

The Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera

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The Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera was constituted on 30 November 2012 in Zurich on the initiative of the cantons of Ticino and the Grisons. Its purpose is "la corretta collocazione dell'italiano nel quadro del plurilinguismo costituzionale della Confederazione elvetica e la promozione della lingua e cultura italiana in Svizzera", the proper position of Italian within the constitutional plurilingualism of the Confederation and the promotion of Italian language and culture in Switzerland. It brings together 44 organizations, including institutional authorities, cultural associations, universities and schools, and works through five working groups on Italian as an official language, knowledge of Italian in Switzerland, Italian and Swiss Italian culture, the challenges of plurilingualism and globalization, and communication and media. Its president is Marina Carobbio Guscetti, a member of the Ticino Council of State, its vice-president Gianni Cretti of RSI and its coordinator Aldo Bertagni.¹ The Forum documents developments in federal language policy, publishes reports on the situation of Italian in Switzerland and runs a reporting desk, the *Sportello*, to which citizens can report translation problems in documents of the Confederation and the cantons. One of its campaigns asked the provocative question *Una Svizzera senza italiano?*, a Switzerland without Italian.² Its work complements the research of the Osservatorio linguistico della Svizzera italiana in Bellinzona, which analyses the use of Italian in federal institutions and the language situation in Ticino.³

1 The meaning of italianità

The term *italianità* has a specific meaning in the Swiss debate. It refers to the cultural and linguistic identity of Italian-speaking Switzerland and to the claim that Italian is one of the founding languages of the federal state, with a corresponding share in its institutions. In Ticino the term is historically loaded, because Fascist propaganda used *italianità* to claim the

canton for Italy, a story told in Chapter D.I. The modern Swiss usage has shed that meaning. It combines loyalty to the Confederation, attachment to Italian language and culture and a sense that the canton's interests are often overlooked in Bern. The *italianità* debate therefore concerns the federal institutions: whether Italian is treated as an equal official language in the administration, in the schools and in the national media, or tacitly reduced to a regional language of the south.

2 Notes

1. Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera, "Chi siamo", <https://www.forumperlitalianoinsvizzera.ch/chi-siamo-2/>. ↩
2. Forum per l'italiano in Svizzera, home page and "Attività", <https://www.forumperlitalianoinsvizzera.ch/> and <https://www.forumperlitalianoinsvizzera.ch/attivita-2/>. ↩
3. Pandolfi and Casoni (above). ↩

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