

# WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF EACH FIREFIGHTER

## THE GOALS OF FABIO DATTILO, CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

LUCA CARI



He has been appointed just in time to celebrate his first Saint Barbara Feast as Chief of the National Fire and Rescue Service. Fabio Dattilo, senior executive since 2009, born in Lamezia Terme but naturalized Paduan citizen, since 1st December 2018 is the new Commander of all firefighters.

He has been nominated by the Council of Ministers on November 20, while he was still dealing with the emergency for bad weather in Veneto. Indeed, acting as Regional Director, he has kept his feet and especially his mind on that territory ravaged by rain and wind, taking immediate decisions and never backing down. A difficult moment that he has faced with commitment and organizational skills, before assuming his new role which places him at the top of the National Fire and Rescue Service.

*First of all, I would like to thank those ones who gave me the honour to lead the most loved Corps in Italy, offering their trust that I hope to reciprocate. A Fire Corps made up of women and men who have been able to arouse a grateful applause, after Genoa disaster, through their work carried out silently and with great professionalism, or the approval and support of Belluno's citizens during the recent disastrous flood, as in many other emergencies occurred in*





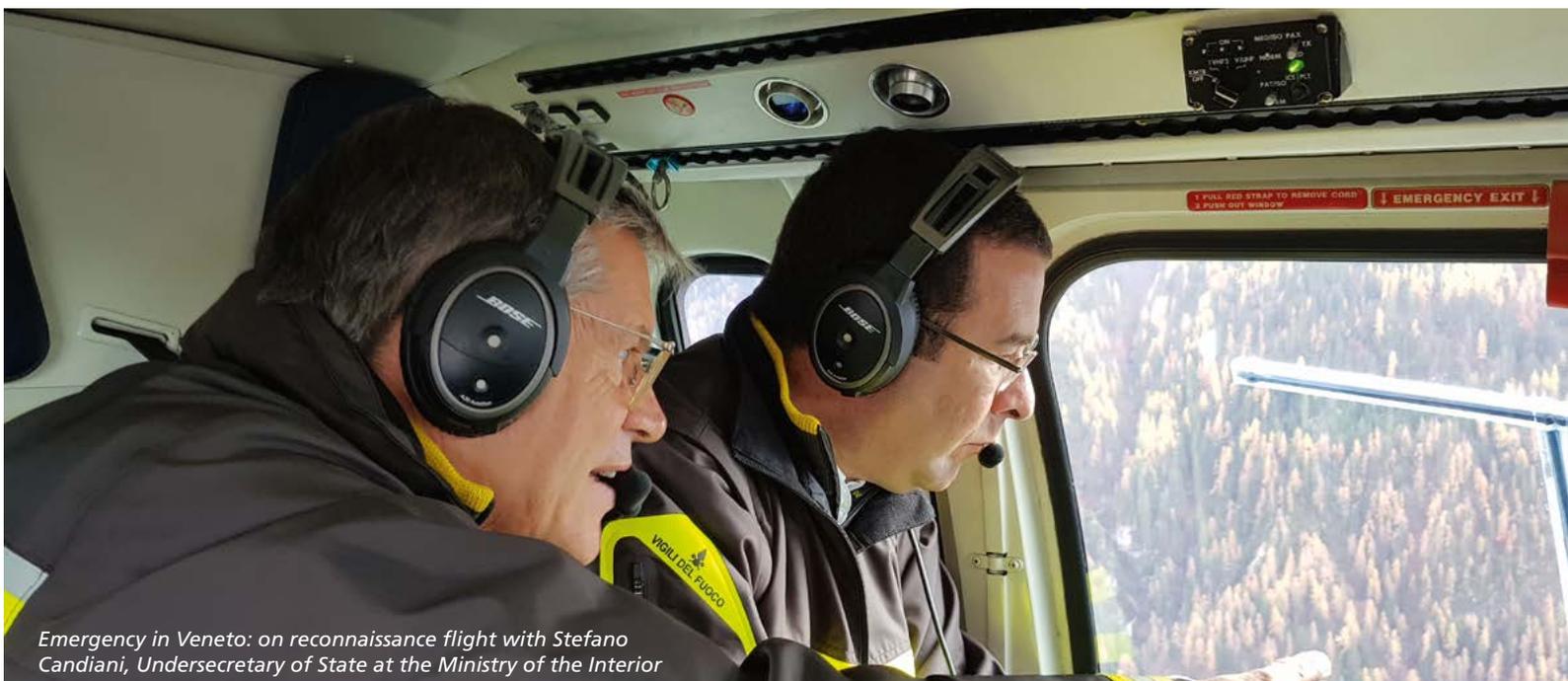
these years, from the 2016 earthquake in central Italy to the event in Rigopiano. I perfectly know, from direct experience, the feelings and adrenalin which support us in those important and delicate moments. Front-line operational personnel often risk their life, before the eyes of a nation mowed down by natural disasters; and that is the most visible part of a complex organization which, behind the scenes, guarantees H24 rescue service to face always different scenarios. We have been described as the fingers of a hand, a potentiality which is fulfilled when the five fingers work together. Similarly, during rescue operations each firefighter, from the operations commander to the team member, is assigned a role and, all together, they respond to the country's emergencies. In this sense, I am going to put a special effort in order that firefighters can perform their tasks even better whilst receiving an adequate recognition for their professionalism.

