



Ambasciata d'Italia
Sofia

November 4, the day on which the First World War ended for Italy with the defeat of the Austrian Hungarian Empire and the entry of our army in Trieste and Trento, is everywhere for the Italian people the day on which we celebrate the completion of the unification of our Country and the role of our Armed Forces - both in the daily life of the Country and in the extraordinary commitments to maintain peace abroad - but also the end of a devastating conflict and the tribute of our military to the achievement of national unity.

“November 4” means for us Italians the victorious conclusion of a very hard effort that for the first time brought together - side by side in the trenches - young people from every region and every social class, and forever cemented with the blood of over six hundred thousand fallen the irreversible choice of a united Italy, finally brought back to its natural borders, completing the project after three independence wars.

In the cemetery where we are today, the remains of the Italian soldiers who died in Sofia between 1916 and 1918 are gathered. Just over 200 soldiers from the so-called Macedonian front and employed in the 35th Infantry Division, sent to the Southern Balkans with 52,000 soldiers, almost all of whom died in captivity towards the end of 1918.

We want to remember them today, together with all the fallen of all wars, a day that celebrates our Armed Forces and the completion of National Unity to which these young people contributed with their lives.

This day makes us understand that peace is not a goal guaranteed forever but a conquest to be defended every day.

“Si vis pacem para bellum”, if you want peace prepare for war, the ancient Romans used to say, a saying often misinterpreted but which in short sums up the will to be ready to defend peace when it is attacked as brutally done in Ukraine, and this is what NATO is doing with its defense and deterrence posture, here in Bulgaria too with the Italian-led Multinational Battlegroup.

First of all, let us pay homage, on this solemn day, to all those who sacrificed their lives for the independence of our country and for the freedom of the Italian people.

We remember them today together with all the fallen of every war, also to underline the commitment made by our Country to safeguard peace with the Constitution of 1946.

Even more so in the dramatic circumstances that we have been experiencing in recent years with Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the threat to our values and commitments and with the conflict in the Middle East and the risks of global escalation. My thoughts today go to the Italian soldiers and those of the other contributing Countries in UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon, to their courage and their mission in these difficult moments and in constant danger.

Peace is built only by peace and we were forced to face a second terrible world conflict to understand that only thanks to a Europe united around a common vision, shared values and concrete projects we could have avoided further conflicts.

Since then the dream of a European Union prosperous and at peace has come true. This is the longest period of peace that Europe has ever experienced in its long history, thanks to the European Union, and we must work to ensure that the European construction can be completed and deepened in collaboration with NATO. It is a difficult work and requires tireless patience, but we diplomats know that diplomacy never works, until it does.

We all firmly believe that the common destiny of our people and of all nations will no longer be entrusted to war, but to the instruments of law, consensus and multilateralism. May the unknown soldier always remind us of this.