

APPEAL

To the Presidency of the Council of Ministers
To the Minister for Education, University and Research
To the President of the Chamber of Deputies
To the President of the Senate of the Republic

With regards to the motion approved on 14 October 2008 by the Chamber of Deputies [lower house of Parliament] within the context of Law Decree no. 137 of 1 September 2008 [urgent provisions on education and universities], the Signatories of the Appeal express a **categorical opposition to any form of separation between the pupils of the Italian public school on an ethnic basis**, regardless of whether this separation takes place through "insertion classes", or whether it is expressed through any other form of discrimination, even if it is defined as "positive and temporary". In fact, such a motion runs contrary to the Italian school system's culture of integration which, over time, has developed methods, strategies and supports that make it unique on the European and worldwide scene in the fields of training and education.

In the "insertion classes", or however one would like to define them, the grouping together of pupils from different cultural backgrounds and ages, effectively threatens to "segregate" groups of children and adolescents, and moreover, for indefinite periods. How will it be possible to integrate, in a learning environment, pupils who, despite having technically learnt the Italian language, have not experienced anything of the relational-affective aspect that always underlies a learning/teaching process? In fact, acquiring the language is something that occurs within an interpersonal and group relationship that is a key aspect of a class at school.

The firm opposition of the signatories also extends to the possibility, which is also envisaged in the aforementioned motion, of not allowing entry into ordinary classes beyond the 31st of December of every year. It is a choice that runs contrary to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Italian Constitution, which establish the subjective right of minors present on the national territory to attend public school establishments.

A firm "no" is also expressed with regards to the provision of special teaching for foreign pupils, courses of "education for legality and citizenship", considering that

there is no reason to think that foreign children have a greater need for these than Italian ones, as it cannot be presumed that the former are “naturally” more inclined towards deviance than the latter.

While reiterating their firm disapproval of the contents of the motion, **the Signatories propose some useful elements to begin or consolidate full integration in schools**; it is a matter of:

- separating and, if necessary, differentiating interventions in primary and lower middle school from those in upper and secondary schools;
- considering the experimental practices that are already underway (supported among others by local council and regional administrations) in the framework of which the language problem is addressed and resolved, without depriving pupils of a significant learning process;
- monitoring such experiences to spread them more widely, while being careful to respect the different contexts in different settings;
- distributing the presence of foreigners in classes, respecting territoriality so as not to create groups in which the presence of Italians is minority;
- recovering and lending value to the previous schooling of foreign pupils (even though they may not speak Italian, this does not mean that they do not understand or know anything);
- using school disciplines as an instrument for an education to acquire knowledge that takes into account the width and extension of knowledge, and of the interconnections that exist in every field of human activity;
- activating concrete mechanisms to achieve insertion and success in school for all pupils, while creating spaces for educational coexistence, placing the school's entire personnel, particularly teachers, in a position to resort to new professional instruments and to learn, through adequate training, methodological/communicative modes that take all the differences that may exist in classes into account;
- activating laboratories for linguistic support, even outside of school hours, but which may be organically connected to them, in co-operation with specialised non-school bodies and structures;
- making the necessary financial resources available to schools to enable them to implement such programmes.

[unofficial translation by Statewatch]

To adhere to this Appeal, send an e-mail to: roma@cidisonlus.org
detailing your name, surname and the body to which you belong.

First signatories: Cidis Onlus

Glob Act

Alisei Coop

Ci.Sei.

Credito Senza Confini

Girasole

Adhesions:

ASGI Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione

ARCI Ragazzi

CIR Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati

**Azienda ospedaliera San Camillo Forlanini per la sanità e la cooperazione
internazionale**

Associazione Equoconsumo Roma

CIES

AUCI associazione universitaria per la cooperazione internazionale

Celio Azzurro

OPPI Milano

CISS ONG Cooperazione Internazionale Sud-Sud

La Risposta Onlus

Milano Film Festival

Associazione Lend- Lingua e nuova didattica

Agorà Onlus

Opera Nomadi - Padova

Associazione Per La Scuola della Repubblica

Sinnos Onlus

Donne in Nero - Padova

CNCA Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza

Rete per la Partecipazione

Griot