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*Cercare il Friuli e trovare l'Europa. La minoranza linguistica friulana e la sua tutela: rivendicazioni, normative, politiche e problemi.*

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The authors, Marco Stolfo and Claudio Cressati (respectively, PhD in History of Federalism and European Unity at the University of Pavia and Professor of History of Political Doctrines at the University of Udine), present in this volume an in-depth analysis of the situation of the Friulian linguistic minority, considered to be an exemplary case of linguistic minorities in Italy and Europe.

The analysis of the Friulian language's condition as a minority language and of the linguistic minority that speaks it – conducted on a synchronic and diachronic level – is based on a multidisciplinary approach founded on a solid theoretical framework and developed around precise and accurate references to regulatory sources and to official and international, European, national and regional documents. These characteristics make the text interesting both for the reader who wants to know more about the specific condition of the Friulian linguistic minority, and those who want to approach the question of linguistic minorities in Italy and Europe in general, and understand the role of the European institutions in their protection, promotion and enhancement.

The book – which has the advantage of being as precise and well-

documented as it is clear and pleasant to read – is divided into seven chapters, which the authors, in the introduction, imagine as seven stages of a journey.

The first stage provides the reader with the necessary tools for the journey, namely the definition of the concepts of minority, linguistic minority and minority language. In relation to these last two concepts, the authors also explore, respectively, the notions of ethnic minority, ethno-linguistic minority and national minority as well as the notions of minority, minoritised and lesser-used languages, and regional and local languages, dwelling on the political and cultural visions and theories underlying the use of each of these expressions. The chapter concludes with a definition of the concept of protection and highlights how, in the case of linguistic minorities, this can only be achieved through a genuine language policy.

The second chapter of the book first examines international protection of linguistic minorities, focusing on UN and UNESCO documents, and then European protection, which is divided into three phases. The first phase, from the end of the Second World War to the beginning of the 1960s, is characterised by a view of the protection of linguistic minorities

as a problem of states and between states, and sees only the Council of Europe engaged in the protection of minorities. In the second phase – from the 1960s to the end of the 1970s – the protection of linguistic minorities became a European issue, dealt with by the Council of Europe and the ESCE (later to become the OSCE). With the third phase, which began at the end of the 1970s, minorities, languages and protection became a cultural and political resource for Europe and, consequently, alongside the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the European Commission also played a key role in the protection of minorities. The authors then ask whether the third phase is still in progress or whether, since 2004, confirming the directly proportional relationship between the process of European integration and the evolution of the protection of linguistic minorities, a fourth phase has not begun, less favourable and positive than the previous one.

The next three stages, the third, fourth and fifth chapters, are dedicated to Friulian. In the third chapter, the authors briefly reconstruct the linguistic evolution of the Friulian language, starting from Aquileian Latin, and highlight the distinctive traits of unity and individuality that make it an idiom recognised – both internally, that is by the Friulians themselves, and externally – as a lan-

guage in its own right, distinct from Italian. Finally, referring to the theoretical framework outlined in the first chapter, they explain why Friulians are, without a shadow of a doubt, a linguistic minority and Friulian, without a shadow of a doubt, a minority language. The fourth chapter illustrates in detail the situation of the Friulian language in the public administration, the fundamental sector of education and the media, dwelling, finally, on cultural production. The fifth chapter examines the evolution of the “ideas of Friulian and visions of Friuli” that have developed in the last century and a half, which the authors trace back to three general orientations: “negationist”, “minimalist” and “positive”.

The last two stages, the sixth and seventh chapters, reconstruct in a detailed and precise way the evolution of the recognition and protection of the Friulian language in the regional and national legal frameworks.

The book’s bibliography is, in turn, a valuable tool that, alongside the references to monographs, collations, journals, periodicals, essays, articles, working papers and internet resources, offers a rich section dedicated to international, European, Italian, regional and local regulatory and documentary sources.

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