

To the Embassy of Italy,

We, Vade Mecum, are a dedicated team of young campaigners, along with others, who undertook the responsibility to conduct demonstrations against the closure of the deaf schools in Norway. We were deeply disappointed when we heard of recent developments regarding the recognition of the Italian Sign Language in the Italian Senate in which the Italian Senate proposed a law that will recognize Italian sign language as “Language of Mime and Gesture” instead of a sign language.

Perhaps you are not aware that the United Nations has recognized the deaf as a linguistic minority. This law clearly rejects all the principles and goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified also by Italy on 15 May 2009.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations recognizes the linguistic human rights of deaf individuals:

- Article 21, Item E:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice, as defined in article 2 of the present Convention, including by:

(e) Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.

- Article 24, Number 3, Item B:

States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

(b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

- Article 30, Number 4:

Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.

The above conclusively demonstrates the UN does recognize deaf people's linguistic minority status. Therefore, according to the Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

- Article 1, Number 1:

States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

- Article 2, number 1:

Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.

In the letter written by F.I.A.D.D.A. Toscana onlus: Famiglie Italiane Associate per la Difesa dei Diritti degli Audiolesi, they stated many misinformed and fabricated assumptions. We will state one of them here:

- “In this situation the Italian today decided to focus on and invest in the future of a language of date and will disappear naturally, promoting the use and even requires, with the coaching of teachers and educators in LIS schools to children from first order, that is just at an age where more and the necessity of an important health intervention and speech therapy, and then putting at risk the results. “

An abundance of research on sign language has repeatedly shown sign language plays an extraordinary role in the increased cognitive, language, academic, and social development in both deaf and hearing children. The researches indicate that by promoting sign language in educational environments, the numbers of academic achievement in children will increase.

If this proposal becomes law, and “Language of Mime and Gesture” is recognized, there will be a drastic impact on current rights, education and language accessibility for deaf Italians and the Italian Deaf community. Rather, in recognizing Italian sign language, the Italian government will be promoting acceptance of a healthy diversity in society.

We sincerely hope you join us in taking a stand and making a difference. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Vade Mecum - [www.viskalseire.com](http://www.viskalseire.com)

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