

Italy and the Sustainable Development Goals





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ASviS Report 2023

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Thanks to Luca for the cover page image entitled "It's getting late".

A complete list of Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development members can be found on pp. 228-229.

In-depth information and a guide to the report with an analytical index by topic are available on the asvis.it website.

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Introduction

2023 is a special year on the journey that began with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda: we are at the halfway point and the goal is now in sight. We have borne this in mind in drawing up this year's ASviS Report, which is full of rich content and valuable insights aimed at understanding what we have achieved so far, where we currently stand and what still needs to be done to meet the deadlines set by the United Nations. As we will see in the following pages, the "bill of health" for the 2030 Agenda is mixed.

On the one hand, our data show that progress has undoubtedly been made compared with 2015. In Italy we have seen policies evolve, partly thanks to constant encouragement from our Alliance: awareness of sustainability has grown, especially among the younger generations; two national strategies for sustainable development have been approved (the most recent one a month ago); the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) has become the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development; plans and strategies have been approved at local level by regions and cities; and, last but certainly not least, the Constitution has been reformed, with the inclusion of environmental protection principles, partly in the interest of future generations. A portion of the private sector has grasped the importance of the transformation required and has greatly stepped up its commitment. In Europe too, we have seen a momentous transformation, evidenced by the lengthy list of actions and innovations adopted over the past four years, which are described in this report.

However, these positive signs cannot mask a harsh reality: we are still a long way off achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda and we aren't on the "right path". As we will see in the following pages, many indicators confirm that progress has been insufficient, or in some cases even gone into reverse. At international level, numerous conflicts, including the one triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the new conflict in Israel and Gaza, have undermined multilateral political progress.

But we must not let this state of affairs lead to defeatism. On the contrary, the progress made in recent years shows that we can change policies and behaviours to set our societies on a sustainable path, but only if everyone is strongly and continuously committed. The great intuition of the 2030 Agenda has been to take into account the actions of the private sector, civil society and individuals, as well as those undertaken by governments. This is what Pope Francis called for in his recent Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum, which also stressed the importance of countering disinformation and climate change denial. We lend our unqualified support and presence to this endeavour. Our Alliance has prepared an extensive list of proposals that cover all aspects of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, we are there to support institutions in helping Italy to accelerate efforts to build a better future.

The words "acceleration" and "future" are at the centre of our reflections. Acceleration of efforts to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda in the seven years we have left, and acceleration of reflections on what should happen after 2030. This will require an open and inclusive discussion with all the components of Italian society.

The word future is linked to the great Summit of the Future called by UN Secretary General Guterres in September 2024, but also to the need to respond to a shortcoming that we have repeatedly noted in Italy, namely the lack of long-term thinking in order to identify responses to crises and prevent them before they happen. The long list of disasters that have hit Italy this year, starting with the floods in Emilia-Romagna, confirms our position in this regard.

With this in mind, the Alliance underwent a transformation this year to in order to better face the future. We have revised our Bylaws, improved our internal procedures and taken steps to boost the participation of our network of members, which is the heart and driving force of the world's only organisation of this kind, as noted by the United Nations and the European Parliament. We have also welcomed back Enrico Giovannini after his experience serving our country in the Draghi government. As scientific director of the Alliance, he led the drafting of this report, directing the research work and inspiring its content. We'd like to offer our heartfelt thanks to him and all our members, as well as to the Working Group coordinators, the various experts and the ASviS team.

Marcella Mallen and Pierluigi Stefanini Co-presidents of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development

Executive summary

Italy is one of the European Union's founding countries and a member of the G7. Beyond formal roles, a great country is also characterised by the commitments it makes in international fora, and by the continuity of the political action through which it seeks to attain the objectives it has freely chosen to achieve. Unfortunately, halfway along the path set out in September 2015 by the UN General Assembly to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Italy appears to be "off track" in meeting the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) we have committed to achieve by the end of this decade.

For six Goals the situation has deteriorated compared to 2010, while three are stable and eight register modest improvements. As far as the 33 Targets that can be assessed with quantitative indicators are concerned, only eight are likely to reach the figure set for 2030, while for 14 it will be very difficult or impossible to reach, nine register contradictory trends, and for two lack of data makes it impossible to reach a conclusion. In short, we are way off the mark.

