

THIRTEENTH SESSION OF FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

Speech, Social Media and Minorities

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2020

15:00-17:45 (local time in Geneva)

Item 5: Towards a safer space for minorities: positive initiatives to address online hate speech: the role of national human rights institutions, human rights organizations, civil society and other stakeholders

TRIEST NGO - SPEECH:

Trieste, historically and culturally, is a multicultural and multilingual city and the Slovenian mother tongue community has been part of the social fabric of the territory for centuries.

In recent years we have been witnessing an increase of Italian nationalistic hatred towards the Slovenian component of the Territory of Trieste, triggered above all, but not only, by the right-wing political component and easily conveyed through the social media Facebook.

These messages, tolerated - or worse - also propagated by Italian institutional figures, tend to present the Slovenian autochthonous community as alien, unwanted and without their own rights, first of all that of the use of their mother tongue in the relationship with public institutions, thus continuing ideally with this conduct the "ethnic reclamation" begun in 1924 by fascism.

After the war, following the Nazi-fascist crimes, the international community recognized the need to sanction the proclamation of Fundamental Human Rights with the commitment of all UN member States to the concrete fulfillment of respect for the highest moral principles, the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, so that certain prevarications could no longer be repeated.

The equal rights of the use of the Slovenian language enshrined in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty, the international conventions against discrimination and the protection laws (38/2001) too often remain so only on paper, unknown and ignored, if not really tacitly rejected even by public authorities and Italian institutional figures in Trieste.

Furthermore, in 70 years there has never been official stigmatization by the Italian administrative authorities on the serious consequences of the fascist racial laws suffered by the Slovenian community of Trieste. This deliberate lack has made it possible even today to carry out a partial historical rereading of the events that took place in that period, of which the continuous propaganda on the "foibe" is the clearest example.

This harmful constant flow of media spread through social media and the media, completely out of control, has generated an increase in alarming episodes, which have also resulted in situations of inadmissible violence.

At the source of this intolerance are the following factors:

- a) disinformation, that is the intentional lack of correct information by the local media concerning the protection laws and the relative rights of subjects belonging to the Slovenian linguistic community;
- b) misinformation, that is the use of information channels as a political tool to influence public opinion, especially by Italian nationalist parties supported by the ample space dedicated to them, with messages of incitement to intolerance also conveyed thanks to Facebook pages of local web newspapers with a significant number of followers.

- c) the failure to adopt effective measures by institutions and public authorities aimed at citizens to counter the effect of disinformation/misinformation aimed at intolerance and hate speech;
- d) Inadequate (or completely absent) training for public officials and public officials operating in the area, including the police forces themselves (the so-called "guardians of the law"), on protection laws and the right to use of the Slovenian mother tongue. This also means that there is a relative and substantial inadequacy of the leaders and public managers of the Italian administration responsible for this lack of training on their subordinates.

We believe that the way to counter this prejudicial and intolerant conduct consists in the adoption of effective measures by public institutions aimed at all interested parties aimed at favoring:

- a) a cognitive path of the history of the territory and the consequent and subsequent laws of protection and equalization of the Slovenian language in Trieste, of the international treaties and conventions, which therefore allows the understanding of their contents, of the principles expressed in them, to ensure that persons belonging to this community can fully and effectively exercise all their rights and fundamental freedoms in respect of human dignity, without any discrimination and in full equality before the law;
- b) a cognitive and informative path that allows knowledge of personal responsibilities, caused by their non-knowledge and / or non-compliance, as well as by the intolerance and discrimination that may arise.

Item 3: International legal and institutional framework

The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities” adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, in questa sede oggi richiamata, ha il suo cardine nell’ article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, che afferma: *“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”*.

Trieste, storicamente e culturalmente, è una città multiculturale e plurilingue e la comunità di madrelingua slovena fa parte da secoli del tessuto sociale del territorio.

Il diritto della libertà di opinione ed espressione, non può trasformarsi nel diritto di prevaricare ed divenire il diritto ad usare un linguaggio violento

Nella stessa dichiarazione viene richiamata la “[International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#)”, ratificata anche dall’Italia con la legge n.654 del 13 ottobre 1975 e che per effetto della legge 38/2001 “Norme a tutela della minoranza linguistica slovena della regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia” e della legge 482/1999, le disposizioni in essa contenute si applicano anche ai cittadini appartenenti alla minoranza linguistica slovena.

L'obiettivo della Convenzione è quello di raggiungere il compimento di uno degli scopi prefissati dalle Nazioni Unite, cioè quello di sviluppare ed incoraggiare il rispetto universale ed effettivo dei diritti dell'uomo e delle libertà fondamentali senza distinzioni, nemmeno quello della lingua, e con la quale l'Italia si è impegnata a condannare senza indugio la discriminazione. L'Italia infatti: a) *“undertakes to engage in no act or practice of [...] discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation”*; b) *“undertakes not to sponsor, defend or support [...] discrimination by any persons or organizations”*

Con la Convenzione l'Italia si è anche impegnata a *“~~shall~~ not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination” and “declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities”* e a garantire a ciascuno il diritto alla eguaglianza dinanzi alla legge nel pieno godimento dei diritti tra cui il *“the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution”*, nonché a dichiarare ogni incitamento alla discriminazione, ogni atto di violenza od incitamento a tali atti diretti contro individui o gruppi di individui di diversa origine nazionale o linguistica, quali CRIMINI PUNIBILI DALLA LEGGE.

Le disposizioni dell’articolo 3 della legge di ratifica della Convenzione sono ora divenute l’articolo 604 bis del codice penale italiano, che qui oggi vogliamo ricordare. Chiediamo pertanto a tutti, di rispettare l’eguaglianza e di assumersi la responsabilità delle proprie violazioni.