

Handelskammer  
Hamburg

VIII

Ministro Franco Frattini  
Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
Piazzale della Farnesina, 1  
00194 ROMA  
ITALIA

Hamburg, 20 July 2009

Excellency,

we are concerned to hear that there are concrete plans to close the Consulate General of the Republic of Italy in Hamburg. The Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, its represented 147 thousand companies and the whole Hamburg business community are deeply worried about this intention.

Referring to its GDP Hamburg is the biggest economic centre in Germany, ranked fourth in the European Union. More than thousand of Hamburg's companies have close business relations with Italy. For them the Consulate General of the Republic of Italy is an important contact address for economic information as well as for necessary certificates and any other kind of official documentation. The quick handling of these company requests is an important precondition for successful international business. This helps and supports both, the Hamburg and the Italian economy.

Regarding the area of Northern Germany the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg is of highest strategic importance to the German-Italian trade. The market of Northern Germany comprising 4.3 million consumers is open to Italian products. About 1700 Northern German companies engaged in German-Italian trade and more than thousand Italian companies based in Hamburg benefit from our local economic power. These manifold and intensive economic relations between Italy and Hamburg with a volume of about 2 billion Euro demand a professional consular backing ensuring short handling times. This can only be covered by a consular representation in Hamburg itself.

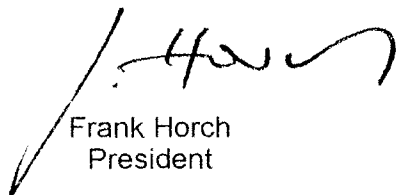
The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg also becomes increasingly important for Italian travellers. Accommodation figures rose significantly from 39 thousand in 2001 to 58 thousand in 2008. This means an increasing amount of requests from Italian tourists for the Consulate General, not to forget about important consular functions requested by the raising amount of cruise liners that call at the port of Hamburg.



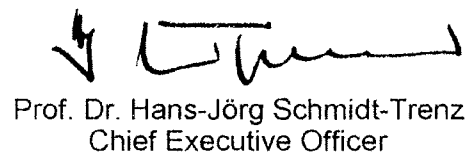
Excellency, we are of the opinion that it is mainly due to the very fruitful cooperation between the Consulate General of the Republic of Italy, our Hamburg Chamber of Commerce and the numerous economic associations here in Hamburg that the economic relations between Italy and Northern Germany have increased dynamically over the last years. Bearing this in mind we are convinced that the added value arising from the realization of the huge potential of the bilateral business relations is a multiple of the costs generated by the Consulate General.

On behalf of our Hamburg business community we appeal to you to exert your influence and avert the closing of the Consulate General of the Republic of Italy in Hamburg. The Italian Consulate General is highly valued here in Hamburg, one of the biggest consular locations worldwide, and it should continue with its outstanding work representing the Italian companies and more than 8000 Italian citizens in Hamburg. We would like to maintain the Consulate General of the Republic of Italy as the first address for our Hamburg companies that have business relations with Italy.

Yours faithfully  
HANDELSKAMMER HAMBURG



Frank Horch  
President



Prof. Dr. Hans-Jörg Schmidt-Trenz  
Chief Executive Officer