As a famous saying attributed to Seneca goes: "If one doesn't know which port one is sailing to, no wind is favourable". And the report clearly shows that in the last eight years Italy has failed to decisively opt for the 2030 Agenda as a roadmap for bringing about fully sustainable environmental, social, economic and institutional development. This doesn't mean that progress hasn't been made in various areas, but, leaving aside some poor decision-making, what has been lacking is an explicit, unanimous and coherent commitment on the part of society as a whole, the entire world of business and all the political forces that have taken turns at the helm of government to transform our country under the banner of sustainability. The outcome of this failure to choose is as described above and is plain for all to see.

The world and the 2030 Agenda: progress and setbacks

Unfortunately, Italy is in good company, although this is neither an excuse nor grounds for consolation, indeed quite the opposite. In the words of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres: "At the halfway point, the promise of the 2030 Agenda is in peril". In the report prepared for the summit on this issue held a month ago, the UN recalls that, in its initial phase, the global commitment to implementation of the 2030 Agenda produced some important results: reductions in the extreme poverty rate (from 10.8% in 2015 to 8% in 2019) and the infant mortality rate (from 20 deaths per 1,000 live births to 18); a more effective fight against diseases such as HIV and hepatitis; an increase in the share of renewable energy (from 16.7% in 2015 to 19.1% in 2020); a return to pre-2008 unemployment levels; and a doubling of the share of marine waters placed under some form of protection. But then the outbreak of the pandemic, and the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, leading to soaring energy commodity and food prices that triggered widespread inflation, set the whole world back.

According to the UN, an examination of the 2030 Agenda Targets for which reliable data are available reveals that only 12% are on track to achieve the set objectives. Despite some progress, more than half of them are "moderately or seriously off track" and around 30% have registered no progress or are in a worse state than they were in 2015. At this rate, in 2030 more than half a billion people will still live in extreme poverty; over 80 million children will not attend school and 300 million will be unable to read and write; greenhouse gas emissions will continue to grow and the damage caused by climate change, which is accelerating compared to assessments made a few years ago, will continue to increase throughout the world; the average temperature, which is already 1.1C above preindustrial levels, will exceed the threshold of 1.5C set in the Paris Agreement in 2034 rather than in 2050, and will continue to rise; in 2030 around 660 million people will still be without electricity and almost two billion will rely on fossil fuels and other polluting energy sources; and it could take at least 25 years to halt deforestation, while at least one out of the eight million currently known species could face extinction.

Towards the Summit of the Future in September 2024

These shocking and unacceptable data prompted Guterres to convene a summit, once again reminding heads of states and government (Italy was represented by the minister of foreign affairs and international



cooperation) of the commitments they had undertaken "before the world" for the 2030 Agenda, and to propose an ambitious agenda for the upcoming Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024, including: reform of the international financial system and changes to the governance of large multilateral organisations; agreement on a Global Digital Compact for an "open, free and secure digital future for all"; drawing up a code of conduct to improve public information, in order to combat fake news and the so-called infodemic; setting new global rules for the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space; creation of a new standard for measuring prosperity that goes "beyond GDP"; and the definition of a New Agenda for Peace in order to provide effective responses to international security risks and revamp the way the Security Council functions. The Summit of the Future will also be prepared at COP28, which will be held from 30 November to 12 December 2023, where, among other things, the outcomes of the 2015 Paris Agreement, and how to implement the new fund to "compensate" the countries most affected by climate change, will be discussed.

Italy has not yet explicitly expressed its position on any of these matters, although it has endorsed the conclusions of last July's European Council, which ensure the support of all the 27 Member States for the UN proposals. ASviS calls on the Italian government to play a strong role in the current and future negotiations in line with Guterres' proposals, using the presidency of the G7 that Italy will take on in 2024 to the utmost. In the words of the chief negotiator for Italy, Luca Ferrari, climate and energy issues will be "crucial" in the agenda. Therefore, we add our voice to those of international observers who hope that the G7 and COP 28 will set out a clear commitment to increasing investment in renewable energy and accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels.

