

Gruppo di Lavoro
per la Convenzione
sui Diritti dell'Infanzia
e dell'Adolescenza

SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION

To the UNITED NATIONS

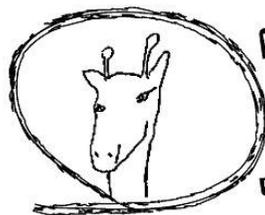
COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Eightieth session
13 February- 9 March 2012

IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONSIDERATION OF
THE SIXTEENTH -EIGHTEENTH CONSOLIDATED PERIODIC REPORTS OF

ITALY

Rome, March 2012



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Brief presentation

The Gruppo di Lavoro per la Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza¹ (Italian Working Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child) is a network open to any association, NGO, cooperative, foundation and any other stakeholder from the third sector dealing with the promotion and protection of children's rights in Italy.

The Gruppo di Lavoro per la Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza was established in December 2000 with the main aim of drafting a report on the implementation of the CRC in Italy, supplementary to the one issued by the Italian Government, to be submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC Committee) at the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Purpose: to promote the effective implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Italy.

Mandate: to guarantee an independent, permanent and up-to-date monitoring system on CRC implementation, which all members agree upon, and to implement potential related advocacy actions.

Throughout this brief document, the Italian NGO Group for the CRC (Gruppo CRC) wishes to highlight the main issues regarding the discrimination of children in Italy.

The situation of children rights in Italy was examined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Children on 2011, 58th Session. The Italian NGO Group sent to the UN Committee the 2nd Supplementary Report (realized in 2009) and translated and updated into English in 2010. A delegation of the Italian NGO Group has attended the pre-session on June 2011 and has presented a brief document with the aim to provide an update on some aspects that have been changing from 2009.

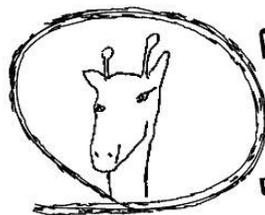
This document collected the main aspect regarding discrimination of children in Italy contained into the 2nd Supplementary Report and the follow-up document present by the Italian NGO Group for the pre-session.

Introduction

Although the principle of non-discrimination is formally and extensively recognized in Italian legal system, both in the Constitution and in legislation, its actual implementation is less consistent.

The Italian Government has undertaken the commitment to respect the rights enshrined also in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and guarantee them to every child living under its jurisdiction, «without any distinction and regardless of any consideration of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion of the child or of the child's parents or legal representatives, or their national, ethnic or social origin, financial situation, condition of being incapacitated, birth or any other circumstance». The evidence provided throughout the 2nd Supplementary Report on CRC in Italy,

¹ www.gruppocrc.net



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presented during the pre-session on the Committee on the Rights of the Child on June 2011, demonstrates that yet there are still several groups of children who suffer extreme discrimination, in particular, foreigners and gypsies.

A significant minority of children and adolescents in Italy experience discrimination and are denied appropriate respect for their rights.

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 25 (non - discrimination)

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a)Expediently take all measures necessary to ensure the effective elimination of any form of discrimination of children of Roma origin in particular in the education system and the provision of essential services, in line with recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/ITA/CO/15, par. 20);
- (b)Effectively adopt a comprehensive national action plan on the prevention of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, taking into full account all the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action, with particular emphasis on Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Child;
- (c)Strengthen the mandate of the National Office of Racial Discrimination, in particular in the systematic collection of data on racist and xenophobic acts against children;
- (d)Incorporate the aggravating circumstances of hate motivation into article 61 of the Criminal Code.

Gruppo CRC recommends that the Italian Government should allocate sufficient economic resources to guarantee that the principle of non-discrimination is implemented, above all with regard to children and adolescents from the most vulnerable groups.

Children born out of wedlock

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 25 (e)

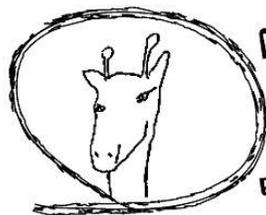
The UN Committee recommends to take appropriate legislative measures to eliminate any remaining discrimination between children born in marriage and children born outside marriage.

