

Statement on behalf of the Ministry of Education

Nolwenn Le Guyader, 16 December 2008 morning

Please forgive me if I go back to yesterday's discussion. My statement does not really fit into the topic of this morning, yet on behalf of the Ministry of Education of France I would like to draw your attention to the fact that French Republican values go against any type of census that might include ethnic, religious or social data of pupils. Such census might lead to categorisation and discrimination. It might lock pupils into their particularism.

The educational policy of the Ministry of Education of France targets ALL pupils and fights against school failure.

In order to strengthen equal opportunities, this policy draws upon **supporting localities** where inequalities are high. The aim is to both further social diversity and to **accompany pupils with a more and more individualised approach**.

This policy does not prevent us from **applying specific temporary measures** in parallel, so as to meet the needs of recent non-French speaking immigrants. Such measures are specific and temporary and help facilitate their integration at various levels of the school system.

Nor does this policy prevent us from providing pupils who wish so to attend optional after-class teaching about their language and culture.

These are, in brief, the necessary conditions for **true equal opportunities, which implies having the same expectations, the same ambition, and the same respect for each pupil**, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or social origin. This takes place within a **secular framework** that enables differences to coexist and common values like freedom and tolerance to be shared.

Thank you.