

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



October 6, 2014

Reply to Attn of:

General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the Celebration of Galileo at the Embassy of Italy Reception, on October 9, 2014

On October 9, 2014, the Italian Embassy, along with Georgetown University Italian Research Institute, Italian Space Agency, National Institute of Nuclear Physics and Selex-Galileo, Inc. will host a reception at the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C., at 6:30 p.m. The event is focused on the innovation and scientific research based on a series of lectures by prominent scholars and scientists, as well as an exhibit and a play. The guest speakers will be Gino Segre, University of Pennsylvania; Fernando Ferroni, President of the National Institute of Nuclear Physics; and Antonio Masiero, Vice President of the National Institute of Nuclear Physics.

Approximately 130 people have been invited to attend, including representatives from other Federal agencies and academia, members of the public and media, and Italian researchers in the United States. The estimated cost of the reception, including all food and beverages, is \$15 per person. I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(2).

I further determine that free attendance at the above mentioned event is in the interest of the agency because it will further agency programs and operations. Attendance at this event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information regarding NASA's plans and programs. Accordingly, NASA employees (subject to the exceptions noted below) who have been invited to attend may accept free attendance to this event. They may also accept invitations for accompanying spouses or guests.

NASA employees, including NASA employees who are in non-career positions for which they are required to sign an ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490, whose duties do not substantially affect the sponsors or a majority of its members, may accept an invitation for free attendance to the reception for themselves and a guest. However, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the event sponsor, such as by way of contracting duties, should

seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(3)(i) regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor to attend under the widely attended gathering exception.¹

Attendees are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a), which provides that employees may accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 per occasion (and no more than \$50 from one source in a calendar year).



Adam F. Greenstone

¹ NASA employees other than non-career employees subject to the ethics pledge of Executive Order 13490 whose duties may substantially affect an event host may also attend the event, under the \$20 gift exception (5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(a)) without reimbursing the organizers if they (and any accompanying guest) do not accept refreshments and gifts worth a total of more than \$20, or worth more than \$50 from the sponsor during the calendar year under the \$20 exception. This would, for example, be the case if an employee only accepted a moderate amount of food and refreshments served at the reception. Those individuals are, however, reminded: 1) that it is never inappropriate and frequently prudent to reimburse a contractor host for the value of attending even if reimbursement is not required, 2) to ensure that their attendance does not generate any appearance of impropriety, such as appearance of preference or endorsement, and 3) they may contact a local NASA ethics official for advice.