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 25 (f)

The Committee recommends that the State party:

Expedite the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Legal Status of Children Born out of Wedlock.

Decisions relating to the care and maintenance of children born out of wedlock come under the jurisdiction of juvenile courts, while for children born into marriage the same matters are dealt with by the ordinary courts. Moreover, there is still a difference in treatment in matters of inheritance and the relations between a child born out of wedlock and the eventual legitimate family of the parent . This situation refers of the diversity of legal treatment between children born into marriage and children born out of wedlock which still persists in our system, while different jurisdictions, different procedures, even geographically



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separate Courts are still there, despite the many projects introduced in the Parliament to solve these differences.

Minors in nuclear families not legally resident in Italy

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 69 (a)

The Committee recommends that the State party:

Review the Immigration Law with a view to ensure migrant children equal rights to education, health and other social services, in line with the Constitutional Court ruling of July 2010.

After it was made a crime to enter Italy and reside there illegally, all public officials and persons providing a public service must report to the authorities any migrant whose situation presents irregularities (Law 94/2009). It is believed that as a result of this law, for fear of being identified as irregular migrants and therefore expelled, parents who are irregularly resident in Italy avoid using public services, such as education and health, and local government offices.

The situation of migrant children in families not legally resident in Italy has also significantly worsened in the last 2 years. According to the changes introduced by law n° 94/09, a residence permit is in general required to access public services (except for urgent or essential health care and compulsory schooling): as a consequence, the access to kindergarten, secondary school and vocational training, as well as to shelter and social services, have become much more difficult for children accompanied by not legally resident parents. This provision has significantly increased the number of migrants that avoid any contact with public services (including schools, social services, often also health services) for fear of detection and expulsion, thus preventing children from enjoying their fundamental rights.

Gruppo CRC recommends that the Italian Government should:

1. [...] introduce measures aimed at removing the obstacles that prevent children whose families do not have a residence permit from enjoying their fundamental rights, as recognised by the Italian Constitution and the CRC.

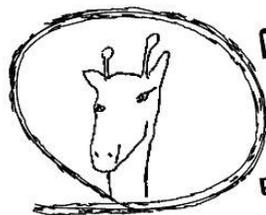
Foreign minors with regard to access to health care

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 48 (e)

The Committee recommends that the State party:

Develop and implement an information and awareness raising campaign on the right to health care of all children, including those of foreign origin, targeting in particular health care facilities which are accessed by foreign communities. This should include addressing the higher rates of still-births and perinatal mortality among foreign mothers.

A series of health problems common to many foreign minors depend on their lack of genuine access to prevention and primary health care, and in particular on the delays with which they turn to health care structures and the very limited use they make of primary care pediatricians, especially after the entry into force of Law 94/2009. There are no national figures on the use that legally resident foreign families make of primary care pediatricians, though some indications are provided by local studies. What emerges is that a disproportionate number of foreign minors are treated in casualty departments or hospitalized.



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The newborn children of immigrant parents are more likely to be born prematurely and weigh less than Italian newborn children. Stillbirths and perinatal mortality are also higher than among the Italian population. This data reveals how many immigrant women, for economic or cultural reasons or because of problems in gaining access to health care, do not undergo the necessary clinical, blood and ultrasound tests before becoming pregnant or during pregnancy.

Some studies have shown that adolescent immigrants are more likely to be affected by psychosomatic symptoms and to be less satisfied with their health and lives in general than their Italian counterparts. The differences recorded in relation to their symptoms and perceived state of health are presumably due to socio-economic inequalities, the lack of social integration and victimization.

