



9 December 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

When I arrived end March 2012 in Milan to begin my tenure as South Africa's Consul-General whose jurisdiction covered all Italy's northern regions which constituted the country's economic hub, I had to rely on my full-time staff based at the Consulate-General. But since the personnel were based in Milan (in Lombardy region), the Honorary Consuls (HCs) who were our country's eyes and ears on the ground in the regions we didn't have a physical presence, were to provide us with strategic support and economic intelligence.

This is where HC Enrico de Barbieri excelled as a consummate diplomat who went beyond the call of duty in promoting and protecting South Africa's national interests: strengthening bilateral political relations between South Africa and his region; opening market access opportunities for South Africa's exports; positioning South Africa as a viable destination for foreign direct investments; promotion South Africa as a tourism destination of choice; and building a positive image of South Africa through appropriate public diplomacy platforms (including mounting a successful media diplomacy programme).

His commitment spoke to his selflessness and his conscientiousness as we offered no financial benefits or remuneration to him as the diplomatic protocol. I am confident that all the Heads of South African Diplomatic Missions in Italy can vouch that he indeed served our country with distinction during his tenure as our Honorary Consul.

His bouquet of services as our HC included being South Africa's in official ceremonies; receiving and hosting official South African delegations visiting his region; drawing up itineraries for official South African delegations; setting up business meetings for the official delegations; helping with all the logistics pertaining to visits by the official delegations.

I can personally confirm that during my over four-year tenure as Consul-General (from 1 April 2012 until I exited the diplomatic corps end June 2016), HC De Barbieri had provided me with all the necessary support I needed in executing my duties. Roughly, some of the projects he worked on included the following:

- Personally arranged and conducted more than thirty official visits of South African Ambassadors and Consul-Generals to the city of Genoa and the region of Liguria with maximum coverage by television and press.
- Delegation of the Limpopo Province led by the Premier Hon. Cassel Mathale
- Conference organised with the Black Business Council of South Africa
- Delegation of Members of the Provincial Legislature of KwaZulu Natal

- Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the end of apartheid with an exhibition at the Genoa Prefecture
- Delegation of the Mayor of the City of eThekweni
- Visit of the South African National Port Authority - to explore strategic partnerships with its Italian counterpart
- Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the end of apartheid
- Secured participation for a group of South African filmmakers at the Genoa Film Festival
- Presentation/inauguration of the FIFA World Cup held in South Africa in 2010 with the official mascot of the event and South African cuisine
- Twinning of Genovese/South African cuisines with the participation of a distinguished SA chef
- Participation at the presentation in Genoa of the yacht Shosholoza that took part in the 32nd America's Cup held in Valencia (Spain)
- International event in support of children in need which was attended by the SA Minister of Social Development, Hon. Bathabile Dlamini
- Participation at dozens of events, TV interviews and shows in Italy to promote South Africa and Genoa

Many of these events received the patronage of the Liguria Regional Authority, the Metropolitan City of Genoa and the Municipality of Genoa as well as that of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Medal of the President of the Republic of Italy.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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