**Let's talk about civil protection.**

During the last emergency in Veneto, the mixed operations centres (C.O.M.) set up in the most affected areas were presided over by our personnel. In these situations, it is necessary to have the ability of taking off one's uniform to direct a particular orchestra, the system of civil protection, where all instruments have to give the same contribution and "play" with equal dignity.

**You are referring to the new Civil Protection Code which assigns the coordination of rescue operations to the National Fire and Rescue Service in the first phase of an emergency.**

The law charged us with a task of great responsibility, we must not be afraid of executing it. As long as the urgent technical rescue phase lasts, we have the control on the whole system; therefore, it is no longer possible to confuse roles and competences as has often happened in the past in the first moments of an emergency. It is



Emergency in Veneto: on reconnaissance flight with Stefano Candiani, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of the Interior



Emergency in Veneto: on-site inspection with Matteo Salvini, Minister of the Interior, and Luca Zaia, President of Veneto region

*not a crossroads where we have to choose which way to go, because now there is only one way.*

*We are the key component of the civil protection. This means that we are the most important force not only for the number of firefighters involved, but also for the decision-making coordination of the operational phase of emergencies. We will have to fulfill this task also analysing the Municipal Civil Protection Plans, in order to check out if they are just mere paper exercises or concrete provisions to comply with in the event of a disaster.*

**Rescue is the main activity of Firefighters.**

*Without a doubt, but we must not be strict. Efficient rescue, for example, requires good training at every level, in line with the times. We have grown in many sectors, but neglected to develop in some of them and we need to recover.*

**An example?**

*Fire extinction. The world is changing, there are fewer home and business fires. Dump fires are an example of this change, we need to think up new specific prevention and extinguishing techniques and direct dynamically our sector studies at new changes and technical rescue scenarios.*

**A new environmental awareness.**

*Nowadays, this is a topic that requires our attention, I consider it as crucial also to get new competences. Part of the dissolved State*

*Forestry Corps personnel merged with the National Fire and Rescue Service; we should take advantage of their specific expertise, particularly as regards the environment and judicial police fields. In Veneto, as Regional Director, I integrated them in the office in charge of the following tasks: census of waste management plants, check on fire prevention requirements, and follow up on specific judicial police issues. In this way, they have become an added value for us.*

**You were talking about new competences to be acquired.**

*We could be the arm or perhaps the watchful eye on the Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport in order to develop, with the expertise of a Corps as “technical” as ours, the hydrogeological risk assessment. We can think about several actions: for example, monitoring activities aimed at verifying the presence and functioning of local supports for disasters prevention. Besides, fire engineers tasks could be expanded to evaluate the preservation or decay of state facilities for anti-seismic purposes. The technical expertise which is in firefighters’ DNA can become a State resource aimed at prevention: I mean, we carry out post-earthquake technical assessment, but we can also do it before damage occurs, this would result in a remarkable saving on works planning expenses.*

