

Greetings from the President

By Lina Vellucci

Dear TESOL Italy members,

Summer is near and I hope you have all enjoyed a pleasant school and academic year.

Many issues and many challenges have come up during the school year. Teachers, in general, have been more involved in professional development activities, especially in language improvement and CLIL methodology courses. It's more and more common for them to follow virtual seminars and online courses, too. TESOL Italy's Local Groups have organized several successful events this year. All this leads to self-awareness, greater confidence and competence in language teaching.

It's time to start reflecting on how to bring new teaching strategies and new ideas into our next year's classrooms, to invigorate language teaching practices in order to improve our students' language and learning skills. What better time than the summer break from school to take time to do so.

TESOL Italy's 41st Convention, another occasion for professional development, is approaching, too. This year over 60 speakers from all over the world will be present to share their ideas and expertise. Our plenary speakers are Dudley



It's difficult to tell whether there is more violence today than in the past, but certainly its impact is much stronger, being much more widely spread by media and social networks. As teachers, we cannot ignore our responsibility in developing our students' critical consciousness. I believe that we bear this responsibility no matter what the age-range of our students might be, and even the groups of adults that I happen to teach in this period of my life can find interesting and useful the exercises in creative writing suggested in a Language Teacher Research published in March 2013 on TESOL Journal.

Scott Stillar¹ in his article "*Raising Critical Consciousness via Creative Writing in the EFL Classroom*"² writes that he considers developing critical consciousness in his students extremely important. He explains that "*creative writing exercises can be used not only to engage students' imagination and increase enthusiasm for writing skills development, but also to raise critical consciousness.*" He further explains that to reach this educational objective he assigns creative writing exercises, letters

Food for thought

From TESOL publications

How can we help our students to resist prejudice and discrimination?

by

Franca Ricci Stephenson

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or journal entries, with the aim of helping students to adopt new perspectives. Students are encouraged to step out of their own identity as members of a dominant culture and take on new viewpoints regarding sensitive political or social issues. Through this approach, he aims "to promote

(continued on p.8)

¹ At the time of the publication of his Research, Scott Stillar was an assistant professor of foreign languages at the University of Tsukuba in Ibaraki, Japan

² TESOL Journal, Volume 4, Issue 1, pages 164–174, March 2013

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- 3) supportes, schools, universities, agencies: • 60,00
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TESOL Italy's mission is to develop the expertise of those involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and to foster professional growth and active participation in language teaching. Its mission includes promoting community understanding of the role of language in a progressively changing environment while respecting individuals' language rights. To achieve this TESOL Italy

- encourages access to and standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, continuing education and student programs;
- links groups to enhance communication among language specialists;
- produces high quality programs, services and products
- promotes advocacy to further the profession.

TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Italy

TESOL Italy, an affiliate of TESOL International, founded by Mary Finocchiaro, is a non-profit organization of teachers of English in Italy. Its purposes are to stimulate professional development, to disseminate information about research, books and other materials related to English, and strengthen instruction and research.

TESOL Italy organizes a national convention every year .

Members receive TESOL Italy Newsletter and Perspectives, the academic journal of the association.

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From the editor

“BREXIT and EFL professionals”

Daniela Cuccurullo

So it has happened. The British have voted in the referendum and a 51,9% majority of people have voted in favour of Britain leaving the EU. Most of us are still trying to come to terms with the fact that Britain has decided to leave but what we cannot do is ignore it. It's not clear yet how (if) Brexit will affect *TESOLers*; nevertheless, we - TESOL professionals who deal with and teach English – cannot forget that English will remain an official EU language because of Ireland, though not *the official one*; furthermore, considering that most of the countries that have entered the EU in recent years use English as their second language, the role of English as the lingua franca (the medium of communication between non-

native speakers of English) in Europe is unlikely to be shaken. And Britain's exit from the EU is unlikely to change the English language's role as the global language of business, trade and education, as the *tool* for international communication.

Let's wait and see!

Enjoy your reading!

