ASVIS REPORT ON

“THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS”

The European Union recently put the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the achievement of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the core of its strategy for the next five years. All Vice-Presidents and Commissioners of the European Commission have been mandated to achieve the SDGs, while the College as a whole will be responsible for the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This commitment will have important consequences on the way in which European and national policies will be designed and evaluated, as well as on the EU governance mechanisms used to coordinate national policies (first of all, the so-called European Semester).

To contribute to this effort, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS) releases the Report “The European Union and the Sustainable Development Goals”, where the progress of European countries towards the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is evaluated using innovative composite indicators available for the period 2010-2017, based on more than 70 elementary indicators published by Eurostat. The Report analyses data concerning both the EU average and individual countries, providing an assessment of progress over time for each SDG, as well as a comparison of the relative performance of all European countries with respect to the EU average.

The data published in the Report are unique in the international landscape of applied research on the 2030 Agenda, as they simultaneously provide information about the performances vis-à-vis SDGs from both temporal and spatial dimensions. The two charts below, for example, show the EU performance as far as two SDGs are concerned, Goal 5 (Gender equality) and Goal 15 (Quality of terrestrial ecosystems).

The data released today also allows country specific analyses over time, covering the years 2010-2017. Country specific composite indicators are computed using as reference point the EU 28 average with respect to each SDGs. Therefore, it is possible to immediately see whether a country is performing better or worse than the EU average, as well as to compare potential differences in trends over time.

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2 See asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/Compositi_Europei_ENG_HR.pdf
3 Composite indicators were developed for 16 out of the 17 SDGs, as for Goal 6 it was impossible to compute it due to a lack of data.
4 The full dataset is available at: asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Programmi_eventi/INDICATORI_EUROPEI.xlsx
5 The time series preceding Brexit (January 31st 2020) are indicated as EU28, as done by Eurostat, since the UK was still a member of the EU.
The availability of time-series and cross-section data allows to depict the gaps among EU countries as measured by the composite indicators, highlighting disparities between the 28 EU Member States. See example below:

Finally, the Report highlights, Goal by Goal, the elementary indicator that has the highest influence on the differences among the EU Member States.