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**Neapolitan and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2020, Neapolitan Academy (Accademia Napoletana) presents a note about Neapolitan mother language people, children in particular.

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960.

In 1979, the General Assembly adopted a program of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

The Charter of the United Nations is based on the principles of the dignity and equality inherent in all human beings and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein, without distinction of any kind, in particular as to race, colour or national origin.

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The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965 entered into force 4 January 1969.

The Convention promotes and encourages universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, according to the Charter of the United Nations.

In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

This is very important where cultural and social rights are not fully respected, this is the case of Neapolitan mother language people.

In fact, according the Convention States Parties shall, when the circumstances so warrant, take, in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

More: States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, in particular, the right to equal participation in cultural activities.

Also, States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture, and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance, and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups.

What's about Neapolitan?

First of all we need to have to say that Neapolitan is not a dialect of Italian, but a Romance language influenced by pre-Latin languages (Oscan and Greek still present in the actual Neapolitan) but also others as French, Catalan, Valencian, Jewish, Arab, Persian, Anglo-American, etc. So Neapolitan is the language thanks to which many cultures and languages harmoniously coexist but with a particularity: this language and its speakers never lose their particular identity.

It is a very important way to transmit the Magno-Greek philosophy of "knowing how best to live" (sapé campà, in Neapolitan) as well as the ancient Greek vocalism.

Neapolitan, promotes the respect for cultural diversity and sexual orientation thanks to the social representations of their speakers (just think of the cult for the Black Madonna, called Mamma Schiavona or to the "litter of the femminielli", pre-Christian cults)

So, Neapolitan is:

a) a vulnerable language so codified by UNESCO (ISO 639-3 code: nap);

b) an international vehicle of the historical (and artistic) heritage of Naples, so defined by the ICOMOS, incomparable uniqueness city.

In fact, Neapolitan is transmitted as a mother tongue for at least 70% of the population of Naples, without considering the entire metropolitan area of ​​the city of Naples, the emigrated community in Italy and everywhere we define "Neapolitanphones".

Neapolitan is among the fifty most used languages ​​in the world.

Also, Neapolitan is constantly recreated by writers, poets,

artists, theater authors, musicians and singers, both Neapolitan and foreigners (song, folklore, cinematography, culinary art, religious and popular rituals, etc.).

To this community, Neapolitan is also a sort of self-identification in relation to its territory, a means of self-awareness, thanks for example to an own odo-toponymy, different from the official codified one.

In this sense, the work by the Neapolitan Academy for the III ° District of Naples (info-tourist map according to the vernacular language of the mentioned area).

Neapolitan is also the language with which and thanks to which Neapolitans, organizing the Resistance against nazi-fascism.

In fact, during the so-called Four Days of Naples (27-30 September 1943) they freed Naples from the Nazi-fascism army by showing the example to the whole of Italy before the arrival of the Anglo-American forces.

The event earned the city of Naples the award of the gold medal to military value and Naples, it should be remembered, it was the first of the major European cities to arise against the Nazi occupation with the sacrifice of many civilians, primarily the"scugnizzi", the children of the populace.

Unfortunately, in Italy Neapolitan is not recognized as language either as a heritage to protect. On the contrary, it's represented by mass-media in a criminogenic, folkloristic, mystified form. With disastrous effects overall for Neapolitan children.

The national school system doesn't consider the possibility to teaches it. On the contrary, a special project is that of the Accademia Napoletana for the IC.72°Palasciano School of Pianura (Naples), "Napoli, Lingua e Cultura".

That's why Neapolitan (and its speakers) is treated as something of folkloric, corrupt and degrading, that is, directly or with allusions, mainly to crime or connected to ignorance; a language spoken by illiterates or at least ridiculous/sympathetic ignorants.

Worse: often with an evil combination of these elements that are transmitted to the public (also abroad) like a sort of "popular identity" with -an alleged- "social complaints", with no serious investigation about reasons and causes.

All that with an ignoble generalization of poorest contexts that are represented without hope. Or at least with the weight of one indelible stain, guilt, shame, always latent even on the occasion of a possible social "redemption".

A unilaterally negative mass-media representation.

This situation is particularly dramatic for Neapolitan mother-tongue children especially for those from the poorest areas.

In Italy, in fact, the cultural-linguistic representation of Naples (and of southern Italy, Naples in the Italian collective imagination is the emblem of the backward and ignorant South) contributes to spread among Neapolitan youth and children mostly belonging to social situations at risk, but not only, even more, a subculture that induces, in a dangerous dominoes effect this new generation to change in a violent way Neapolitan accent and language.

We are witnessing a double attack on the rights of these children.

First, to the Neapolitan mother-tongue children the Italian education, and media system dictates (as it dictates to his family) to despise his language od accent, as something that must be lost, or something "vulgar", degrading, ignorant as mentioned above.

Of course, this includes losing and minus-valorize everything concerns the genuine Neapolitan community, its heritage, including the language.