Translation in Love



Poetry in Translation!

by Marina Morbiducci

In 1911-1914 at 27, Rue de Fleurus, Montparnasse, Paris, US expatriate Gertrude Stein, while completing her collection of experimental poems titled *Tender Buttons*, in the section called “Objects”, in her astonishingly atypical way, describes a box: “*Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research [...] it is so rudimentary to be analysed and see a fine substance strangely, it is so earnest to have a green point not red but to point again*” (p. 14). Apparently totally nonsensical, we (Edward G. Lynch and myself – the translators of the Italian version) tried to make sense of those lines as follows: “Dalla gentilezza viene la rossezza e dalla rozzezza viene rapida stessa domanda, dall’occhio viene la ricerca [...] è così rudimentale venire analizzato e vedere una sostanza fina stranamente, è così importante avere un verde che indica non il rosso ma l’indicare ancora” (p. 15). The translation of the whole work – prefaced by Nadia Fusini - was published by the brave small print (nowadays not so small any more!) “Liberilibri” based in Macerata. The first edition dates back to 1989, and the second edition, back to 2004. However, we can say that the book is an “evergreen”. The colours which are mentioned in the excerpt above quoted correspond greatly to the artistic *coté* and general atmosphere of pictorial sensitivity which Gertrude Stein was experiencing in those days in Paris, and this is no surprise considering the fact that her brother (Leo, an expatriate, too) was an expert in the history of art, and her best Parisian acquaintances were Matisse, Braque and, most of all, Picasso. Out of the “box” which Stein is conceiving and composing, a world of colors is springing up, where questions come “rapid” (so rapid that even the definite article “the” is omitted!), and where curiosity, research, analysis become the substance of life. This is all transmitted through a “difficult” poetical text, which needs so much interpretation in order to find a meaning in it, even in the original language, let alone in another language (the famous Jakobsonian “interlingual translation”...). It is exactly the “deviance” of poetical language - deviousness which is in this case doubled by the abstract quality of the expression, totally lacking the traditionally referential dimension of language –to make it appealing. That which defines, closes; that which suggests, opens. It is the “system” which is different. If systems are closed structures, there’s no space for invention, originality, peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, and so on. It’s exactly for our “rebellious” students that translating poetry is useful. We’ve made this point several times in these pages – the section “Translation in Love” being now a dozen years old; meanwhile the status of translation – and poetry translation – has gained strength and recognition in applied linguistics and SLA, particularly (thank to the authoritative works by Henry Widdowson, Guy Cook, Alan Maley, Sara Laviosa, and so on) and at the moment we are also

witnessing a great surge of interest in translation also in the English Lingua Franca frame of reference. These important books have all been quoted in previous issues in the *TESOL-Italy Newsletters*, and it may be well worth going back to them. However, presently, out of the “box” we would like to pick one beautiful poem drawn from the recent publication *E-mails from Scheherazad*, a collection of poems by Mohja Kahf, edited by Mirella Vallone (Aguaplano, 2015). Here follows an intriguing example:

Finding Poems for My Students

*O my students,
I scour the world of words
To bring you poems like the rocks
My girls dig up in riverbanks
And come running to show me
Because the notches in them
Say something true, something
That an ancient Wisdom
Wanted us to see.*

*I run to you, pockets full of poems.
I select: this poem will help you pass a test.
Here is one that is no help at all,
But is beautiful; take it, take it.*

[...]

*Your current glazed-eye indifference
Doesn't bother me. One day,
When you are either cleaning house
Or moving (and sooner or later
Everyone must do one or the other),
You will shake the drawer and the poem
Will fall out. And may the poem be for you
The one phone number in the universe
You were looking for, and may it be
For you the mislaid key
To your greatest need.
On that day,
You will read.*

(2000)

In cerca di poesie per i miei studenti

*Cari studenti miei,
Rovisto il mondo di parole
Per darvi poesie che siano come le pietre
Che le mie ragazze raccolgono in riva al fiume
E di corsa vengono a mostrarmi
Perché i loro intagli dicono
qualcosa di vero, qualcosa che
Un'antica Saggezza
Voleva noi vedessimo.*

*Io corro da voi, con le mie tasche piene di poesie.
Le scelgo: questa via aiuterà a passare il test.
Eccone un'altra, invece, che non serve a niente,
ma è splendida; prendetela, prendetela.*

[...]

