



**MESSAGE FROM
H.R.H. VITTORIO EMANUELE
DUKE OF SAVOY
PRINCE OF NAPLES**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 159TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF ITALY
AND FOR THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

GENEVA - 17 MARCH 2020

Dear Italians,

today marks the 159th anniversary of the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy. On 17 March 1861, during a memorable session at Palazzo Carignano in Turin, the new Parliament promulgated law no. 4761 of the Kingdom of Sardinia which read as follows: "*King Vittorio Emanuele II assumes for himself and his successors the title of King of Italy*".

The long-awaited process of national unification thus experienced its first ideal fulfilment and the fire of the Risorgimento purified centuries of foreign domination in our country. Of course Venice, Trento and Trieste were still missing, but the foundations of a free and modern state, aware of its history and dignity, were thus laid, under the auspices of my House which, in the previous eight centuries, had always stood as a bulwark of independence and freedom in the subalpine region.

All this was possible thanks to the effort of the best Italian youth, with the help of intellectuals such as Alessandro Manzoni and Giuseppe Verdi and with the impetus of a formidable ruling class, symbolised by the genius of the Count of Cavour and by the valour of Giuseppe Garibaldi. Above all, all of it could be accomplished thanks to the active work of my August Ancestor, H.M. King Vittorio Emanuele II - Father of the Fatherland, who was born exactly two hundred years ago, whose example and courage on the battlefields gave us a free Italy from the Alps to Sicily, and to whom our grateful thoughts must now turn.

In these days of suffering, in the terrible tragedy that the COVID-19 epidemic has brought about, my wish is that the anniversary of 17 March 1861 may be the hope for a new Risorgimento, for a resurrection of the spirit of the Fatherland in the highest and noblest sense of the term.



I express my deepest condolences and those of my House to all the people who have suffered the loss of loved ones. My heartfelt and grateful thoughts go to those who are committed to fighting this emergency, in particular to the heroic personnel of the health service and to all the Armed Forces and Police Forces who are under a great deal of stress at this moment.

I am proud to see how the Italian people are reacting to this challenge, and I am even more proud when I see many young professionals, doctors, nurses and volunteers who, in hospital wards and beyond, are showing that Italy is a cohesive and responsible society. I feel the same for the sacrifice of so many families and workers.

The threat we face is great, but even greater is the pride that animates these efforts!

I am equally proud to see the images of the many balconies and windows where the Italian flag is exposed. This shows the whole world our will to resist and our confidence in victory against an invisible and insidious enemy.

Also through the contribution of the Dynastic Orders of my House, we will try to find a way to help support this great collective effort.

I am with You, I am never forgetting You.

Vittorio Emanuele