Gruppo CRC recommends that the Italian Government should:

1. Create efficient communications networks between all those involved in order to provide immediate information on the right to health care of immigrants and the guaranteed levels of support, ensure that the resources allocated and services available for foreign children truly meet their needs and priorities, contribute to promoting basic healthcare, and assess quality and costs;
2. Do everything possible to ensure that "Prevention plans" operating at a national and regional level also reach children of foreign origin, including those children whose parents are not regularly resident;
3. Improve knowledge of the specific health needs of immigrant children and how to record these, paying particular attention to mother and child health care, by identifying new operational ways of meeting the hidden, but emerging demand for health care from immigrant children and their families, and ensure that the National Health Service meets these needs

Discrimination against foreign minors with regard to access to education

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 61 (f)

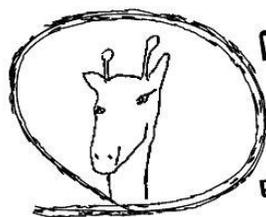
The Committee recommends that the State party:

Develop programs to improve integration of foreigners and minority children in schools.

The number of students of non-Italian citizenship enrolled in Italian schools has increased considerably over the last few years. There were 574,133 in the 2008/2009 school year. The percentage of schools with non-Italian students is also increasing (71.3% in 2007/2008). The highest percentage of non-Italian students is to be found in primary schools (7.7%), while geographically the north-east of Italy has the highest percentage of non-Italian students (10.3% of the total).

With regard to their country of origin, Romania ranks first with 92,734 students (16.2% of the total), 35.2% more than in the previous school year, followed by Albania (85,195, equivalent to 14.84% of the total) and Morocco (76,217, equivalent to 13.28%). The students from these three countries account for 44.27% of all non-Italian students in Italian schools.

During the 2007/2008 school year, a record was kept for the first time of the number of these students who were born in Italy, the so-called "second generation" students, and the number of non-Italian students enrolling for the first time in the Italian school system. From an analysis of this data it emerges that students born in Italy without Italian citizenship account for 34.7% of all non-Italian students, with the highest percentages in nurseries and primary schools. Moreover, the number of foreign students with



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disabilities amounted to 2% of all non-Italian students.

As a result of the increase in the number of non-Italian students, a number of policies have been adopted since 1999 to promote their integration in school. In February 2006, the guidelines for the admission and integration of foreign students were approved. Then, in December 2006, the Observatory for the integration of foreign students and intercultural education was set up, publishing its own guidelines for the integration of foreign students in October 2007.

Another problem that has arisen is the concentration of foreign students in classes in certain geographical areas and certain types of schools. The most recent political initiatives do not, therefore, seem to have addressed the problem of integration as they have merely sought to deal with the problem of the numbers of foreign children. Finally, there is the problem of the school attendance of non-Italian students due to problems resulting from their knowledge of the Italian language and the difficulties of social integration. It would be useful here to involve parents and families, both Italian and non-Italian, and provide information and guidance.

The Italian NGO Group for the CRC actually express our concern about the introduction for school year 2010/2011 of the **maximum limit of 30% of children with non-Italian nationality** in each class of any level (including kindergarten), following the provisions of Ministerial Circular CM No. 28/1/2010 of the Directorate General for the school system for school autonomy and the Ministry of Education.

Gruppo CRC, therefore, recommends that the Italian Government should:

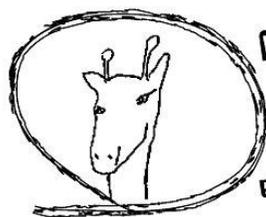
1. Guarantee and protect interculturality in the learning process by providing information and guidance aimed at assisting the involvement of parents and families, both Italian and non-Italian, providing staff with specific training and making use of the professional resources of non-Italians.
2. Reactivate the Observatory for the integration of foreign students and intercultural education created in December 2006.

Children with disabilities

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 46

The Committee recommends that the State party review existing policies and programs to ensure a rights based approach in relation to children with disabilities and consider information and training initiatives to ensure that relevant Government officials and community at large are sensitized in this respect. [...] The Committee also recommends that the State party provide sufficient numbers of specialist teachers to all schools so that all children with disabilities can enjoy access to high quality inclusive education. The Committee encourages the State Party to take into account the Committee's general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities in this respect.

