



## **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Finmeccanica**

### **Press Conference**

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On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1948 in Via Amendola, 47 in Rome, under the Chairmanship of Aristide Ferrari, the first meeting of the Board of Directors of “Società Finanziaria Meccanica” took place; a company that had been founded a mere four days previously to manage state involvement in mechanical engineering and shipbuilding.

Over the years the features of Finmeccanica have changed several times, but never detracting from its industrial and technological vocation.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Finmeccanica coincides with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic's Constitution, and I believe it is worth reflecting on this fact.

A great part of recent Italian history is also one of economic development, industrial activity and technological progress.

Not only that. If post-war Italy has succeeded in regaining the international role due to her, this is without doubt owed in part to its industry, which has contributed to restoring national wealth and to projecting a competitive and successful image of Italy to the world at large.

This role is as important today as ever. Indeed in an increasingly global landscape the international propensity of industry constitutes an essential part of a country's foreign policy.

In today's general climate of economic uncertainty, Finmeccanica is proud of its numerous international successes and enviable technological heritage which make it one of the main instruments of the recovery of competitiveness for the whole system.

Finmeccanica is conscious of its role and intends to continue to meet these high expectations.

This year's initiatives to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Finmeccanica should be seen in the light of my previous comments: it is not a case of nostalgic indulgence – which would have little value – but rather of remembering our beginnings in order to face the future with confidence and to consolidate our position.

This has led us to dedicate to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary a series of cultural and social initiatives which will take place in the period of 2008/2009.

The first event is in less than a week, on 26<sup>th</sup> March in the “Auditorium Conciliazione” in Rome when, on the occasion of the inaugural concert we will pay tribute to the role of the Chairmen and Chief Executives who have led Finmeccanica.

To mark this occasion, Professor Vera Negri Zamagni, lecturer in Economic History at the University of Bologna, will present the volume on the history of Finmeccanica on which she is working and which will constitute an important element of reflection and deeper knowledge.



This work does not seek to be self-congratulatory for Finmeccanica. Rather, it proposes to retrace the steps of the Group from its birth until today, including good times and bad times, triumphs and defeats, and with its face turned towards the future.

Indeed I believe that from the knowledge of one's own history and roots it is possible to draw the experience necessary to avoid repeating past mistakes and the enthusiasm required to be open to – and hopefully to overcome – the new challenges we will face.

The exhibition will be marked by the same spirit. Gathering together the historical photographs from the Fondazione Ansaldo archives, and images of today, it will provide a bridge between the past and the future and express a consciousness of one's own roots.

Additionally, the project involving the Via Francigena pilgrims' routes in the South of Italy is of great cultural value for Finmeccanica in developmental terms.

The project will entail identifying the main pilgrims' routes in Southern Italy, with a view to identifying ideal ways in which to exploit the region's potential.

To conclude, I would like to remind you that this year also commemorates the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fulbright Commission, the body that manages the cultural exchanges between Italy and the United States under the auspices of the Fulbright Program.

With the future in mind, we have made available together a study grant to allow one young Italian research student per year to do a two-year Masters Degree in either Material or Economic Science at a prestigious US University.

The Fulbright-Finmeccanica grant seeks to offer a small contribution, on the one hand, towards bridging the gap we often find between the academic CVs of our graduates and the demands of hi-tech industry and, on the other, to promote good relations between Italy and the United States, a country ever more strategic for Finmeccanica's growth and development.

Thank you.