We believe that the Italian Parliament and public opinion should pay more attention to these issues, thereby allowing the Government to take authoritative and widely shared positions, given that the decisions that will be taken at the COP28, the G7 and the UN will affect the future of international governance for years to come. The terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel and the flare-up of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will undoubtedly affect the work of these organisations, making it even more difficult to progress multilateral cooperation, and also underscore the absolute need for the international community to find new ways to prevent the risks of conflict and intervene effectively where they arise.

The European Union and the 2030 Agenda: an unprecedented commitment to further strengthening

The European Union (EU) is the most advanced geopolitical area with regard to the 2030 Agenda. Many of the countries topping the international rankings based on the SDGs are European. Since 2010, the EU has made progress for most of the SDGs, but these improvements are often small and insufficient to raise hopes of meeting the 2030 Agenda Targets by the end of this decade. Moreover, a reduction in inequalities between countries in the achievement of the SDGs has been reported for only eight of the Goals, while for three they remain constant and for five they have even increased. In short, Europe must also accelerate and drive global change.

The 2030 Agenda at the heart of European policies

Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda have been adopted as core elements by the presidency of the European Commission under Ursula von der Leyen since the presentation of the 2019-2024 programme, which was later approved by the European Parliament. The goal of achieving the SDGs explicitly shaped the design of both the Commission's governance and European policies, including those launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The European Union, finally implementing the provisions of the Treaty, which exclusively mentions sustainable development among its aims, has defined a set of rules for integrating the SDGs into sectoral policies via the European Semester cycle, ex ante evaluation of legislative proposals, verification of the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle of the European Green Deal, and checking policy coherence against the content of the "strategic foresight" reports published annually by the European Commission. No major country and no other geopolitical area in the world has adopted such advanced rules consistent with the 2030 Agenda.

Of the 600 policy initiatives announced by the Commission, more than two-thirds have been presented, of which more than half have been approved by co-legislators or the Commission itself (a description is provided in Chapter 2, including details regarding their expected impact on the various SDGs). The vast majority (71%) of those remaining are in progress or nearing adoption (13%), although 32 initiatives (16%) are moving forward very slowly or have been blocked. The European Green Deal, the European Union's top priority, has registered the highest number of initiatives (154, of which 96 have been presented), while those related to "a Europe fit for the digital age" (105), "a stronger Europe in the world" (69) and "promoting our European way of life" (94) represent the largest shares of the initiatives adopted so far.

Efforts over the next few months ahead of the European Parliamentary elections

On the occasion of the first EU voluntary review, presented at the UN High Level Political Forum on 19 July, the European Parliament and the Council emphasised that "the SDGs comprise the only comprehensive and globally agreed set of targets that responds to the major challenges that both advanced and developing countries will face in the future, and therefore the 2030 Agenda should serve as a beacon to navigate and overcome current uncertainties". Therefore, ASviS believes that the coming months should be devoted to completing the passage of legislation already before co-legislators. First and foremost, this applies to the Green Deal proposals. The adjustments needed to reach an agreement with the Council and the European Parliament must be identified without abandoning its ambitious objectives, starting with those incorporated in the Fit-for-55 package. This will provide certainty to operators in the various sectors regarding the path to be taken, and also clarity regarding how the funds available to accompany households and businesses in the required transformation should be used. Without such funding the costs of transition would outweigh the benefits for many people.

Similar attention should be paid to social policy actions, especially those related to combating inequalities, including gender inequalities, and to the agreement on the new Stability and Growth Pact, which should be designed as an instrument to foster the transition of the socioeconomic system towards sustainable development, rather than as a set of rules aimed only at financial stability. In this regard, the need to consider the overall value of public expenditure and the accounts, as well as the composition of revenue and expenditure, in order to gear them towards environmental and social sustainability, the transformation of the system of production and increased competitiveness, should be taken into account.

