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Paolo Gentiloni
Italy (S&D)

Background

Paolo Gentiloni is a seasoned Italian politician with both a strong national and international reputation and his nomination signals a return to Italy's pro-European vocation after the strained relations of recent years under Salvini.

Born in Rome on 22 November 1954, he is currently President of the Democratic Party, one of the two main political forces that make up the majority of the Conte II government (coalition government Five Star Movement – Democratic Party).

A journalist by profession, in his youth he was part of the Italian Extra-parliamentary Left, mainly as a supporter of strong environmental positions in the 1980s and 1990s (he was Director of the Legambiente monthly magazine: "La Nuova Ecologia" from 1984 to 1993).

Member of the Italian Parliament since 2001, he was the right-hand man of Francesco Rutelli (leader of La Margherita party) for several years. He was his spokesperson while Rutelli was Mayor of Rome between 1994 and 2001. In the first years of parliamentary experience, Gentiloni dealt with transport and telecommunications. He also chaired the RAI Supervisory Commission (the Italian public broadcasting service).

Former Minister of Communications during the Prodi II Government (2006-2008), he was then Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Renzi Government (2014-2016) and was then called to replace Renzi himself as Prime Minister between 2016 and 2018. During these last two experiences of government, Gentiloni stood out above all in foreign policy, with a continuous search for an open dialogue with the United States and Russia on hot files for Italy such as the war in Libya, where he firmly supported the birth of the Al-Serraj Government, supported by the international community as well as by the majority of Western countries.

Gentiloni played a considerable diplomatic role in Italy's external relations with the European Union, as well as in strengthening political, economic and commercial relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, following the JCPOA agreement between Tehran and Washington during Barack Obama's second term in the White House.

Re-elected MP in 2018, he then became President of the Democratic Party with the coming of Nicola Zingaretti's Secretariat. According to several political observers, he is considered likely to be Sergio Mattarella's successor in view of the presidential elections of 2022.

Position on the EU:

A true European believer, Gentiloni expressed in his years as a member of the government the need to deepen European integration, as he proved on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome - which gave birth to the European Economic Community in 1957 - when he affirmed the need for European chancelleries to recover the "spirit of the second post-war period" in continental diplomatic relations. His recent nomination as European Commissioner for Italy is seen by several Italian and international political observers as a sign of the resumption of a more relaxed relationship between Rome and Brussels after the end of the Conte I government at the end of summer 2019.

Personal characteristics:

Graduated in Political Science at the University of Rome 'La Sapienza', he is fluent in English, French and German. He can boast important personal relationships with various political exponents at international level also thanks to his experience as Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as thanks to the numerous missions carried out as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, of the Standing Committee of Africa and as President of the Italy-United States section of the Interparliamentary Union during the XVII Term of the Italian Parliament.

During his government activity, he stood out for his moderate political style with a low communicative profile, in deep discontinuity with the more dynamic one of his predecessor as prime minister - and party partner - Matteo Renzi. Also for these sober characteristics, Gentiloni can enjoy a cross-cutting appreciation even among political forces that are ideologically not related to his party.

Synopsis of the positions held:

MP of the Republic:	2001-to date
Minister of Communications:	2006-2008
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	2014-2016
Prime Minister:	2016-2018