



## Italy

Mariastella Gelmini  
Minister for Education, University and Research



*Mariastella Gelmini was born in Leno, district of Brescia, on July 1th of 1973. Attorney, she is learned in administrative law. Entered in Forza Italia since 1994, in 1998 she was the first of the elected at Desenzano's council, holding since 2002 the office of President of the city council. From 2002 she has been town councillor for Territory of the district of Brescia and, from 2004, town councillor for farming. First of the elected in the ward of Brescia for Forza Italia, she entered in the regional council of Lombardy in the April of 2005. The next month she was elected by Silvio Berlusconi regional coordinator of Forza Italia in Lombardy. For the first time, in 2006, she was elected at the Chamber of Deputies during the XV legislature, where she was member of the council for the authorizations to proceed, of the parliamentary committee for the procedures of indictment and of II Justice Committee.*

*In 2008 she was reconfirmed at the Chamber of Deputies in Lombardy II area in the lists of "Popolo della Libertà" for the XVI legislature and has been elected minister of education, university and scientific research in the IV Berlusconi's Government.*

### **Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future**

Dear Director General Koichiro Matsuura,

Thank you very much for inviting me to take part in the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the International Conference on Education, to be held in Geneva, from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of November.

I consider the topic of the Conference "Inclusive Education", indeed the "Way of the Future" for our youth, and it is with great regret that, on account of prior institutional engagements, I must decline your gracious invitation.

Notwithstanding, I consider it my duty to briefly outline what Italian schools are currently doing in this field.

School autonomy, or devolved self-management, in Italy allows educational establishments to meet community needs and expectations through collaboration with other local or regional players, such as regional, provincial or municipal authorities and non-profit organisations, in projects and initiatives integrating educational research with stakeholder action on the part of local government, civil society and families.

The development of educational research on topics related to inclusion is of great importance for our country. Not only can it help improve the quality of the initiatives undertaken, but it is essential in order to create contact and synergy among the diverse actors in the system and within our different geographic and social realities, also in fostering the dissemination and exchange of knowledge and the sharing of "good practice".

Education for inclusion is a fundamental aspect of education for citizenship, and together with peace education, it constitutes an integral part of very many "Piani dell' Offerta Formativa" or School Plans, the profile of our schools.

In this day and age, inclusive education entails inclusion within open visions of society, with a readiness to collaborate steadily and peacefully across diverse cultures and experiences, while being characterized by a global dimension of knowledge.

In helping young people become more aware of such issues, we are also engaging them in a broad educational project that goes beyond the local realities within which they play their parts, reflecting itself cross-nationally to find its roots in Human Rights education.