Secondly: Neapolitan children re-produce in a sort of new social self-identification, attitudes, behaviors and deviant actions, mixing with vulgar or criminal neologisms (or in imitation of terms invented by actors of crime film characters) who are amplified by the media for commercial purposes and which are re-produced and disseminated as examples of success, power, "immortality".

A new artificial and degrading "language" replaces the noble Neapolitan mother tongue. Finally, the Neapolitan language loses its best characteristics: musicality and expressiveness, which made it internationally famous. We assist at the end of an invaluable cultural heritage.

All that induces real cultural, social and linguistic violence against a population, a human group - especially of children and youngs which is precisely the Neapolitan ones. In addition, advertisings, fictions, and cartoons also represent characters with a Neapolitan accent or language in a degraded, violent or ridiculous way.

Also: in the last thirty years at Tg1 (the newscast of the RAI1, Italian radio-television) only 9% of the news related to so-called Southern Italy are publicized and almost all of them about crime; in the 2000s the articles of the Italian press about Southern Italy decreased by 80% and these also overflowing on the exclusive criminal theme.

So, Neapolitan's mother-tongue children learn to identify themselves in a negative way and a double prejudice is developed: the first towards themselves and their cultural identity and language, which these children are induced to discriminate and hate, the second and at the same time, by the entire Italian community against them.

Perverse discrimination and self-discrimination: an anthropological disaster.

All that before conflicts with the spirit of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and particularly of the art.7 considering the lack of immediate and effective measures in the fields of teaching, education, culture, and information, to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination, for Neapolitan mother-language children.

In this sense, we consider particularly relevant the contrast with the right to equal participation in the cultural activities, a right that is seriously questioned by the scarce or absent access for Neapolitan mother-tongue children to the knowledge-focused to the respect for their cultural and linguistic heritage.

This in fact, for the reasons mentioned above it should necessarily also include a - correct - education in and of their mother language. An education based on the value and social dignity of the Neapolitan language, culture as a heritage of an entire community. On the contrary, in Italy, no legal protection is considered for Neapolitan Language.

The Charter requires and we stress it, to eliminate racial discrimination in all forms to guarantee the right to equality before the law without distinction of ethnic origin, in full enjoyment, in particular, of social and cultural rights.

The social and cultural representation about the Neapolitan community and its language in Italy and the lack of legal preservation for the Neapolitan conflicts with those measures that the Italian State should adopt in the fields of teaching, education, culture, and information, to contrast to those prejudices that lead to discrimination.

Another sort of discrimination for Neapolitan mother-language children can be observed about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, made in New York on 20 November 1989 - ratified by the Italian state on 27 May 1991 with law no.176 - which instead reiterates the requirements of the traditions and cultural values ​​of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child, for the conservation of their own identity.

This Charter states the right to freedom of expression (art. 12), imposing ratifying States to inculcate in the child respect for his identity, his language, and his cultural values, in accordance with the provisions of article 29 of the same Convention.

It is evident also a contrast with the provisions of article 17 where the States parties "encourage the mass media to disclose information and materials that have a social and cultural utility for the child and described in the spirit of article 29; b) encourage cooperation international with a view to producing, exchanging and disseminating information and materials this type of origin from various cultural sources, nations and international; c) encourage mass media to take particular account of the linguistic needs of indigenous children or belonging to a minority group".

Simply this has no regard in Italy for Neapolitan mother-tongue children, exposed from an early age to advertising, information and educational messages that represent themselves as deviant or retrograde subjects.

So they have only one alternative: to follow degraded or ridiculous social models, mythologized by the mass media and associated with an alleged Neapolitan Language (often declined as mafia) or false models of social redemption.

They suffer real discrimination and moral and cultural violence: they receive an education to the minority with respect to their linguistic and cultural identity, such as their mothers.

This is another form of discrimination as a violation of the

Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, adopted by the General Assembly of Nations United on 18 December 1979, entered into force on 3 September 1981, by Italy ratified by the law of March 14, 1985, n. 132.

This Convention in fact commits States parties to protect the social function of motherhood, for the progress of a community that also is compressed and violated for Neapolitan mother-tongue women.

In fact, the Italian cultural, social and scholarly system imposes them to educate their children to abandon the Neapolitan language, cause considered negative, vulgar, degraded.

So we assist at double violence: against the woman and her child with a concrete disintegration of a social, cultural and linguistic community, such as the Neapolitan one.

As Accademia Napoletana, the only international scientific group to preserve Neapolitan Language and Culture, we work in cooperation with associations, groups, researchers, to claim this situation. Our project Nuje is for the entire Neapolitan community in Italy and all around the world, in partnership with any minorized communities that suffer our or similar problems of discrimination.

Teaching activities, conferences, publications on magazines, juridical review, also in Neapolitan but not only, social campaigns in Neapolitan language are our focus to preserve and defend our heritage as our cultural, linguistic, human rights. And we claim Neapolitan situation also today, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

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