General Iannucci: the FLF Bulgaria achieves NATO validation

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The complex training cycle that led to the NATO validation of the Forward Land Force (FLF) at Brigade level, under Italian leadership, concluded today in Bulgaria with the visit of the Operational Commander of the Joint Forces Command (COVI), General of the Army Corps Giovanni Maria Iannucci. This is a result of absolute importance that confirms the credibility, readiness, and excellence of the Italian Army within the context of the Atlantic Alliance.

At the center of this success is the "Pinerolo" Brigade, called to demonstrate in the field the ability to elevate the FLF from Battle Group level to Brigade level, integrating means, procedures, and personnel from eight Allied Nations (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, and Turkey).

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A complex and multinational training cycle

The activity, which began last September, was structured into three distinct and interconnected Command Post Exercises (CPX) – **“Relentless Resolve”**, **“Dacian Fall”**, and **“Stone Wall”** – designed to test:

- the **operational readiness** of the FLF at Brigade level;
- the **integration of the command chain** in a multinational context;
- the capability of a **digitalized Brigade Command** to conduct “full spectrum” operations, from conventional combat to support and stabilization activities.

The COVI ensured the coordination of the national contribution, guaranteeing its full coherence within the framework of the NATO device deployed on the eastern flank of the Alliance.

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From CPX to managing eight multinational Battle Groups

During the exercise **“Relentless Resolve”** (October 6–10), the Italian Brigade Forward Command Element assumed command functions within the framework of the Bulgarian national defense plan, operating according to the doctrinal and procedural standards of the Alliance.

The subsequent exercises **“Dacian Fall”** and **“Stone Wall”** (October 17 – November 29) represented the decisive test: the Brigade Command exercised control over **eight multinational Battle Groups**, coordinating:

- operational functions;
- combat support;
- information flow and real-time decision-making management.

This was a command and control commitment of the highest complexity, which the Italian Army faced effectively, confirming the national capability to express perfectly interoperable multinational brigade-level commands within NATO.

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The Live Fire Exercise: the culminating moment

The culminating point of the entire training cycle was the **Live Fire Exercise**, during which three multinational tactical groups – Italian, Bulgarian, and Greek – conducted simultaneous and coordinated live-fire activities, deployed over **two maneuver areas approximately 140 kilometers apart**.

The combined action on this scale required:

- rigorous synchronization of timing;
- integrated management of fires, maneuver, and supports;
- high reliability of digitalized command and control systems.

The contribution of personnel from the **Army Evaluation and Innovation Command (COMVIE)** was fundamental, present in all training phases to monitor and evaluate processes, procedures, and command and control performance, ensuring compliance with the highest standards of the Alliance.

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Forza NEC: the technological heart of the “Pinerolo” Brigade

During the concluding visit, General Iannucci attended both the operational activities and the presentation of the **Network Enabled Capability (NEC) digitalized Command Post**, the true technological heart of the “Pinerolo” Brigade.

Thanks to Forza NEC, the Brigade has:

- an advanced digital infrastructure for command and control;
- capability to fuse information from multiple sensors;
- superior situational awareness, crucial for conducting operations in a multinational and multi-domain environment.

In his speech, the COVI Commander emphasized how the FLF's commitment in Bulgaria represents **“a concrete contribution to the credibility of the allied posture on the eastern flank”**, highlighting the value of collaboration among participating Nations and Italy's leading role in the integration and interoperability process.

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A confirmation of Italy's role within NATO

Among others present at the final exercise were the **Bulgarian Deputy Chief of Defence, General Mihail Popov**, and for Italy, **General of the Army Corps Giovanni Gagliano**, Commander of the Army Combat Support Forces, and **Major General Stefano Iasson**, Commander of the Carabinieri Mobile Units Division.

The success of the training cycle and the NATO validation of the FLF Brigade Bulgaria under Italian leadership attest to:

- the national capability to operate in a **multinational and multi-domain context**;
- the high level of **interoperability and integration** with other Allied Armed Forces;
- full compliance with the **operational standards of the Atlantic Alliance**;
- Italy's concrete contribution to the **overall readiness of the NATO posture**, particularly on the eastern flank.

This success represents not only an important operational milestone for the “Pinerolo” Brigade and the Italian Army but also a clear political-strategic signal of Italy's determination to play a leading role in Euro-Atlantic collective security.

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News link: https://www.difesa.it/operazionimilitari/op-intern-corso/operazione-eva-bulgaria/notizie-teatro/elevazione-a-brigata-della-forward-land-force-bulgaria/84059.html