

**Address by the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti
on the occasion of the call to the Haifa Port of the ITS Etna
Command and Logistic Support Ship of the Italian Navy
September 5, 2019**

Captain Luca Pasquale Esposito,
Commander Liav Shriver (Haifa Naval Base Executive Officer),
Military Attachés,
Cadets of the Italian Naval Academy,
Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bruchim HaBaïm le Kulam!
Benvenuti a tutti!

Welcome all on the Command and Logistic Support Ship of the Italian Navy ITS ETNA. Etna, for the few of you who don't know it, is the name of a volcano that dominates the city of Catania in Sicily.

Captain Esposito, on behalf of the Commander in Chief of the Italian Fleet, Vice Admiral Donato Marzano, who could not be here because of other institutional commitments and I, are honored to host you tonight to celebrate the sixth stopover of the 2019 summer training campaign for the 2nd year Cadets of the Italian Naval Academy.

First of all I would like to highlight the prestigious role of the Italian Naval Academy, based in Livorno that trains and prepares future Navy officers and commanders. Following a long-standing tradition, the Academy oversees the selection, education and training of young officers, infusing them with the Italian Navy's ethical values and highly professional skills, thus preparing them for their future roles and responsibilities as Navy leaders.

Fellow Cadets, I believe that a summer campaign like the one you are experiencing is essential to enhance your personal qualities including motivation, commitment, willpower, self-sacrifice. Embarking on a warship is for you not just a significant training experience but also an opportunity to gain deep insight into navigation and seamanship.

Through this amazing experience, you have the possibility to promote the image and prestige not only of the Italian Navy, but also of the Italian Armed Forces and of Italy as a whole.

Overall, this phase of the training gives you, as future officers, the aim at educating to dialogue and open mindedness towards different cultures, customs and traditions, with a view to promote multinational cooperation.

Naval Diplomacy is part of the bigger Italian Diplomacy and in this sense it helps the integration of our Country in the complex and dynamic international scenario of today, where, in synergy with other Countries, we are asked to face new global challenges.

As a second point, allow me to emphasize also the excellence of the Italian shipbuilding industry, well represented by this Logistic Support Ship, the fifth unit of the Italian Navy to bear this name, but unique of its kind.

Delivered to the Italian Navy in July 1998, she was awarded her battle flag at Catania in November 1998, and was initially utilized as naval replenishment and logistic support ship for fleet operations.

ITS Etna has been designed to fully support long-range missions of a naval squadron, ensuring the transportation and replenishment at sea of fuels, lubricants, ammunition, food supplies and other commodities. The ship has also a fully automated cargo handling systems that can be used for loading/unloading of materials to provide support to populations affected by natural disasters, another field of activities where Italy, and the Italian Navy, is fully committed internationally.

Last but not least, I would like to take this chance to mention the growing friendly relationship between Italy and Israel. One of the proofs of our deep and strategic bilateral cooperation is indeed the military sector, which is today an area where our two countries enjoy a very successful cooperation, both at strategic level, where we work side by side to ensure peace and stability in the Mediterranean basin and at industrial level, where we managed to develop deep bilateral programs such as the one between Leonardo and IAI ELTA that allowed the exchange of very advanced military platforms, such as the Italian training plane M346 and the Israeli mini AWACS "CAEW".

Long life to the friendship between Israel and Italy,
Viva l'Italia! Mazal Tov Israel!