



Masiello closes ranks — only a country that knows why it defends itself can find the means to do so.

The debate over conscription and the need for a shared national consciousness. Masiello: «War, whatever form it takes, is never something confined solely to the armed forces»

Published on 05/10/2026

Addressing the recurring issue of reinstating military service, Masiello clears up any misunderstandings: «The debate over conscription is understandable, but it risks being misleading: **we are discussing the instrument before clearly identifying the problem.** Ongoing conflicts show us that forces become worn down and must be regenerated, requiring serious reflection on how to address this issue. But **the real challenge lies in the realm of awareness. Only a country that knows why it defends itself can find the means to do so.**

Defense must not become a "specialist matter": analysis of data and surveys

The central issue lies in the collective perception that has developed over recent decades:

«Over the past twenty years, **defense has become, in the public perception, a “specialist matter”**. The suspension of conscription removed one of the channels through which civilian society came into direct contact with the military, with the result that the duty to contribute to the defense of the Homeland, which the Constitution assigns to all citizens, has remained in the background». To bridge this gap, the Chief of the Defense Staff insists on fostering a culture of defense, supported by the data: «A Censis survey tells us that, **among younger people, just over one in six say they are willing to defend their country**. A Eurispes report tells us that **just over four in ten Italians see resources allocated to Defense as a cost, while around one-third see them as an investment**: the latter figure has increased by eight percentage points in two years. These figures certainly capture a divide, but also a trend: **when it is explained, perceptions change**».

Opening the doors and cross-pollinating: a strategy for engaging with the civilian world

The best path forward is openness and mutual listening: «Since the beginning of my term, I have been working to create ever more **opportunities for contact and dialogue with the civilian world**: communicating more and better, **opening our doors and going into schools and universities**, explaining what we do and why». He concludes with a reflection on deep cross-pollination: «**Contact with the civilian world does not merely help people get to know us; it helps us change**, because an institution that engages with the outside world absorbs skills, mindsets, and speed that enable it to keep pace with the times».