



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The year 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of the Sri Lanka Italy Business Council (SLItBC), a significant milestone. For a quarter of a century, the SLItBC has played a vital role in fostering business, cultural exchange, and mutual growth between Sri Lanka and Italy. The Council has achieved significant objectives through collaboration and innovation, strengthening bilateral trade and services. Valuable partnerships have been forged, contributing to economic growth. While a trade surplus in favor of Sri Lanka continues, strategic actions are crucial for continued trade enhancement.

In 2025, the SLItBC plans to organize key initiatives and events to further strengthen bilateral ties. These include business networking sessions, culinary events, and technology-focused activities, benefiting its members. Cultural events, such as music and art exhibitions, a film festival, and collaborations with the Italian Embassy, will enhance the rich heritage of both nations. The Council is also exploring trade missions to Italy in sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and technology to increase trade.

The unwavering support of the Italian Ambassador, His Excellency Damiano Francovich, and Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Alberto Arcidiacono, has been invaluable. Their active engagement and the organization of numerous events by the Embassy, have significantly contributed to the Council's success. The SLItBC expresses its sincere gratitude to all executive committee members and member companies for their continued support.

**DAMINDA MULGAMA**  
**President**  
**Sri Lanka Italy Business Council**

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## HON PATRON'S MESSAGE

Caro Amici,

It is a great pleasure for me to introduce this new initiative of the Sri Lanka – Italy Business Council.

The digital newsletter published by the Council will open the way of promising opportunities for further economic collaboration between our two countries, circulating information that, we hope, will contribute to strengthen our bilateral trade.

As the business environment in Sri Lanka continues to move towards total recovery after 2022 default, staying informed and connected is more important than ever. We hope this new tool will support your business journey and foster the commercial ties between Italy and Sri Lanka.

I wish all to the best and great success to this newsletter.



**Damiano Francovich**  
**Ambassador of Italy to Sri Lanka and the Maldives**

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## 25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024



### Seated (left to right)

Mr. Janaka Gunasekera (Imm. Past President), Mrs. Dushy Jayaweera (Vice President); Ambassador H.E. Damiano Francovich (Patron), Mr. Daminda Mulgama (President), Mr. Alberto Arcidiacono (Deputy Head of Mission); Mr. Heshan Perera (Vice President)

### Standing (left to right)

Ms. Sajeewani Amarasinghe; Mr. Sanjeewa Jayasundara; Mr. Felix A. Fernando; Mr. Shamil Mendis; Ms. Anika Williamson; Mr. Rajeev Aloysius (Honorary member); Ms. Gloria Hewapatha (Secretariat); Mr. Ranjit Jayewardene (Honorary member); Mr. Nandajith Somarathne; Mr. Sanjeeva Rajapakse

The 25th Annual General Meeting, marking a milestone of a Council formed in 1998, was graced by H.E. Damiano Francovich, Ambassador of Italy to Sri Lanka and the Maldives and Patron of the Council, as well as Mr. Alberto Arcidiacono, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Italy.

Commending the efforts of the Council in promoting bilateral trade and investment between Italy and Sri Lanka, Ambassador Francovich highlighted the good results of bilateral trade in 2023, where the total figure had reached more than 800 million euros with a healthy surplus for Sri Lanka of around 74 million Euros. He noted that the total relationship remains roughly the same.

A Baur & Co. Ltd Deputy Managing Director Janaka Gunasekera passed on the baton to Mr. Daminda Mulgama, who was duly elected unanimously as the President of the Council for 2024/25. He outlined his plans for the coming year to further the objectives of the Council, and to further strengthen the perennially strong bilateral business, cultural and social ties, between Sri Lanka and Italy.



Mr. Mahendra Jayasekera was presented with a token of appreciation for delivering a most eloquent and informative post-business keynote address for the evening.





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## CENA APULIA (CONT.)

The Ninth Week of Italian cuisine in the World concluded that day, and our event was undoubtedly the highlight in Sri Lanka. In addition to introductions to each dish by the chefs, sommelier Tilosha Perera from Wineworld (Rockland) gave commentary on the fine Italian wines. Kamal Munasinghe, General Manager of the hotel was also thanked by Event Chair Rajeev Aloysius and President Daminda Mulgama. H.E. Damiano Francovich graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The evening was made possible through sponsorship by Colorobbia, Industrie Bitossi, Energy International Logistics, Transmec Group, Lanka Tiles, and Omega Line.





## CHRISTMAS PARTY 2024



Sixty members and their guests and well wishers of Italy participated in a much lauded Christmas party on Friday, 13 December 2024. The evening featured piped Italian carols, free-flowing Italian wine and a succulent menu including freshly made woodfired pizza, gnocchi, different types of pastas, meats, focaccia, and much more topped off by three Italian desserts. The venue was Cucina by 3brothers, one of the authentic Italian restaurants in Colombo. We thank event chair Vice President Heshan Perera; and President Daminda Mulgama for their support.