Little has changed during the last years with regard to the policies favoring children with disabilities and no significant changes have been made to pre-2003 national and regional legislation. The framework law on disability (Law 104/1992) has not been amended, despite the new cultural and scientific paradigms promoted by the WHO since 2001, which have completely overturned the whole concept of disability. There are two basic age groups in which children are more vulnerable because of their disabilities: 0-5 and 14-18 years of age. The Government Report struggles to understand that social inclusion should be the goal of national policies favoring children and adolescents. On the few occasions the Report refers to



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children with disabilities, the cultural and social approach is still based on the idea of a handicap. Although the mentioning in the Government Report of “activities to promote the use of the ICF” (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) “as part of the assessment of disability related to access to benefits and assistance” is greatly welcomed, it was not possible to obtain further information on this. The Government is urged to adopt an inclusive approach based on the new cultural and social paradigms.

Education of students with disabilities

In practice, students with disabilities are isolated from their group-classes and placed in special areas where they receive individual attention, thereby creating what are in fact “special classes”. There are teachers who have no special training and find it difficult to deal with classes in which there are one or two students with disabilities and the process of inclusion tends to be passed on to the support teachers. Guided visits, educational visits, moments of play and recreation, and cultural activities may all “paradoxically” become situations of exclusion, above all for students with severe disabilities.

The "Guidelines on integrating education of students with disabilities", adopted by the Ministry of Education on August 5th 2009, aimed to give consistency to Italian legislation on this matter. However, no proper financial planning to the implementation of the principles and commitments expressed in the document has been finalized. Given the numerous complaints against the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Constitutional Court delivered the sentence no 80/2010 in which it is declared "unlawful – as from the Constitution the rules that set a ceiling on the number of staff as assistant teachers, and the banning to undertake derogation" .

Gruppo CRC, therefore, recommends that the Italian Government should:

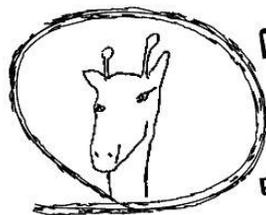
1. Introduce specialized training, also as part of lifelong learning, for ordinary school teachers and all other relevant members of staff (autonomy, communication and personal hygiene assistance, and staff responsible for motor education).
2. Draw up partnership program agreements with the full involvement of families, schools and local services.

Discrimination against poor children

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 58

The Committee urges the State party to intensify its efforts to address and eradicate poverty and inequality, especially of children, and:

- (a) To consider systematic reform of current policies and programs to effectively address child poverty in a sustainable manner, using a multidisciplinary approach considering social, cultural, geographic determinants of poverty reduction;
- (b) To evaluate the result of current programs on poverty alleviation and ensure that subsequent policies and plans contain relevant indicators and a monitoring framework;
- (c) To increase participation of women in the labor market and promote flexible working arrangements for both parents, including by increasing the provision of childcare;
- (d) To increase and sustain income support to low-income families with children and ensure that such support is extended to families of foreign origin.



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1.756.000 Children in Italy live in poverty. They are the 17% of the children resident in Italy and the 22,5% of the total of poor in Italy. 72% of Italian children classified as poor live in southern Italy. The categories which are more at risk are: large families in south Italy, families with 2 children and only one parent employed, single parents, and immigrant families with children. More than a third of the numerous families in southern Italy are classified as poor (37.5% of families with five or more members), and one in two families with three or more children are also classified as poor (48.9%). Italy is geographically divided by a high level of inequality, a problem that needs to be tackled through serious policies aimed at combating child poverty. These policies should combine job creation schemes, income support schemes and other social welfare services.

Italy now has the sixth largest gap between rich and poor of all 30 OECD countries. Not only is the poverty “rate” one of the highest in Europe, but so is the “degree” of this poverty, with a coefficient of 24. Child poverty has fallen quite rapidly, from 19% in the mid 1990s to 15% in 2005, but is still above the OECD average of 12%.

Gruppo CRC recommends that the Italian Government should:

1. Introduce indicators that take into account the multidimensional nature of child poverty, and develops and promotes a multidimensional approach to the study of child poverty, focusing on the rights of children and adolescents.
2. Promote legislation and social expenditure of a more continuous nature (not one-off measures) that help to create a more ‘global’ project to assist children (and their nuclear families), by coordinating and reorganizing existing services so as to provide efficient services that truly assist these children and their families and thereby favor a “child-based” economic and social form of development.
3. Carry out a study aimed at introducing minimum standards at a national level for the reduction of child poverty and monitor the action taken to see whether the goals are achieved.

