

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

For most of the past four weeks, my wife and I have been in Europe. We usually go once or twice a year to relax and visit some of our favorite places. We knew we would be in Germany and Italy, but we were not sure where to spend our time. My wife has long wanted to go to Sicily and we knew it would be a stretch, but everything fell into place and we journeyed the length of Italy to Catania. Sicily was fabulous, and we both knew we had found that "get-away" place where we could live for an extended time period. We especially liked the rural areas and small communities. We met some really great people!

We have been living and travelling in Europe now for over 40 years. Many of my Air Force years were spend in Germany, so I am comfortable behind the wheel on either the autobahn or the autostrada. My wife worked in the travel business with both Germans and Italian, so her unique insights make us very comfortable travelling on our own.

Over the years, the changes in Europe have been significant. Europeans always took pride in their National currencies. When the European Union adopted a common currency, things seemed at bit strange at first, but the euro seemed to have common acceptance until the economies started to collapse over the last five of years. On this trip, especially in Italy, we often heard the merchants and businesses people speak out to get their own currency back. The ordinary Italians did not seem pleased with their government and the European Union. Not just National government, but regional, and local governments as well. Politicians are a most despised group of people. Not much different than the way Americans feel about their elected officials. In many ways, the frustrations and dissatisfactions voiced by the people we talked to were echoes of the same government failures we are experiencing in our country.

Many of the people we met said that they were paying too much in taxes and government fees. Probably most noticeable complaints concerned the expanding regulatory elements in everything from drink containers, to special fees on roads. We were asked about the regulatory situation in our country and

we had to admit that the growth of government has brought expanding intrusions into the activities of daily living.

When the conversations turned to trust in government, whether the person was German, Italian, Austrian, or American, the comments were the same. Most of us don't trust the people we have elected to do an honest job. People trust themselves, their families and their own work ethics. I was not surprised to hear Italian business people, talking about the ways government agencies were stealing from them.

During our time in Italy, National elections were held and a new government was elected. Politicians were attempting to form a coalition to empower a government to meet the economic demands of the European Union and please Italians. The politicians were having great difficulty!

When we landed in the U.S., I turned on the news.....same story here!I guess some things are the same the world over. Bad politicians give us bad governments! Polarized governments are failing everyone!

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