Plan for 40,000 Reservists: Italy Strengthens the Armed Forces

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Rome – Italy is preparing to enter a new phase of its military strategy. The Defense General Staff is developing an ambitious plan to strengthen the operational capacity of the Armed Forces, with the recruitment of 40,000 new reservists ready to intervene in emergency situations and support a potential high-intensity war effort.

A choice driven by the need to fill a numerical and operational gap that, in recent years, has put the national defense system under pressure. “The strength of the Armed Forces is set by law. I have no problem saying, as I have said many times before, that this model is now inadequate and needs to be changed,” said Defense Minister Guido Crosetto.

Currently, the personnel of the Italian armed forces stands at around 160,000 units among the Army, Navy, and Air Force, plus over 100,000 Carabinieri. Numbers that, according to military experts, would not be sufficient to ensure the country's security in complex scenarios and prolonged conflicts.

Paratroopers ready for airdrop

General Masiello: “We need reserves ready to be deployed”

The alarm was also raised by the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Carmine Masiello, who estimated that at least 40-45,000 units are missing to ensure the full operational capacity of the ground forces. "The Army has the duty to prepare for any eventuality, precisely to face the worst scenarios, avoiding being caught unprepared," Masiello stated during a hearing at the Defense Commission.

The general emphasized how the current size of the workforce does not guarantee "the necessary mass to face a potential high-intensity conflict, which requires the ability to sustain and regenerate the forces engaged in combat." For this reason, the project being defined provides for the creation of a "pool of readily deployable reserve forces," capable of supporting the Army and other Defense components if necessary.

Chief of Army Staff. Gen CA Carmine MASIELLO

A new phase for European defense

The Italian plan fits into a broader context, that of a new phase for European defense. This week sees the leaders of the E5 – Poland, France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom – meeting in Paris to discuss the future of continental security. At the center of the talks is the possibility of a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine and investments in common defense, also in light of the 'ReArm' plan announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

On this occasion, Italy will reiterate its willingness to participate in a peacekeeping mission only under a United Nations mandate, as clarified once again by Minister Crosetto.

But the real challenge concerns the structural strengthening of the military capabilities of the individual member states of the European Union. “The Army – explained Masiello – must be ready to regenerate forces and support the efforts required by new crisis and conflict scenarios. We cannot afford to be caught unprepared.”

War in Ukraine

A paradigm shift in European security

The geopolitical situation, marked by instability and uncertainty, requires long-term strategic choices. The Italian decision to recruit 40,000 reservists represents not only a response to internal operational needs but also a contribution to strengthening European collective security.

The Paris summit could mark the beginning of a new era for European defense: more integrated, better funded, and ready to face the challenges of the present and the future.

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