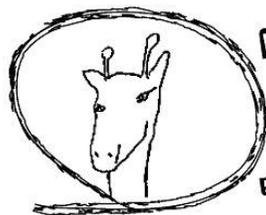
Adoption of suitable measures to prevent and eliminate regional inequalities

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 9 (b)

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (b) Develop effective mechanisms to ensure a consistent application of the Convention in all regions through strengthening the coordination between national and regional levels and adopt national standards such as the essential levels for provision of social services.

With regards to the UN Committee’s recommendation about the process of devolution of the State functions, that should help eliminate inequality among children and is a result of welfare system of the region in which they live, the Italian NGO Group for the CRC underlined the absence of the Basic Essential Levels indicators of Social Services as required in law 328/00 (LIVEAS). In these last two years (2009-2011) the development of the devolution process has been accelerated with law 42/09, that implements the change of the Constitution –and has designed a federal reform of the State; since 2009 the devolution to the Local Administrations and partially to the Regions was initiated by different laws issued in a sequence by the Parliament. The “ basic essential levels” regarding law 328/00 were overcome by the



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“basic level of benefits relating to civil and social entitlements to be guaranteed throughout the national territory” (LEP) in the Art. 117 paragraph m) of the Constitution (note that the word “entitlements” is translated in the Constitution from the Italian word that means “rights”). At the moment, no institution is actually defining the previous LIVEAS, considering that the “essential levels of benefits” are more general and refer to the whole devolution process. The main problem is that actually only a “technical studying group” within the Conference of the Regions is working about the said “essential/basic levels” and they haven’t started with the definition of “social and civil entitlements” (this because the Constitution gives to the National level of the State the duty of their definition), as required from the Constitution, but with a first evaluation of the similar services and their associated costs, as they are considered in various Regions; all the debate, also the public debate, is focalized on “standards costs” and “standards needs”. With the exclusion of few NGO’s networks that are working in this direction no process is in place to define the social and civil entitlements, neither on the mentioned discriminations among the Regions.

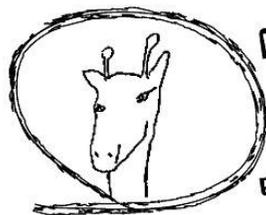
Reading through the yearly Financial and Economic Document (Legge Finanziaria) approved by the Parliament in April 2011, in the chapter devoted to the expected “new” welfare system there is no mention to the way in which social measures and services (within the basic benefits that the Constitution ask the State to define) should be financed, but it is said that families are expected to be able to buy directly the services they need from the social market, thanks to a reduction of taxation. On this point it has to be said that in Italy not all families are entitled with the same rights, because – about the tax system – there are differences between married and unmarried couples; so, although not directly, there is a discrimination for children born out of wedlock.

Discrimination against juvenile prisoners

No law has yet been passed on the juvenile prison system. The Department of Juvenile Justice (DGM) had begun a reform, as highlighted in the Government Report, but the proposed reform has not yet been discussed in Parliament and Gruppo CRC is concerned that this reform will not be completed.

Gruppo CRC is also concerned about proposals to incorporate the DGM into other sectors of the Ministry of Justice. It is necessary to improve the training offered to minors while they are in Juvenile Correctional Institutions (IPM). The training and education offered by the IPM differ from institution to institution and from year to year, depending on the economic resources made available by local and national government agencies.