*La vostra vitrea indifferenza d'oggi
Non mi rattrista. Un giorno,
quando starete a pulire la casa o
traslocare (prima o poi una delle due succede),
aprirete il cassetto e la poesia
sunterà fuori. Possa allora quella poesia per voi
essere
quel numero di telefono dell'universo
che stavate cercando, e possa
quella poesia essere
la chiave smarrita
del vostro più urgente bisogno.
Quel giorno,
leggerete.*

(2000) (Trad. Marina Morbiducci)

NB: Nell'edizione sopra citata la traduzione è di Mirella Vallone, p. 98-99.

So, at this point - as a way of conclusion - let me just add another quotation from *Tender Buttons*. In fact, in the same collection by Gertrude Stein, we find another “box” (p. 30-33):

A BOX.

A large box is handily made of what is necessary to replace any substance. Suppose an example is necessary, the plainer it is made the more reason there is for some outward recognition that there is a result...

One final remark: have you noticed how many “boxes poems” are circulating in the Internet? Well, have a look: <http://hellopoeetry.com/words/19717/boxes/poems/>. Definitely *poetry out of the box...!*

The way they learned

by Anna Rosa Iraldo



In a moment in which Great Britain is a hot topic, it may be interesting to have a look at the reading exercise assigned in the 79th and eightieth lesson of the Poliglotta Moderno 1906.

Reading Exercise — Esercizio di Lettura.
riding exercisit

Il seguente brano dev'essere letto ad alta voce due o tre volte al giorno.

THE ENGLISH NATIONAL ANTHEM — L'INNO NAZIONALE INGLESE.

God save our gracious King,
 God save our noble King,
 God save the King!
 Send him victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us,
 God save the King!
 O Lord, our God, arise, (1)
 Scatter (2) his enemies,
 And make them fall!
 Confound their politics
 frustrate their knavish (névise) tricks, (3)
 On him our hopes we fix, (4)
 God save us all!

(To be continued)

(1) Levati, alzati. — (2) Disperdi. — (3) Rendi vani i loro villi inganni. — (4) Fissiamo.

**THE ENGLISH NATIONAL ANTHEM (Continued).
 L'INNO NAZIONALE INGLESE (Continuazione).**

The choicest gifts (cioisestghifts) in store, (1)
 On him be pleased to pour (2) (pōr - o chiuso),
 Long may he reign;
 May he defend our laws,
 And ever give us cause
 With heart and voice to sing:
 God save the King!
 O grant him long to see
 Friendship and amity
 Always increase!
 May he his sceptre (3) sway (4) (scptre - sud),
 All loyal souls obey,
 Join heart and voice: Huzza!
 God save the King!

ti (che hai) in serbo.

To all TESOL Italy members,

TESOL Italy expresses its heartfelt, profound condolences and solidarity to the people of Amatrice, Accumoli, Arquata del Tronto and of different countries around the world, for their losses and the damages in the earthquake on 24th August 2016.

TESOL Italy, which is a non-profit association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, is willing to offer its support to teachers wherever needed.

Lina Vellucci

President TESOL Italy

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Who's in the Classroom? (7)

by Melanie Rockenhaus

What's going on in English classrooms in Italy? Who are the teachers, and what do they think of their jobs?

This series visits the classrooms of Italy to find the answers to those questions.

This month we're peeking into the classroom of Elisa Tuzzetti, who teaches English at the Scuola Media Romagnoli in Gela, Sicily. The students have all gone home for the summer, but Elisa kindly agrees to speak about her classroom experience.

Originally from Gela, where she now lives and teaches, she has a degree in foreign languages (English and French), and has been teaching since 2005. Elisa has completed a number of graduate courses in ESL, both in Italy and abroad; among the most recent, she attended teacher training courses in Malta, Dublin and Sicily (the TESOL Summer Camp in 2015, sponsored by the US Embassy in Italy, organized by TESOL Italy). She loves her job, especially inspiring her students and watching them enjoy learning English. This is achieved by helping them understand they are doing something good for themselves in learning a foreign language.

