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Italian physics in the international organization of science: The case of IUPAP

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To commemorate its centenary, the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) initiated a historical endeavor to comprehend the evolving roles of the institution in fostering international collaboration in physics from the 1920s until the present day. Drawing upon the findings of this historical project, this presentation offers a critical overview of Italy's involvement in the IUPAP. By examining pivotal events and notable individuals, the study demonstrates that Italy's participation in the IUPAP underwent major reconfigurations, heavily influenced by changing political circumstances both domestically and internationally. Following the reformation of the National Research Council (CNR) in 1927, the newly constituted CNR board of directors viewed the IUPAP as an obstacle rather than a facilitator of international physics cooperation. Conversely, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, Italian physicists in prominent positions within national science policy-making circles recognized the IUPAP as an opportunity to pursue two interrelated objectives: the internationalization of Italian physics and the restoration of Italy's central role in the emerging international physics community. This convergence of motives resulted in a privileged alliance between Italian physicists and the IUPAP, culminating in the election of Edoardo Amaldi as President during the IUPAP general assembly held in Rome in 1957. Following Amaldi's presidency, the Italian Physical Society remained committed to fostering an internationalist outlook. While increasingly focusing on the European context, Italian physicists remained actively engaged in the IUPAP, actively influencing some of its major objectives.

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