Foreign minors are more likely than Italian minors to have criminal action taken against them, are convicted more frequently, are held in pre-trial custody for longer periods, and are less likely to receive alternative measures to custodial sentences, be pardoned or placed on pre-trial probation. This fact is also highlighted in the Government Report, where, however, they exclude the possibility of discrimination, failing to compare the data relating to the juvenile penal system to the data relating to the number of foreign minors in Italy. Almost all the people being held in the IPM in central and northern Italy are foreigners. At a national level, in 2008, the percentage of foreign minors present on a daily basis in the IPM had fallen to below the levels of the early 2000s, a drop confirmed by the data for 2009, which is a comforting development. It does not, however, alter the fact that foreign minors are overrepresented in the IPM. The number of minors who are placed in communities has also fortunately increased, but this measure is still applied less frequently in the case of foreign minors than Italians. Of the 2,188 minors who were placed in communities in 2008, 1,364 were Italians (non-Sinti), 164 were classified as “nomads” and 664 were “non-nomad foreigners”. **Roma and Sinti children** are also overrepresented in the statistics



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concerning detention, above all among girls, even though there is little reliable data on these minors as they are recorded on the basis of their different nationalities.

We conclude, with the data concerning the children referred to the Social Services Offices for Children (USSM) by the courts. Between 2002 and 2007, almost 30% of were non-Italians and 23% of minors subsequently dealt with by these services were non-Italians.

Migrant children (above all unaccompanied minors), Roma, Sinti and Italians from the deprived areas of large cities in southern Italy, where unemployment is high and organized crime rife, are over-represented in Italy's juvenile correctional institutions (IPM). Foreign minors, in particular, are more likely than Italian minors to have criminal action taken against them, they are convicted more frequently, they are held in pre-trial custody for longer periods, and they are less likely to receive alternative measures to custodial sentences, be pardoned or placed on pre-trial probation, even though the situation with regard to pre-trial probation and being placed in a community is improving. Roma and Sinti minors are also over-represented in the statistics concerning juvenile penal institutions, above all among girls, even though there is little reliable data on these minors as records are based on their nationalities.

Gruppo CRC recommends, in particular, that the current Italian Government should:

1. Pass a law on the juvenile prison system, aimed at reducing the use of detention and changing the role and modus operandi of the IPM.
2. Allocate additional financial resources and skilled human resources to the juvenile prison system, social services and communities.
3. Adopt specific policies and action plans aimed at eliminating the discrimination against foreign children, Roma children and children from the south of Italy.

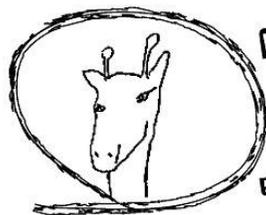
Discrimination against children belonging to minority groups

CRC/C/ITA/CO/3-4 24, paragraph 80

The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) Discontinue the state of emergency in relation to settlements of nomad communities and Ordinances of 30 May 2008;
- (b) Develop and adopt, with the participation of affected communities, a national plan of action for the genuine social integration of the Roma in Italian society, taking due consideration of the vulnerable situation of Roma children in particular in relation to health and education;
- (c) Allocate adequate human, technical and financial resources to ensure sustainable improvement in the socio-economic conditions of Roma children
- (d) Adopt measures to address harmful practices such as early marriage;
- (e) Develop relevant guidelines and provide training for government officials to enhance understanding of Roma culture and prevent discriminatory and stereotypical perception of Roma children;
- (f) Ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The difficult social situation of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti children, already remarked upon by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations in 2003, continues. The political choices made in the last few years have not reduced their social exclusion or the discrimination against



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them. Italy is still the country of the so-called “**nomad camps**”, which contribute to the social and geographical exclusion of the communities that live in these camps.

There are still social difficulties with regard to the situation of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti children and adolescents, both Italians and non-Italians above all in the areas of health, social welfare, education and housing. Hate speech is still used in public speeches and there continue to be episodes of racism against the Roma. The situation of the Roma and Sinti communities is tackled using exceptional measures.

Roma children have suffered particularly serious rights violations and discrimination in the last 2 years. A large number of Roma families living in “nomad camps” have been evicted, especially in Rome (380 forced evictions carried out from August 2009 to May 2011) and in Milan (500 evictions from 2007 to April 2011), usually without providing adequate alternative solutions, without giving them warning nor the possibility to appeal, and illegally destroying their properties. Some families have been evicted tens of times . Evictions have hindered children’s regular school attendance, worsened their living conditions and further marginalized these families.