## CHRISTMAS PARTY 2024 (CONT.)





## WEEK OF ITALIAN CUISINE IN THE WORLD

by Rajeev Aloysius

The Week of Italian Cuisine in the World was created by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the purpose of promoting traditional Italian cuisine and exportation of Made In Italy products. Italian authentic ingredients are produced and sold around the world, and *chilometro zero* (0 km food) is a farm-to-table concept that is becoming increasingly practical in both amateur and professional settings. The Ministry through its many diplomatic offices around the world, promotes Italian food by sending some of the finest chefs in the country to assist local talent to deliver on techniques, authenticity, quality and most of all, the holistic dining experience of one of the great cuisines of the world.

Having said that, there are several ingredients such as those certified with the Denominazione di Origine Protetta (DOP) or Indicazione Geografica Protetta (IGP), necessarily have to be produced within a certain geographic area, in very specific, carefully documented and traditional ways. A small selection of these were outlined in our newsletter in January 2024.

At a press conference to present the 9th edition of the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World at the Palazzo della Farnesina in Rome on 19 November 2024, a new feature was announced. Starting next year, the celebration will no longer have a fixed date, but will have “flexible” dates. This responds to a need of the master chefs involved, to participate in more initiatives. The announcement was made by the Vice President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Antonio Tajani and the Minister of Agriculture, Francesco Lollobrigida in front of foreign delegations, agrifood trade associations and correspondents in Italy of the international press. The dates for the Tenth edition are likely to be between 9 to 27 November 2025, though this is of course, subject to confirmation.

With two successful events in the past two years, focussing on the Venice (Veneto) and Apulia (Puglia) regions, the Sri Lanka Italy Business Council too looks forward to bringing you, our valued members and well-wishers, another delectable tasting menu (Menu Degustazione) from a new region.





## TRADE FAIRS IN ITALY 2025

The Italian trade fair system, which holds national and international events devoted to subjects ranging from gold to engines, from travel to electronics, and from design to food, has always been one of the greatest allies of the **Made in Italy** tagline and concept. Production generates a domestic impact of some 22.5 billion euros every year, including services, transport, hospitality, and wages, equal to 0.7% of GDP. The trade fair industry is a multiplier not just of business, but also of high-spending business tourism, specialist services and jobs accounting for 203,000 workers, taking both indirect impact and allied industries into consideration. AEFI, which represents almost 75% of sectoral turnover, has 48 members, with 42 districts in which over 1,000 events a year range over a total 4.2 million square metres of exhibition area, and 8 organisers. It represents 200,000 businesses and 20,000,000 professionals from all over the world.

Access the dynamic and frequently updated monthly listing of the Italian trade fair that is relevant to your business at -

<https://www.aefi.it/en/calendario/>

## REMINISCENCES - A LOOK BACK | JUNE 2022



In the spirit of World Food Safety Day 2022, the Italian Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, H.E. Rita Mannella, celebrated its importance by planting a Gini Waraka plant in her official residence in Colombo. She was joined by Mr. Ranjit Jayewardene, who headed the project, and members of the Executive Committee. The goal was to highlight the importance of food safety as a shared responsibility, with a role for everyone to play - government, farmers, producers, distributors, sellers and consumers, etc., who all share the responsibility of ensuring our food and the supply of food is safe.



## WHO WE ARE

Inaugurated under the aegis of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce on 9 October 1998, the main objective of the Sri Lanka - Italy Business Council is to promote investment, trade and joint ventures between Sri Lanka and Italy. The Council celebrated 25 years since its founding this year.

The groundwork for the formation of the Council commenced after a proposal was made in 1997 to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, by the then-Ambassador of Italy to Sri Lanka, H.E. Maurizio Teucci. Since its inception, the Council has endeavored to support its membership which has grown to include companies involved in diverse sectors of trade and services as well as NGO's. The Executive Committee is represented by members of these sectors. Meetings are attended also by representatives from the Embassy of Italy in Colombo, the Delegation of the European Commission, the Export Development Board and the Department of Commerce, as invited observers when required. The Council maintains close ties with the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Rome.

The Sri Lanka - Italy Business Council continues to collaborate with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in achieving the objective of strengthening bilateral ties and promoting investment and joint venture partnerships.

## OBJECTIVES

- To promote trade and tourism and services between Sri Lanka and Italy and in particular to promote exports from Sri Lanka to Italy.
- To encourage the establishment of joint ventures in Sri Lanka between Italy and Sri Lankan investors.
- To exchange information on trade and investment with the appropriate bodies in Italy.
- To conduct joint meetings with Italian business organisations in Sri Lanka and in Italy.
- To serve as a recognised representative of business sector interests in Sri Lanka, in matters concerning business relationships with Italy.
- To co-operate with the Government of Sri Lanka in the pursuit of the above objectives.
- To undertake all matters that are incidental or conducive to attaining the above objectives.

## CONTACT US

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