

Adopting the motto “Trasformiamo il futuro” (“Let's transform the future”), thousands of young pupils from different schools, together with university students, have traced the footsteps of Saint Francis from Perugia to Assisi to ask national and international politicians once again to stop all wars and to promote peace, respect for human rights and for the state of law, sustainable development and democracy.

Behind the opening banner of the Marcia PerugiaAssisi (the PerugiaAssisi March) for peace and fraternity were the students, teachers and headteachers of 119 schools of the National Network of Schools for Peace. Following them was the banner of the Rete delle Università Italiane per la Pace (RUniPace) (the Italian Universities Network for Peace), which includes 71 universities.

Also present were 280 associations as well as mayors and town and regional councillors of 150 local authorities from all over Italy.

It was a "march of the young", the third one since war broke out in Ukraine.

At the starting point, various speeches were delivered on the platform, including that of Enza Pellecchia, co-ordinator of RUniPace with Marco Mascia. She was joined on the platform by the rectors of the Universities of Perugia, Parma and L'Aquila and the representatives of RUniPace of many universities.

The finishing point in Assisi, on the 75th anniversary of the Italian Constitution and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, witnessed the signing of the “Patto di Assisi” (“The Assisi Pact”), an educational pact under which schools, universities and local authorities have agreed to join forces to attain the following aims:

- to take great pains to educate ourselves and to educate others towards peace, as a public commitment for the common good, essential for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030;
- to invest in the young generations and their education so that they may learn to repudiate war and become the builders of peace and of a more humane world;
- to ensure that every school, university and city becomes a place of peace, dialogue and fraternity;
- to develop the transversal teaching of civil education and studies for peace as a strongly interdisciplinary academic discipline in terms of research/action, uniting the theory and practice of the transformation of the present and of the future.

As the Patto di Assisi states, in order to transform the future we must transform education, open up new horizons and overcome any didactic or organisational practices that are no longer fit for the era in which we are living. We need to educate young forgers of peace who are competent and prepared to transform an uncertain and rapidly changing future fraught with complex dangers.