Treaty reform to strengthen the governance of the European Union

Despite significant achievements, evident tensions have arisen this year between the political forces that make up the majority in the European Parliament, especially regarding Green Deal dossiers, which will be an issue at the centre of the next electoral campaign, ahead of the elections in June 2024. The coming months will also see lively debate on how to take into account the recommendations that emerged from the Conference on the Future of Europe.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament has drawn up several Treaty amendment proposals with a view to improving the Union's capacity to act and strengthening its democratic legitimacy. These include, among others: recognition of the Parliament's power of legislative initiative; transformation of the Council into a genuine legislative chamber, with the aim of achieving a "bicameral" system comprising the Parliament and the Council, with the Commission acting as the executive; change from unanimous voting in the Council to qualified majority voting; reform of European electoral law; creation of an EU citizenship statute that clarifies and consolidates the specific rights and freedoms of citizenship; introduction of a standardised age for the right to vote and stand as a candidate in all the Member States; rapid and consistent implementation of the many proposals that emerged from the Conference on the Future of Europe; institutionalisation of deliberative and representative participatory processes, including the introduction of EU-wide referenda on fundamental issues and pan-European online consultations organised by the Parliament.

Some of these proposals can and should be improved, but they're undoubtedly **geared towards a "feder-alist" strengthening of European institutions and increased European democracy**, with greater powers

for the Parliament, which is the only institution elected by citizens. Furthermore, the shift from unanimity to qualified majority in Council decisions (with an amendment to the Parliament's proposal that prevents the Council from indefinitely passing on responsibility for "disagreeable" decisions to certain governments) would increase the efficiency of the deliberative process and reduce the power of veto of individual countries. This is essential in preventing enlargement of the Union to include new Member States from leading to potential bottlenecks in the decision-making process.

Regarding all these matters, we expect Italy to play a proactive role in moving in the direction set out by the European Parliament. In line with the need to step up efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Treaty amendments should enable the European Union to respond in a stronger and faster way to climate and environmental challenges, geopolitical, economic and health crises, and migration issues, against a backdrop of greater democratic representativeness among European institutions.

Unfortunately, we don't currently know the position of the Government and the Parliament on these issues, which are so important for the future of Italy and the European Union, although absent from public debate. Therefore, we appeal to the media and politics to rapidly raise public awareness of the issues under discussion at European and international level, given the potential effect that any decisions will also have on how our institutions work.

Italy and the 2030 Agenda: accelerating as much as possible to make up for delays

We have already pointed out that Italy's performance to date with respect to the SDGs is far from satisfactory. The composite indicators developed by ASviS show deterioration compared to 2010 for poverty (Goal 1), water, sanitation and hygiene (Goal 6), the quality of terrestrial and marine ecosystems (Goals 14 and 15), governance (Goal 16) and partnership (Goal 17); substantial stability for aspects related to food (Goal 02), inequalities (Goal 10) and sustainable cities (Goal 11); extremely limited improvements (less than 10% over 12 years) for six Goals (education, gender equality, renewable energy, decent work innovation and infrastructure, combating climate change); and slightly greater improvements for two Goals (health and the circular economy). With regard to regional disparities, of the 14 Goals for which regional data are available only two (10 and 16) show a reduction, three (2, 9 and 12) are stable, and the remaining nine report an increase, which goes against the key 2030 Agenda principle to "leave no one behind".

Almost two million families, including 1.4 million minors, live in absolute poverty; inequalities between rich and poor are growing; around five million 18-34 year olds (almost one in two) show at least one sign of deprivation; public spending on healthcare and education is much lower than the EU average; early school leaving amounts to 11.5%, reaching 36.5% among foreign children; youth unemployment is over 20% and 1.7 million young people are neither studying nor working (NEETs); gender inequalities are still marked; and unacceptable violence against women has been registered. These are just some of the data that characterise social conditions in Italy.

Regarding the **environment**, Italy registers losses of 42% from its water systems; only 21.7% of land areas and only 6.9% of marine areas are protected; 41.7% of rivers and lakes are in a poor ecological state; soil degradation affects 17% of the country; 80.4% of fish stocks are overfished; and renewables account for 19.2% of total energy sources, preventing us from starting the process of cutting emissions that Italy has committed to at international level.

On the **economic front**, after the strong growth registered in 2021-2022, Italy is once again showing the signs of weakness that characterised the previous decade; employment is growing, but the share of irregular (3 million people) and unprotected work is still high; substantial progress has been made regarding the circular economy and innovation has increased, although many companies are reluctant to invest in digital and ecological transformation, and more generally in sustainability (around 30% of manufacturing companies have not undertaken any such initiatives); Italy needs substantial infrastructure investment, partly to make existing infrastructure resilient to climate change; and finance is shifting towards sustainability, coupled with a change in savers' preferences, but elements of the business world are still resisting the qualitative leap that may be noted in other countries.

