

Dear friends,

First of all I am sorry for having anticipated my speech which was programmed for the end of this Plenary. I am afraid duties pertaining to my office force me to leave in advance. As Coordinator of the Italian ITF Delegation's activity during our Chairmanship, I have followed closely both the organisation of this Plenary and the international debate on the history and teaching of the Shoah, with the connected problem of resurgent anti-Semitism.

It is the first time, however, that I have the opportunity to participate in one of your international meetings. I must say that I feel privileged to have listened to the illustrious speakers who have preceded me. I am also happy to know that Denmark's and Latvia's applications have been accepted and that Belgium and Switzerland have presented their statements about their future admittance, with the consequence that the ITF family will reach the number of 18 member countries.

Having to leave so early, I regret I won't have the possibility to listen to the reports of the Working Groups and especially to the report of the Working Group on "Teaching the Shoah in Multicultural Societies", a topic that is so vital to all of us, who are confronted with the intricacies, complexities and even cruelty of contemporary society.

I intend as usual to keep in touch with my collaborators in the Italian Delegation to know the content of these reports, in order to apply your suggestions and proposals to the Italian education system. The International Task Force's thinking and endeavour have always influenced our educational choices and the Stockholm Declaration is a milestone in our pedagogical practice.

You can be sure that the Guidelines contained in the "How" Document, elaborated by the Educational Working Group, will be taken into due consideration and made available to all teachers in many ways and through all information channels.

As you have noticed, teachers training on the Shoah has been one of our main fields of action. I am proud to say that our efforts will acquire from now on new strength and an international dimension. We have tried to raise awareness of the Shoah and the risks of intolerance, anti-Semitism and all sorts of prejudices in every generation, starting from the youngest.

At our primary school, teachers are very sensitive to the problem and try to convey the crude facts of the Shoah, to the young minds and sensibilities in the most appropriate ways. Such awareness grows with age. At our secondary school, teachers on this basis build further information and knowledge. Sometimes parents and adults are made aware of the Shoah through their children. I consider it a great success.

The Italian Universities are more and more involved in this awareness process and will take advantage of the efforts and suggestions made by your Academic Working Group.

In the same way, the proposals made by the Memorials Working Group will help our teachers in the organization of their pupils' visits to the memorial sites in Italy and abroad.

I am confident that the Information Working Group will help each member state to keep up to date with the developments of scholarly and pedagogical research in all other countries.

The Shoah has inspired many artists and writers all over the world. My country can boast, above all, PRIMO LEVI's literary masterpieces, which are esteemed worldwide.

That is the main reason why we have decided to enrich our organization of this Plenary Assembly with an International Seminary on Primo Levi.

Tomorrow, in the room of the Refettorio of the Chamber of Deputies I will open this very Seminar and will listen with great interest to the lectures made by the authorities on the subject.

I hope to see most of you on that occasion.

As a testimonial, Primo Levi has passed way, but as works of art, his writings defy the passing of time and are an eternal testimony to the dark past.

As long as literature can speak, there is room for thought.

Thank you for listening. To those of you who cannot participate in the Primo Levi Seminar, I wish you a safe journey home. I hope to see you all in Trieste, in Autumn.

Valentina Aprea