**How can this be achieved?**

*We should manage to drain resources from those Ministries we lend our services to, beyond the budget of the Ministry of the Interior.*



**You also served as Central Director of Fire Prevention, a matter which is dear to you. How do you see its development?**

*We live in a world which demands increasing simplification so that recovery and productivity are not hampered. We have worked hard, but we can achieve that little “delta” that we lack through the use of risk assessment methods in lines with what happens in the world and the elimination of the current double track of new and old rules which, in my opinion, confuses both companies and authorized technicians. We need a professional quality leap which also affects the production sector: thanks to the Fire Prevention Code and the R.T.V. (Vertical Technical Rules, provisions to be applied to specific activities), to set up a business becomes easier and, besides this, the standardization of technical solutions allows the reuse of buildings for different use destinations.*

**How can this target be reached?**

*PTo reach it, we have to be aware that training plays a fundamental role. Our technicians must have a deep knowledge of fire prevention to be able to confront with a professional world which is increasingly competitive. Failing this comparison, it would be difficult for us to perform our inspection tasks.*

**What about the personnel?**

*We have to invest in men, underlining that we need equipment, sufficient personnel and proper economic allocations. In three points: within few years, we should glimpse an alignment with the Police wages; then, we have to redefine the vehicles fleet, taking into account their age and effective use. This requires the integration and training of the whole administrative and IT workforce: professional profiles which nowadays have become indispensable non only to keep rescue efficient through purchases and supply of materials, means and services, but also to manage a complex IT applications system addressed to all fire activities. At last, the most important point, that is the development of the operative personnel, with a professionals percentage which I hope is as high as possible, but to be integrated anyway with volunteers.*

**How do you see this system?**

*I see a strong spine made up of professional firefighters with a project which should be reintroduced: “Italy within twenty minutes”. It means that firefighters should have a widespread distribution throughout the country in order to reach the intervention sites as soon as possible. I also attach great importance to the role of volunteers whom we instruct, train and then include in the fire teams together with the professional firefighters. In this way, they become a resource to be used in certain operations to relieve the professionals’ tasks. In the last emergency occurred in Veneto they have been laudable and I want to thank them for having dedicated their time to help the people in trouble.*

**Which kind of Chief will you be?**

*I intend to listen to the personnel, also through their representatives. The trade unions, in the framework of what is provided for by statutes and contracts, have to give their contribution but I also expect it from the single firefighter. It is by listening to the “base” that we can get aware of the real needs. I have been doing it for a long time now, I’m used to going to the fire station courtyard and talking to the personnel, because on the drawing board we could discuss everything without getting to understand the real needs. On the contrary, I would like to be closer to the personnel and develop, through targets agreed by the “base”, the motivation that drives every fireman to perform his duty, to overcome those moments of detachment which must not weaken the spirit of service that characterizes us. The strategy for the future shall be focused on staff development. The main asset of the National Fire and Rescue Service consists of its men and women: if we are the most loved ones by the Italians, it is because we daily communicate with the people due to the work we do and especially to the empathy we show while doing it. This is an aspect to be faced and improved.*

*Translation by Maria Stella Gaudiello*



**PAROLE DA SALVARE**

*insigne* / in'sinne /

[vc. dotta, lat. *insigne(m)*, da *signum*, il 'segno' che distingue una persona ✨ av. 1420]

**agg.**

1 che si distingue per meriti eccezionali: *scrittore, scienziato, giurista insigne*;

**SIN.** famoso, illustre, ragguardevole

2 di grande pregio e valore: *monumento insigne; chiesa, basilica insigne*

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**ISCRITTO CON YOGURT E GESSO. VA VIA DOPO 15 GIORNI**

## **CERCA LE PAROLE TRA LE VIE**

Parole straniere **intraducibili**, **falsi amici**, **figure retoriche** e **parole da salvare**: ti raccontiamo tante curiosità linguistiche portandole fuori dal vocabolario. Inizia a cercarle lungo le vie di Milano, Torino, Padova e Napoli.

*La tecnica dei graffiti utilizza una miscela completamente naturale. Una volta finita la campagna, i messaggi si cancellano con l'acqua. I residui del graffito che finiscono nel sistema di scarico sono totalmente innocui per l'ambiente.*

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