Like everyone's classroom, however, hers is not without difficulties, beginning with the number of students. Elisa has more than 160 students in six different classes, with an average load of four to five classes a day. Classes are always multi-level, contain up to 30 students each and almost always include students with learning disabilities or special needs. All these factors complicate both planning learning activities and assessing the quality of language learning.

Elisa would address these issues by limiting students to a maximum of 22 students/English class. Classroom assignments should be "open", determined by students' real levels of English and not simply students' grade level. She would also like to see the class time dedicated to English increased from three to five hours per week. She believes these changes would increase the quality of ELT in Italian schools and more directly address students' real needs, and it's difficult not to agree with her.

Among her many success stories, Elisa is most enthusiastic about being in charge of the Kangourou della Lingua Inglese (www.kangourou.it/kanging/indexi.html) competition in her school. The Kangourou is a national English competition for Italian students that her middle school has been participating in since 2011. Many students join in, and she is proud of the fact that so many of the Scuola Media Romagnoli students are semi-finalists – 10 this year, 9 last year – and that one was the top semifinalist all across Italy this year! They have also produced finalists, and Elisa was happy to accompany one to Mirabilandia a few years back, where he finished 7th in the final round.

At the end of this peep into Elisa's classroom, it would also be useful to pause for a moment and look at her approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD). She improves her English and classroom teaching skills not only with the formal training courses indicated in the first paragraph, but also by running an extracurricular activity (her school's Kangourou participation). She maintains her English as well by watching films or listening to the news in English, by reading magazines or online articles in English. I suggest we each take a close look at our personal CPD profile. Are we doing enough to improve our English? Have we participated in courses, seminars, activities for our classroom teaching skills? Have we considered publishing or presenting? Now is always the right time to focus on our CPD!

Do you know of an interesting English teacher who would like to be interviewed for this series? If you do, please contact me at rockenhaus@gmail.com.

To contributors

Please send your contribution in
Times New Roman 12
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or
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The deadline for submitting articles for the
2016
September-October issue is September 30th

Greetings from the President

By Lina Vellucci

(continued from p.1)

Reynolds, current President of TESOL International Association, Aya Matsuda, Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Arizona, U.S.A and Nayr Ibrahim, Head of Young Learners and Bilingual Section at British Council in France.

I hope you can make time to participate at the convention and the other TESOL Italy initiatives throughout Italy.

Let's look at the new school year with renewed energy and optimism.

In the meanwhile my warmest wishes for a great summer vacation.

Food for thought

by Franca Ricci Stephenson

(continued from p.1)

empathy and a better understanding of groups that have been marginalized, ignored, or vilified in the dominant culture of the students in order to facilitate greater critical awareness and open dialogue concerning issues pertaining to these groups.

The assignments Mr. Stillar gave his students regard sociocultural issues peculiar to Japanese society, but could be easily adapted to situations in any other country.

Assignment 1: A day in the life of a North Korean. (Journal entry of at least 400 words). The background situation is Japan's strained relationship with North Korea, and the strong feelings of hate and fear among many Japanese citizens, daily stirred up by the Japanese media which dramatize the North Korean threat and make little distinction between the citizens of North Korea and its ruling dictatorship. Through this exercise, he aimed at helping students to understand the North Korean people.Assignment 2: A Buraku tragedy. (personal letter of at least 400 words) Students were asked to take the role of a young person whose family does not allow him or her to marry a member of the Buraku caste against which even today, there is strong prejudice and

discrimination, effecting negatively employment and marriage opportunities. The letter was to inform his/her fiancé/fiancée of this news and his/her decision.

Assignment 3: Sea Shepherd crewman journal (journal entry of at least 400 words) from the perspective of a member of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society protesting Japanese whaling operation, while the Japanese media often present the Sea Shepherd group as a terrorist organization.

Mr. Stillar reports on the creative writings of his students and their reactions; he reports as well on the discussions which followed each assignment, focussed on discrimination and prejudice, and which showed increased awareness of the political and social problems that had been dealt with.

