

The Right Honourable Valentina Aprea's Words of Greeting to the ITF General Assembly (Triest)

Dear Friends,

I'm so sorry that duties related to my position as Parliamentarian and under Secretary of State for Education force me to stay in Rome today.

I still remember the pleasure I felt when we met at the first ITF General Assembly last June in Rome. I have been favourably impressed by the competence and the total dedication to the theme shown by all the delegations.

I'm pleased to register that other countries are now joining the 18 former members, which is the evidence that civil society all over the world is increasing its own engagement.

Our country has been honoured by this Chairmanship. We have tried to be as efficient as possible at the organization level. At the same time, we have taken the opportunity to improve the way the Ministry of Education University and Research is tackling the problem of teaching the Shoah at all levels of the Educational System and in the Universities.

The ITF's ideological and pedagogical contribution has imbued all our activity and will be a constant point of reference. As a matter of fact, the relevant ITF documents (How, What, Why) has been duly translated into Italian and disseminated in many ways all over the country.

We are monitoring what Italian schools have been doing with regard to the Shoah, and we can now safely say that the vast majority of them devote some time to the topic. Nay, some have developed very interesting and creative projects. As a matter of fact, the participation of primary and secondary classes to the national competition for the 27th January, the Holocaust Remembrance Day, is ever increasing. The quality of the material produced by individual classes is more and more refined, either the attitude is historical or emotional, or artistic, or literary, and the approach is traditional or supported by the new technologies.

As you know our country has become a multicultural society with all the complexities entailed by the coexistence of people with different backgrounds and plurality of allegiances.

An Inter-ministerial Committee has been set up to fight all sorts of discrimination and anti-Semitism. The Ministry of Education is represented by her-own delegate. By the way, by a member of the Italian ITF Delegation. This helps to link the workings of the two Institutions.

The multicultural nature of our present society and the difficulties of international policy have created stereotypes that may determine a wrong and mislead attitude towards the teaching / learning of the Shoah in multicultural classrooms. That is the reason why the ITF Subcommittee dealing with the teaching of the Shoah to the children of immigrants is trying to provide teachers with equilibrated and well informed answers to these emerging problems.

Dear colleagues and friends, you can rely on my personal engagement and can be sure that on behalf of the Italian Government the Italian Delegation even after the passover of the Chair to Poland, whose Delegation I here publicly welcome and greet, will continue giving its own support and contribution to the ITF's ideals and activities.

I wish you all a safe return home and I hope that you will remember with pleasure this Italian experience.

Yours
Valentina Aprea.