

8 February 2010

**Royal
Geographical
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography
and geographical learning

Minister Mariastella Gelmini
gelmini_m@camera.it

Dear Minister Gelmini

I am writing on behalf of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain to express our concern at hearing that the subject of geography will not feature strongly in the new curricula for high schools and technical and professional schools in Italy. We urge you to reconsider that decision and to include geography fully in all curricula. We have good reasons for making this recommendation.

There is no subject more relevant for young people to study at this time. Young people need to be equipped to take responsibility, as decision-makers and individual citizens of the future, for managing our overcrowded planet and its fragile environments. Geography is the subject that equips young people with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to do that. Uniquely it combines the study of the natural science of the environment with the social sciences of people, cultures and places; and it uses new IT technologies such as geographic information systems to visualise, map and analyse change in places and regions.

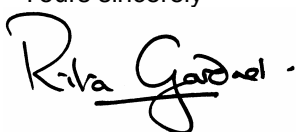
Geography teaches young people about our interconnected and developing world – its peoples, places and environments. It demonstrates the linkages between local, national and global scales and helps young people develop a sense of place, identity and cultural values. It teaches an understanding of many of the big issues facing individual nations, Europe and the world today: from globalisation to climate change; from natural disasters and their management to international development; from biodiversity to migration. Learning through geography encourages young people to be environmentally responsible, socially aware and culturally inclusive citizens, and above all, to understand, plan for and help realise sustainable development. Geographical knowledge, understanding and skills are vital for facing the future challenges of our world and they are in demand by employers.

The importance of geography at school has been increasingly recognised in recent years in the UK. It is part of our core curriculum for all students from the age of 5 to 14 and an important subject from 14-19. The government has funded, for example, a Euro 6million package of support to improve the teaching of geography in schools in England since 2006.

I urge you to think again about the relevance of geography and to join the other European nations in including it within a core curriculum.

If I can help with any more information please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely



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