At the end of the semester, a questionnaire survey was administered to the students on their feelings regarding the critical pedagogy activities:

1. *Did the critical writing activities make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?*
2. *Did the critical writing activities expand your understanding of the topics? If so, how?*
3. *Which topic did you feel was the most difficult? Why?*
4. *What emotions did you feel when doing the critical writing activity?*

The answers showed that the students were open to adopting new identities and to writing from new perspectives. There was a rise in enthusiasm towards the writing activities and the following discussions, and the students showed a “higher-than-expected level of topical and vocabulary knowledge regarding the issues being discussed.”

Many of us have tried similar creative writing activities within our literature classes, so Mr. Stillar’s aren’t totally new to us; what seems new and interesting is the political and social content he placed in his: An approach worth the effort.

July 2016

Learning English in immersive worlds: Edmondo, the Italian educational Open Sim

by

Letizia CinganottoResearcher, INDIRE

INDIRE, the Italian Institute for Documentation, Innovation, Educational Research activated in school year 2015-16 a project named “Immersive English Teaching”, aimed at exploiting the potential of immersive worlds to enhance language competences.

The Institute has created a free educational Open Sim, named “Edmondo”, addressed to Italian teachers and students.

According to the international literature on the field, a critical analysis of immersive teaching shows that learner autonomy and virtual reality are an ideal combination for language learning: firstly, by increasing language and linguistic awareness; secondly, by promoting interaction and collaboration with peers and native speakers; and thirdly, by organizing an innovative, dynamic and learner-centered learning environments.

INDIRE researchers (*Letizia Cinganotto and Andrea Benassi*), starting from the literature review, have been engaged in experimenting this assumption on the ground, involving a group of Italian teachers and a network of international experts in immersive worlds and in language teaching coordinated by *Heike Philp* from ‘Let’s Talk online’ in Brussels, with the help of *Daniela Cuccurullo* and *Annie Mazzocco*, expert teachers who acted as moderators and facilitators during the synchronous meetings in Edmondo and the asynchronous activities on the Moodle platform.

The research stems from the following research question: “Can immersive worlds enhance English language teaching and learning?”

The initiative consists in two parallel training pathways for teachers:

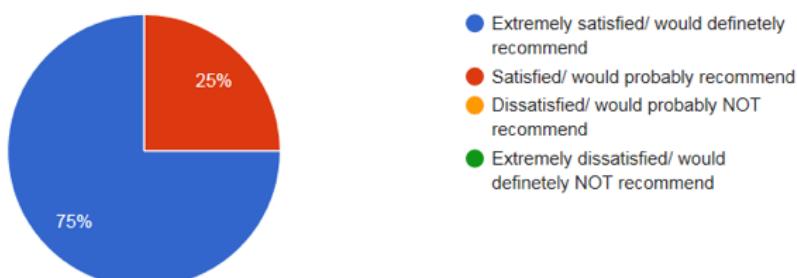
- English language self-consistent lessons in Edmondo, distributed in two sub-groups according to the teachers’ level of competence (A2/B1)
- methodological course on immersive English teaching in Edmondo, designed as a ten-week course on practical teaching activities and games in Edmondo.

The project was monitored by recording the lessons in Edmondo and also collecting the teachers’ reactions through the use of different tools, such as self-assessment questionnaires, portfolios, diaries, etc.

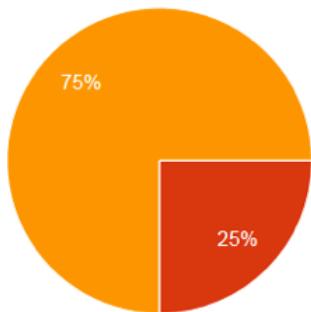
The Moodle platform and the Facebook Group devoted to the initiative were aimed at supporting teachers and build up a virtual community of practice.

The results of this initiative are encouraging and rewarding, as some of the answers from the final survey below show:

How satisfied are you with this course? Would you recommend it to others?



Please rate the activities and tasks in Edmondo and in Moodle



- The activities in Edmondo were easy but the ones in Moodle were complicated
- The activities in Moodle were easy but the ones in Edmondo were complicated
- They were both mostly easy and appropriate for the course
- They were both mostly difficult and inappropriate for the course

Explain briefly what you have learnt from this course, what you liked or didn't like and what you may/may not use in your future teaching.

