



Giorgia Meloni defends the Army in the University of Bologna case: "Constitutional duties of the University violated". The University's response: "Educational model issues"

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The case of the **Philosophy degree course for Army officers** requested at the University of Bologna is not an isolated incident, nor a simple academic mishap. It is the tip of a cultural fracture that [we analyzed in our in-depth report yesterday](#), dedicated to the refusal of the Department of Philosophy to activate a specific path for young officers: a signal of distrust towards the Armed Forces that has now exploded on the national scene.

Today, that event becomes a true institutional stress test. On one side, an internal decision by a Department that chose not to proceed; on the other, the united reaction of the government, with Prime Minister **Giorgia Meloni** and Minister of University **Anna Maria Bernini** openly

defending the Army as a **fundamental stronghold of the Republic** and asserting the strategic value of its cultural education.

Meloni: “Unacceptable choice, the role of the Armed Forces is questioned”

The Prime Minister uses harsh words, highlighting the stakes involved. She describes the decision of the Department of Philosophy of Alma Mater as **“an incomprehensible and gravely wrong act”**, an **“unacceptable choice”**, and even **“an act damaging to the constitutional duties that underpin the University's autonomy”**.

In Giorgia Meloni's view, the university cannot become a closed enclave where the Army is tolerated only as a marginal presence, but must be **a center of pluralism and debate**, called to welcome and enhance every path of cultural elevation, *“remaining completely free from ideological prejudices”*. The strongest point, however, concerns the heart of the matter: the relationship between the University and the Armed Forces.

The Premier recalls that denying a training path specifically designed for officers means, in fact, **questioning the very role of the Army**, which the Constitution identifies as a tool for the defense of the Republic and the security of citizens.

In this political and symbolic passage, Giorgia Meloni is not only defending an academic project but also **the honor and dignity of the military institution**, asserting its full right to be recognized as a natural interlocutor of the academic world.

The centrality of humanistic education for the 21st-century Officer

The Prime Minister's intervention insists on a point that, in the Italian public debate, is often relegated to the background: the nature of contemporary officers' education. For Meloni, **enriching officers' preparation with humanistic skills is a strategic factor**, not an optional cultural ornament. In an international context marked by hybrid crises, information wars, influence campaigns, and operations in complex theaters, preparation cannot be reduced to a purely technical dimension.

Having personnel in uniform also trained in philosophy, history of ideas, ethics, logic, and critical thinking means **putting the Army in a position to read the world**, interpret the behavior of hostile and allied actors, understand the social and political impact of every decision on the field. It is the idea of the officer as a **professional of arms and at the same time an interpreter of complexity**, capable of navigating international norms, public opinion, relations between states, and civil societies.

In this perspective, the Army is not asking for privileges, but **investing in higher education precisely to improve the quality of decisions concerning everyone's security**.

Minister Bernini: “I will guarantee the course”

If the Premier calls the refusal “unacceptable,” the Minister of University and Research **Anna Maria Bernini** politically translates that assessment into a direct commitment. From the Academy of Modena, Bernini declares she will **guarantee the realization of the course**, stating that she feels, in this, an expression of the entire government.

The minister defends the principle of academic autonomy but claims its authentic meaning: **“There is no university autonomy that can turn into a wall or a shield”**. Autonomy – she recalls – is not the right to close off from the rest of the state's institutions, but a space of responsible freedom. And this responsibility includes the ability to dialogue with those who protect, with arms and law, the same national community that the university is called to serve on a cultural level.

It is no coincidence that Bernini recalls the history of Alma Mater as the **oldest university in the world and “mother of studies”**. Precisely because of that role, she says, the university should be at the forefront in recognizing the importance of “a scientific and humanistic course for the **defenders of our future**.” Defining officers in this way means reaffirming that the Army does not belong to a niche sector but occupies **a central place in the republican pact**.

The Army as an institution educated to responsibility, not blind force

This story strongly highlights a recurring misunderstanding: the idea that proximity between universities and Armed Forces automatically entails a risk of “militarization” of cultural spaces.

It is a reversed vision. The Italian Army is an institution **rigorously anchored in the Constitution**, dependent on Parliament and the government, integrated into a system of democratic alliances like NATO and the European Union, bound by strict rules on the use of force.

Thinking that the inclusion of officers in Philosophy courses compromises the university's freedom means ignoring that **those same officers swear to defend the freedom and rights of citizens**, including those who today contest their presence in academic halls. The logic that inspires the Army's request goes in the opposite direction of the ideological caricature: **more culture, more critical sense, more tools to question the ethics of using force**, the legitimacy of operations, the relationship between security and rights.

In this reading, the military institution is not a foreign body to be kept at the door, but a state entity asking to be further trained, judged, tested on the same grounds of responsibility that the university has overseen for centuries.

The University's position: issues of educational model, not access

In its [official note](#), the University of Bologna clarifies today that it has **never denied enrollment to anyone** and emphasizes that anyone with the requirements can enroll in existing courses, including women and men of the Armed Forces. The subject of the choice concerns, according to the University, the request to activate a structured study path ad hoc, entirely conducted at the Academy, with a strong commitment of educational and organizational resources.

The Department of Philosophy, after internal discussion, would have deemed it impossible to proceed “as things stand,” citing issues of consistency with the educational offer and sustainability. The point, however, is that this technical motivation has been read, by a large part of the political and institutional world, as **the symptom of a deeper difficulty in recognizing the Army as a legitimate educational partner**, on par with other public institutions with which universities collaborate daily.

This is where the matter transcends the internal confines of the university and becomes a national issue: **can a Department, we add, refuse a path designed for Officers who represent the State, without questioning the signal this sends to the country?**

Beyond the controversy: what the Bologna case really tells us

Beyond the day's confrontations, the case of the Philosophy course for Army officers at the University of Bologna tells us a lot about today's Italy. It shows how cultural resistances persist in recognizing the Armed Forces as a fully “adult” role within civil society, not only on an operational level but also on an intellectual one.

It simultaneously reveals that a part of the political institutions is no longer willing to accept, in silence, that **ideological prejudices translate into obstacles to the cultural growth of those called to defend the Republic.**

The fact that Minister Bernini has guaranteed that **“the course will be held”** indicates that, at least on the political ground, the line has been drawn: the Army should not be marginalized but accompanied in a path of increasing integration with the world of study and research.

Defending the possibility for officers to study Philosophy is not a whim, nor a symbolic concession: **it is an investment in the future of our defense, on the level of consciousness and responsibility of those who, tomorrow, will have to make decisions in the name of Italy.**

In this sense, the Bologna case is not just a controversy destined to fade away. It is a revealing passage: it tells us whether we are willing to recognize the Army the place it deserves **not only in parades and emergencies but also in the heart of national culture**, where critical thinking is formed.

And it reminds us that **defending the military institution means defending the Republic itself.**

News link: <https://tg24.sky.it/politica/2025/12/01/meloni-universita-bologna-esercito-italiano>