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Press Conference “Revolutionary Commitment from Giannini”

Giorgio Vittadini praises the Minister of Education, Giannini, who reiterates the value of the freedom of education and promises to put an end to substitute teaching.

Rimini, August 25, 2014 – During a press conference, Giorgio Vittadini, the President of the Foundation for Subsidiarity, wholeheartedly supported Stefania Giannini, the Italian Minister of Education, Universities and Research. Vittadini, referring to the Minister’s recent panel discussion, said that he “for the first time, heard revolutionary things” regarding the public school system, in terms of teachers’ salaries based on merit and on true professional capabilities, as in the corporate world. Vittadini reiterated an idea he has been supporting for years to overcome the current economic crisis: the recovery won’t come from the construction industry, but rather, from education intended as nurture. “Our country won’t jump-start from a brick but from a brain,” he insisted.

Giannini did not go into details, nor did she reveal the “scholastic surprises” promised by the Italian Prime Minister Renzi (“surprises, in fact, to remain such cannot be revealed”, she said). However, she made some firm commitments. The first concerns the elimination (“not a physical one”, she reassured) of substitute teachers. “This is an adverse mechanism obliging us to follow seniority” she explained “at the expense of functionality. No prior government ever applied this mechanism, so we always end up turning to substitute teachers. This is something we want to eliminate, out of respect for the students, their families, and the teachers as well”.

When questioned about the ongoing controversy regarding public funding to private schools, the Minister was brief: “Whatever is at the service of the community as a whole and is oriented to the common good is a public service, whether provided by a public or a private entity. I’d like to recall that the European community in the past two years has been urging us to apply the directive about freedom of school choice.” The Minister did not want to add anything else here. “In this moment, we are fleshing out the human, intellectual, and technical infrastructure of our educational system. The relevant tools and means to carry out such project will be evaluated eventually, but not in this phase,” she concluded.

The topic of funding gave the Minister the opportunity to criticize those sectors that, in our country “keep demanding scholastic quality, while contributing little to its improvement.”

Giannini did not go into details regarding school reform. She only identified secondary schools (i.e. middle schools) as the main the sector needing the most radical changes, “due to a lack of attention and of updating.”

(D.B.)

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