



Permanent Mission of Italy  
OSCE

**AMB. STEFANO BALDI**

**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE ITALIAN NATIONAL DAY 2024**

Vienna, 28 May 2024

Distinguished authorities, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

We gather today in this historic building to celebrate the courageous and visionary decision of the Italian People to choose the Republican form of government, and freedom and equality as the founding principles of our democracy. This inspired the adoption of the Constitution in 1947, which is the foundation of the Italian Republic that we know today.

As spelled out in art. 11 of the Constitution, *“Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes”*.

Tragically, after more than two years, the war in Ukraine is still raging. Italy strongly condemns Russia’s ongoing aggression, with the complicity of Belarus.

Russia is grossly violating international law, the UN Charter and the core principles and commitments on which the OSCE is founded, first and foremost those enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. As next year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we reaffirm its enduring relevance and our strong commitment to uphold its principles. The OSCE remains as relevant and necessary as ever.

Dear friends,

on a personal basis let me share with you the special emotions that I feel in the celebration of our National Day this year. This is going to be the last time that I will celebrate it in Vienna: in September, I will end my term of duty here as Permanent Representative to the OSCE and I will return to the Ministry in Rome after eight years abroad.

I have spent nearly four years in this unique city so full of culture, art and music. These years have not been easy with the COVID pandemic at my arrival and with the outbreak of war in 2022. It has been a particularly intense period full of activities and initiatives. It will not be easy to leave all this behind and it will be not easy to leave so many friends behind. But this is the difficult and inevitable part of our diplomatic life and career.

I just referred to many initiatives carried out over the past four years, so let me draw your attention to one enriching today's celebration at Palazzo Metternich. Also this year I have personally produced a special panel exhibition for this Day. It showcases the 20 Regions of Italy, their diversity, their art, their beauty, products and attractions. You will find the panels displayed in different parts of the Residence. I hope this will help you to understand why Italy is an extraordinary country.

Thank you and let's celebrate our National Day!