



The Norway Model: Conscription is the Best Investment for the Future

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In an era of geopolitical uncertainty and youth labor market crisis, Norway offers a valuable lesson: military service is not "wasted time," but an elite launching pad. While in Italy the debate on conscription swings between nostalgia for the past and fears of militarism, the Scandinavian system shows that a modern defense can be the greatest engine of civil and professional training in the country.

Not for Everyone: Excellence as a Criterion

Unlike the old mass compulsory conscription, the Norwegian system (*førstegangstjeneste*) is based on a **rigorous selection**. Although conscription has been theoretically universal and gender-neutral since 2016, the army selects only the most motivated and capable.

- **Meritocratic selection:** Out of thousands of young people, only a fraction is chosen based on physical, psychological tests, and, above all, **personal motivation**.

- **Social Status:** Being chosen to serve in Norway is a badge of honor. It is comparable to admission to a prestigious university.

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A Master of Life: Skills for the Job Market

The article from *Forsvarets forum* highlights how military service is a true "maturation process."

The benefits that young people bring to the workforce after 12 months of service are tangible:

- **Hard Skills:** Young people learn advanced first aid, mechanics, logistics, cybersecurity, and the management of complex technologies.
- **Soft Skills:** Discipline, the ability to work in a team under pressure, conflict resolution, and leadership. These are exactly the skills employers struggle to find in recent graduates.
- **Competitive Advantages:** In Norway, those who complete the service receive **extra points** for university admission and a resume that immediately catches the eye of recruiters.

"Folding sheets perfectly every morning or learning to manage camaraderie in extreme conditions is not just military discipline; it's learning to know your limits."

Defense and Democracy: An Indissoluble Bond

In Norway, military service is not seen as preparation for war for its own sake, but as an act of **protecting democracy**. With the changed international scenario (the border with Russia and the crisis in Ukraine), young Norwegians understand that freedom has a cost in terms of personal commitment.

This creates a sense of **national cohesion** and belonging that transcends political divisions, an element that in Italy seems to have weakened over time.

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Why Should Italy Take Example?

Italy faces similar challenges: a high rate of NEET (young people not in education, employment, or training) and a growing gap between citizens and institutions. Here's how the Norwegian model could inspire our future:

A. From "Naja" to "Strategic Service"

Italy does not need to restore the old bureaucratic and punitive conscription. Instead, it should create a Highly Qualified Voluntary Service, open to men and women, offering professional certifications recognized at the European level (mechanics, drones, cybersecurity, civil protection).

B. Concrete Incentives, Not Just Pats on the Back

Like in Norway, the service should guarantee:

1. **Significant university credits.**
2. **Reserved spots** in public competitions (already partially existing, but to be strengthened).
3. **Tax breaks** for companies that hire those who have completed the service.

C. Active Citizenship

A period of service to the State would help mix young people from different social backgrounds and regions, breaking down barriers and creating a leadership class more aware of civic duties.

Conclusion

The Norwegian message is clear: "Do yourself a favor, serve your country." It's not about learning to shoot, but about learning to live, collaborate, and build a solid career. Italy has the opportunity to transform defense into an academy of excellence for new generations. It's time to stop viewing conscription as a dusty memory and start seeing it as an investment in human capital.