



Paris, 20 December 2024

[Legal decision]

The ban on the use of certain elements of inclusive writing (notably middle dots) in teaching is legal

The Conseil d'État has ruled that the currently applicable rules on feminisation in education (circular released by the Minister of Education on 5 May 2021) are not contrary to French or European law.

This circular requires teachers to ensure that the principle of equality between girls and boys is upheld, to systematically feminise the titles of positions held by women, to use formulations that do not display gender preference, and to combat stereotyped representations through the choice of examples and statements. However, it prohibits the use and teaching of certain rules relating to inclusive writing, notably the middle dot, which alters compliance with the usual rules of gender agreement expected as part of teaching programmes. This last point that was challenged before the Conseil d'État by a parent.

The Conseil d'État ruled that the requirement for teachers to apply the standard rules of agreement, including the "generic masculine" rule, and to prohibit alternative agreement rules or spellings that fragment words (such as the use of middle dots), has the purpose of facilitating the acquisition of the French language and reading skills, while promoting equal opportunities for all pupils. The ruling confirms that this directive does not violate principles of equality, non-discrimination, equal access to education or the right of parents to educate their children in line with their religious and philosophical beliefs, nor does it infringe on teachers' and pupils' freedom of conscience or expression or respect for private life.

On these grounds, the Conseil d'État rejected the applicant's petition.

Decision Nos. 497830, 474812 and 487671, 20 December 2024

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