

25. April 2025: 80 Jahre Befreiung Italiens

(Rede Jan Welsch)

Dear friends,
cari amici,

It is a great honor to address you today on behalf of the City of Konstanz and our Lord Mayor, Uli Burchardt, who sends his warmest greetings and sincere regrets that he is unable to be here in person.

I also bring heartfelt regards from our City Council and from all citizens of Konstanz – your twin town by the shores of Lake Constance. We are proud and grateful to stand with you on this important day – the 80th anniversary of Italy's liberation from fascism.

April 25, 1945 marked a turning point not only for Italy, but for all of Europe. On that day, the courage and sacrifice of the Italian Resistance paved the way for a free and democratic Italy. This date reminds us of the power of people who rise against tyranny – and of the timeless values of freedom, human dignity, and peace.

Today, eighty years later, we remember those who fought for these values. Many of them are no longer with us. It is now our duty to carry their voices forward – to keep the memory alive, and to defend what they stood for.

This task is more important than ever. In a time when peace in Europe can no longer be taken for granted, when hatred and division try once again to take root, our responsibility is clear: to remember, to stand together, and to speak up.

And it is precisely in moments like these that our friendship proves its strength.

Who could have imagined, eighty years ago, that people from Germany and Italy – from Konstanz and Lodi – would come together, not in conflict, but in friendship?

The bond between our cities is living proof of reconciliation. Over the decades, we have built bridges – through art, music, sport, shared meals, and mutual visits. From official exchanges to personal friendships, our connection has grown deep and lasting.

A symbol of this bond proudly sails across Lake Constance every day: the ferry *Lodi*. Since 2010, it has carried your city's name – a daily reminder of how far we have come: from war to peace, from separation to unity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This day is one of remembrance – but also one of commitment.

We remember, so that peace may be preserved.

We remember, so that democracy may be protected.

We remember, so that the dignity of every human being may be upheld.

Let us pass this legacy on to the next generation – not as a burden, but as an invitation to build a better, more peaceful world. Let us do it together – as partners, as friends, as Europeans.

Thank you for your warm hospitality.

Long live the friendship between Lodi and Konstanz.

Long live a peaceful, united Europe.

Grazie di cuore – and thank you very much.