



# **Defense Prepares New Reserve: Recalled Military Personnel and Civilian Specialists Including Cyber Experts**

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The future Reserve of the Italian Armed Forces should not be a simple list of personnel to recall in case of emergency, but a true component of the military instrument, organized in peacetime and ready to be activated when necessary.

This is the direction indicated by the Ministry of Defense in the 2026 Guidance Act, published on July 9, while the legislative measure that must define the new model in detail is still awaited.

The idea is to build an additional force capable of rapidly increasing personnel availability without permanently keeping in service all the men and skills that could become necessary in a crisis scenario. A system that looks therefore not only at quantity, but especially at activation speed and availability of specialized competencies.

## **A Reserve Ready Already in Peacetime**

The central point is precisely this: the Reserve must exist, be trained and kept efficient before an operational need emerges.

The personnel must therefore be trained, updated and inserted into a system that allows Defense to know in advance which capabilities are available and how quickly they can be mobilized.

In case of crisis, disaster or increased operational needs, the Armed Forces could thus rapidly reinforce their units without starting from scratch with recruitment and training.

It is an approach that responds to a problem that has become central in recent years: the ability to sustain over time a prolonged military commitment and to replace personnel, reconstitute units and keep support structures operational.

## **Not Just Former Military: Civilian Specialists Are Also Needed**

The real novelty concerns the type of personnel that could enter the future Reserve.

Alongside already trained military personnel and recently discharged servicemembers, Defense is indeed aiming to use professionals from the civilian world, especially in those sectors where highly specialized expertise can be indispensable during a crisis but difficult to maintain in large numbers in permanent units.

Among the areas indicated are logistics, military health, infrastructure, command and control, technical-operational support, advanced technologies and especially cyber.

A computer scientist specialized in network security, a doctor, an engineer or a technician with particular skills could therefore be inserted into a system that provides for the necessary military training and subsequent recall when their expertise becomes useful to Defense.

In this way the Reserve would also become a bridge between Armed Forces and the industrial, scientific and technological world.

# A Force That Can Expand Based on the Threat

The model outlined by Defense is based on a principle of scalability: the reserve component must be able to increase or decrease depending on needs.

Under normal conditions, a prepared and kept efficient structure will remain available. As a crisis worsens, additional personnel and capabilities can instead be progressively activated.

The goal is therefore not to create a force parallel to the permanent Armed Forces, but to provide them with depth: more personnel when needed, greater specialized capabilities and especially the possibility of continuing to operate even during long and demanding crises.

## The Three Components of the Future Reserve

The drafts of the reform circulated in recent months have hypothesized a structure articulated into three different components.

The **Operational Reserve** should mainly gather military personnel recently discharged, therefore men and women who already possess training and experience and who could quickly return to service.

The **Specialized Voluntary Reserve** would instead be intended for technical, health, IT and scientific professionals, allowing Defense to access expertise present in civil society.

Finally, a **Territorial Reserve** could be employed mainly on national territory, with particular reference to emergencies and support in case of disaster.

However, this is still an evolving structure: requirements, recruitment methods, training periods, incentives and conditions for recall will be defined by the final text of the reform.

## The Issue of Personnel Numbers and Resources

The Reserve project is part of a broader review of the Italian military instrument. Among the hypotheses contained in the drafts is also a progressive increase in the personnel of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Military Health Corps up to 40,000 additional units by 2033.

However, the two aspects should not be confused: the increase in permanently employed personnel and the construction of the new Reserve represent different tools, even though both respond to the same need to increase the overall capacity of Defense.

There also remains the issue of financial coverage, essential for transforming the project into a truly operational structure. An effective Reserve indeed requires periodic training, equipment, recall systems, protections for those working in the private sector and resources to maintain personnel preparation over time.

## **An Important Change for the Italian Armed Forces**

If the project comes to completion, the Reserve could represent one of the most significant changes in the organization of the Italian Armed Forces in recent years.

The concept is simple: maintain a permanent professional military instrument, but alongside it a second tier of already prepared and rapidly available personnel, capable of providing men and expertise when the situation requires.

A solution particularly important in technological sectors and in cyber, where often the most advanced expertise is found in the civilian world and where needs can increase suddenly.

The challenge will be to transform this principle into a concrete system: establish who will be able to be part of it, how often they will need to train, with what notice they can be recalled and what guarantees will be provided for those who, in the meantime, will continue to work in civilian life.