In Rome 7.177 people living in camps have been officially registered, but estimates are much higher (12-15.000). The “Piano Nomadi” launched by Rome Municipality and Prefecture in 2009 foresees the transfer of 6.000 Roma people to segregated camps (called “villages”), some outside the city, thus even more isolated, and very large (up to 900 people). It is not clear what the fate of those families excluded from the “villages” will be .

As a consequence of the highly substandard living conditions in “nomad camps”, Roma children’s health and even life are threatened. In 2010-2011 in Rome, 5 Roma children died because their shacks burnt in fires, that are very frequent in camps.

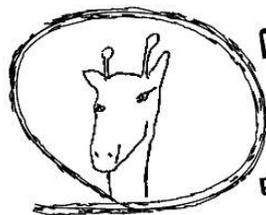
In some cases Police authorities and social services, instead of providing adequate support to Roma families living in unauthorized camps, threatened them to report their children to the Judge competent for separations and adoptions, if they kept living in such conditions .

Cases have also been reported where migrant and Roma children have been separated from their parents against the best interests of the child, being such separations primarily based on the family’s economic and social condition or on cultural bias and misunderstandings (not only there is a serious lack of cultural mediators, but sometimes the child and the parents are even forced to speak Italian in the proceedings where authorities assess their relationship).

Finally, blatantly discriminatory decisions against Roma children have been taken by Italian authorities. For example, in 2009 the Juvenile Court in Naples refused an alternative measure to detention to a Roma child, declaring that Roma culture per se leads to non respecting rules , while in 2010 the Milan Municipality and the Ministry of Interior stopped the assignment of public housing to Roma families just on the basis of their ethnic origin .

With regard to the **education of Roma and Sinti children**, the problems of attendance and early school leaving have not been resolved, especially when they are caused by objective difficulties linked to the precarious material and housing conditions of the Roma and Sinti. They are also the result of social exclusion and prejudice, which can be seen from the education they receive. The situation is not helped by inadequate policies of integration at both a national and local level. It should be noted, above all, that there are no policies aimed at educating people about the positive values of the Roma and Sinti cultures, with the involvement of suitably trained cultural mediators.

As far as the **health** of these people is concerned, it is the children in particular who contract diseases as a result of the conditions in which many Roma and Sinti families live. The situation becomes even more



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serious when their camps are near polluted areas, where a worrying rise has been recorded in tumours and congenital malformations. Emphasis must also be placed on communicable diseases and the need to vaccinate the children who live in the camps.

The safeguarding of the rights of foreign Roma children is often hindered by the **legal status** of the children and their parents. Many Roma foreigners are unable to obtain a residence permit because they fail to meet the current legal requirements, such as having a passport, a regular job and a home that meets specific parameters. The situation of children born in Italy to foreign parents is also precarious as they do not acquire Italian citizenship through being born in the country.

The law allows foreign minors born in Italy to obtain **Italian citizenship** when they turn 18 years of age only if they have resided there legally and without interruption until their eighteenth birthday, requirements which – despite the less restrictive interpretation given by the Ministry of the Interior – many Roma born in Italy cannot demonstrate.

Gruppo CRC therefore, recommends that the Italian Government should:

1. Recognize and respect the cultural differences of the Roma, Sinti and Camminanti people by introducing specific measures, such as recognizing them as national minorities.
2. Promote the direct involvement of Roma, Sinti and Camminanti in the planning, implementing and monitoring of the policies for the social inclusion and protection of their children, including a solution to the problem of the “nomad camps” by providing suitable housing, regularizing their legal status, helping them find work, promoting schooling, and facilitating their access to health and social services.

Discrimination due to of sexual orientation

There are no official studies or statistics that can be referred to as regards this issue. However, there is considerable scientific literature showing that homosexual adolescents are affected by a high-level of “minority stress”, which can lead to self-injurious and suicidal behavior. In the last few years there have been various cases in the news of suicides or attempted suicides linked to homophobia and serious problems of non acceptance within the family.