

29th Pontignano Conference: UK and Italy together to build back better

- The 29th edition of the Pontignano Conference will focus on the opportunities that Italy and the UK can seize to shape and strengthen growth in a period of rapid change.
- Prof. Mariana Mazzucato will be recognised for her innovative contribution to economic thought in the UK, Italy and the world, and in particular for her role in founding the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose.
- Building on last year's experience, the conference remains a hybrid, with five ministers attending and several others speaking remotely.
- The 29th edition of the Pontignano Conference, the most important event on the Anglo-Italian agenda, is being held in Siena from 16 to 18 September.

It is organised by the British Embassy in Italy and the British Council, the British body for cultural relations and opportunities in education, in collaboration with the University of Siena and St. Antony's College of Oxford. The event is co-organised in collaboration with the ICE Agency.

Chaired by Carlo Calenda and David Willetts, this year's event is entitled 'UK and Italy: together to rebuild better'. Experts in a wide range of fields and leading figures from the governments of London and Rome will be present. Supporting the importance of the occasion is the extensive ministerial representation, both in presence and virtual. Italy will be represented by the Minister for Economic Development, Giancarlo Giorgetti, and the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Benedetto Della Vedova, with the Undersecretary for Technological Innovation and Digital Transition Assuntela Messina in attendance.

The UK will be represented in person by Kwasi Kwarteng, Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury and Minister for Cities, and Wendy Morton, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for European Neighbourhood and the Americas.

Lord Bethell, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care, and Lord Goldsmith, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Pacific and Environment, will also be in London.

The importance of the occasion in the bilateral relations between Italy and the United Kingdom will once again be witnessed by a significant number of

very high-level speeches also from the world of institutions, business, research and media.

The British Ambassador to Italy, Jill Morris, said:

Strengthened by the presence of our two countries in multiple international organisations, Italy and the UK are once again standing side by side in tackling global challenges that affect us all, and which require a joint global commitment. This year, through the UK's Presidency of the G7 and Italy's Presidency of the G20, as well as our partnership for COP26, we have a unique opportunity to lead a sustainable, green, equitable and resilient global recovery.

The themes of our respective Presidencies complement and complement each other perfectly, and have in common the goal of a sustainable recovery from the pandemic. Strengthening our resilience and addressing the issues of climate change and biodiversity protection, while advancing our common values: this is at the heart of the debate at the centre of the XXIX edition of the Conference – “UK and Italy together to rebuild better” – for a renewed community of purpose in the interest of our countries and the generations to come.

The Director of the British Council in Italy, Rachel Launay, commented:

I look forward to participating in the Pontignano 2021 Conference, and investigating with experts how the world of art and culture will respond to the enormous challenges posed by climate change, as the culture and education sectors grapple with new models of functioning in a post-Covid world.

Programme

The conference kicked off on Thursday 16 September at 18:00 in the Aula Magna of the University of Siena.

Greetings from the co-chairs, Carlo Calenda and David Willetts, and from the Chancellor of the University of Siena, Prof. Francesco Frati, were followed by a keynote address from the award-winning Margaret Heffernan, Professor at the School of Management, University of Bath, on the lessons learned from the pandemic to improve resilience in the future of Italian and British societies.

The Conference will continue on Friday and Saturday behind closed doors, in accordance with the Chatham House Rule*, at the Certosa di Pontignano, just outside Siena, and will be divided into four thematic areas that will allow

participants to address some fundamental issues for the future of our countries and Europe.

The third “Pontignano Award”

In the first edition this was given to the renowned scientist Rino Rappuoli, Head of Research and Development and Chief Scientist of GSK Vaccines, and in 2020 to the President Emeritus of the Republic and Senator for Life Giorgio Napolitano. This year it will be presented to Professor Mariana Mazzucato, in recognition of her innovative contribution to economic thinking in the UK, Italy and the world, and in particular for her role in founding the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, on the evening of Friday 17 September.

Professor Mazzucato commented on the prestigious award as follows:

I am deeply honoured to receive this year’s Pontignano Award. Italy and the UK face many of the same problems, such as climate change, inequality and lagging productivity, but they also have the same opportunities. Working closely with the UK government since 2017 on its industrial strategy, with Prime Minister Conte on Italy’s recovery programme and, in 2021, with the ‘G7 Panel on Economic Resilience’ under the leadership of Lord Mark Sedwill, has been truly inspiring.

If we are to achieve our goals of inclusive and sustainable growth, it is crucial that economic theory and practice is rethought to be more goal-oriented, with new metrics around the common good and public goals when we think about budgets, procurement and public-private partnerships. Only in this way will we be able to improve equity in the global health response, accelerate investment in climate mitigation and adaptation, and promote fair labour standards. The G7 working group offers timely recommendations for both countries as they seek to build more resilient economies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The breakout sessions of the conference will focus on the following questions:

Group 1

Defence and Security

Following the publication of the UK Government’s Integrated Review, how can democracies work together to strengthen collective security?

Moderator: Marta Dassù, Senior Director of European Affairs, The Aspen Institute.

With Piero Fassino, President of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of

Deputies. Remotely connected Tobias Ellwood, Chairman of the Defence Committee, House of Commons, Roberta Pinotti, Chairman of the Defence Committee, Senate of the Republic.

Group 2

How can we build and maintain sustainable, resilient, secure and ethical supply chains that effectively integrate Italian and British components?

Moderator: Roberto Luongo, Director General, ICE.

With Philip Pratley, Director International Affairs UK, Leonardo MW Ltd and Maria Paola Chiesi, Director of Shared Value & Sustainability, Chiesi Farmaceutici.

Group 3

How can science and technology, and a culture of innovation, help the UK and Italy build a resilient strategy that can respond to future shocks in an effective and sustainable way?

Moderator: Paul Monks, Chief Scientific Advisor, BEIS.

With Indro Mukerjee, CEO, Innovate UK and Gianna Martinengo, Founder and President, Women&Tech Interdisciplinary approaches to healthy recovery.
Moderator: John Holden, Cultural Fellow, King's College London & Giorgia Giovannetti, Vice President of International Relations, University of Florence.

Saturday will open with the presentation of the conclusions of the G7 Panel on Economic Resilience with Lord Sedwill, President of the Atlantic Future Forum, and Mariana Mazzucato, Founding Director of the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose at University of London.

Saturday's proceedings will conclude with a panel on 'Future Trends' with Marta Foresti, Director, ODI Europe, and remotely, Katie O'Donovan, Director of Government Affairs, Google UK.

The XXIX edition of the Pontignano Conference has the valuable support of Algebris Investments, APCO Worldwide, Chiesi, Equita, GSK, Ipsos, Jaguar Land-Rover, Leonardo, Novamont, Poste Italiane, Sky and VMware.

Concept notes and links to materials and images:
www.britishcouncil.it/pontignano

Social media: British Council Twitter channel @itbritish British Embassy @UKinItalia, @UKinItaly and @JillMorrisFCDO will follow the conference with the hashtags #Pontignano2021 and #Pontignano. □

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