I have learnt new opportunities for virtual teaching

I learnt how to use more the immersive teaching and I put in contact myself with gamification

I'm very satisfied with this course. I've got a lot of inputs for teaching in RL and VL. Many thanks to all the trainers

I have learnt what I was supposed to learn for each module. I can't build in Edmondo yet but I want to improve my skills.

I've understood better what are the possibilities that immersive methodology offers when dealing with English language learning. I've mete very competent teachers and friendly colleagues... it's been really involving and motivating, even if I had to work hard in order to catch up with all the activities

I learnt how to use immersive methodology, how to build learning tools and how to create interactive language pathways

Imagine to write a colleague and give him/her some reasons why you would/wouldn't recommend this course.

This course offers many opportunities for virtual teaching

It's a very important experience to learn English with native language teachers skilled about immersive teaching

I would recommend this course because the trainers are wonderful.

It's fantastic. For me is a good method to learn english language

THIS COURSE IS VERY EXCITING

If interested in joining the next initiatives in Edmondo, write to:

Letizia Cinganotto: l.cinganotto@indire.it

Andrea Benassi: a.benassi@indire.it



Web Watch

HOLIDAYS...

LET'S HAVE FUN...BUT...



by
by Ines Migliozi

Summer is coming and people are looking forward to it: the sun is out, the sea is warming up and almost everyone is planning a holiday...but before leaving for sunny places, let's remind our students five good reasons to refresh their minds improving English in a funny way:

- They can be their own boss!
 - They don't have to rush anymore!
 - They can organize themselves!
 - They can have as many breaks as they want!
- AND...FINALLY...
- They can choose different types of funny online activities!

When students think about English, they usually believe they must read lots of boring books, learn a lot of words that they will probably never use in their lives, and stay up until the early morning so to become "good students". As teachers we can suggest activities for all tastes, games of all types, jokes, videos and songs to help them practise English and also have fun! In short, they can listen, play, laugh and...learn!

www.learn-english-today.com	They can find English grammar lessons, English idioms and idiomatic and amusing fun activities, funny stories and word games for learners at all levels.
www.learnenglish.britishcouncil.org	Learn English provides information, tips and resources to help adults, teens and children learn English.
www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/	On this site there are different types of activities to improve English.
www.havefunteaching.com	You can find a collection of free worksheets, activities, songs, and videos.
http://www.englishmaven.org	You can find puzzles and crosswords for all ages and ability levels.

Moreover, when they use their facebook account, they can find lots of communities to practise English; the most popular are:

English is fun!
English insight!
English idioms
Learning English vocabulary grammar.

TESOL Italy groups

REQUISITI PER IL RICONOSCIMENTO

Si raccomanda a tutti i colleghi impegnati o che intendono impegnarsi nella costituzione di un gruppo provinciale TESOL Italy di inviare all'Executive Committee la seguente documentazione:



1. Elenco nominativo degli iscritti (minimo cinque), con allegata fotocopia della ricevuta del relativo versamento sul c/c postale n. 15774003 intestato ad Associazione TESOL Italy, Via Boncompagni 2, 00187 ROMA.
2. Verbale dell'assemblea costitutiva del gruppo da cui risultino l'elezione e il nome di un Coordinatore.
3. Programma delle attività che il gruppo intende svolgere nel corso dell'anno.
4. L'Executive Committee, preso atto della documentazione prodotta dal gruppo, si riunisce per deliberarne il riconoscimento ed invia successivamente il testo della delibera al Coordinatore.

Il Coordinatore del gruppo TESOL Italy rappresenta a tutti gli effetti l'Associazione nell'ambito della provincia in cui il gruppo svolge la sua attività ed è tenuto a presentare una relazione annuale in sede di National Committee.

I membri del Consiglio di Presidenza e la Segreteria di TESOL Italy sono a disposizione per qualsiasi eventuale richiesta di ulteriori informazioni.

La collega incaricata dall'Executive Committee del coordinamento nazionale dei gruppi è Maria Grazia Maglione (e-mail: grazia.maglione@gmail.com).

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