Last but not least, it should be noted that in terms of **institutional sustainability**, over the last 10 years voluntary homicides and predatory crime have fallen dramatically, although sexual violence (up 12.5%), extortion (up 55.2%) and cybercrimes such as fraud and scams (up 152.3% compared to 2012) have increased. Prison overcrowding, which had decreased from 2010-2019, has started to rise again. In recent years, democratic participation, especially among the younger generations, has shown a marked and growing decline, partly due to a failure to implement adequate digital voting systems and mobilise people to take part in referenda. Over the years, Italy has adopted controversial immigration regulations and policies, which have been strongly criticised by independent organisations that deal with this issue. At the same time, in its foreign policy and international cooperation decisions, Italy only partially applies the principles of existing national legislation, allocating 0.3% of Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance, compared with the commitment made at the UN to reach 0.7%.

Italians are increasingly aware of the need for sustainable development, but also more sceptical

Italians are well aware of the need to embark on a sustainable development path. While around a third of the population are familiar with the 2030 Agenda, this share rises to 58% among students (against 43% in 2019), thanks to the awareness-raising initiatives carried out in schools and universities, including by ASviS. Among those familiar with the 2030 Agenda, 19% (against 11% in 2019) believe that all the SDGs should be given equal weight and considered as a whole. However, the remaining 81% identify priorities that are partly related to the specific times we are living through. In 2023, the primary concern is "combating climate change" (with a large number of people feeling that not enough is being done), while the focus on "decent work and economic growth" and "health and wellbeing" has heightened, at the expense of "clean and affordable energy" (which was "inflated" in 2022 by worries about energy security) and the quality of the Earth's ecosystems. The recent Eurobarometer survey reveals that for 96% of Italians climate change is a serious global problem, for 74% the national government is not doing enough to tackle the issue, and for 87% the ecological transition is economically advantageous as the damage caused by the climate crisis is much greater than the investment costs needed to bring it about.

This increased awareness of sustainability has been accompanied in recent years by growing scepticism about our actual ability and willingness to build a more sustainable world. While not unique to our country, in Italy the share of sceptics has grown from 13% three years ago to 22%, partly due to governments and businesses overemphasising proposals and promises regarding future action compared with the limited results actually achieved, namely a feeling that greenwashing is on the rise. Perhaps in part also due to this, between 2020 and 2023 the share of "supporters" of the transformation to sustainability was substantially unchanged (from 22% to 23%), those "open to the idea" fell from 41% to 38%, while the share of "indifferent" people was stable (17%). Also driving scepticism is the wave of "climate change denial" that occurred during the year (following on from the scepticism linked to the Covid-19 pandemic), which obliged the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, to intervene publicly on several occasions, inviting everyone to listen to the scientists.

The Government's commitment to preparing an Acceleration Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda

The amendment of the first part of the Constitution in 2022, which included protection of the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity, "also on behalf of future generations", among the Italian Republic's duties, the very recent approval of the new National Sustainable Development Strategy and the adoption of strategies on specific issues (biodiversity, gender equality, etc.), the spread of sustainable development education in schools and universities, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) investment geared towards the ecological and digital transformation, as well as combating inequalities, and the commitment of many regions and metropolitan cities to include the 2030 Agenda in their planning are all initiatives and activities that ASviS has strongly promoted and encouraged in practical terms over the years. Many specific legislative interventions have also moved in the right direction. However, none of this has set in motion the "transformation" of the Italian socioeconomic system needed to follow the path set out in the 2030 Agenda.

To reverse the negative trends described above and to make up for lost ground, it is vital to accelerate adoption of a political and cultural approach that puts sustainability at the centre of all public and private decisions, as the National Strategy approved by the Interministerial Committee for the Ecological Transition (CITE) on 18 September frankly acknowledges. This also implies taking seriously the final declaration of the UN Summit in September, in which Italy committed itself to urgently defining an Acceleration Plan to achieve the SDGs regarding which it is lagging furthest behind, or for which current performances are insufficient to ensure their achievement. Practically speaking, this means almost all of them.

We welcome this strong commitment made by the Meloni government, but it requires immediate action, first of all to clearly define who is responsible for preparing the Plan. As it concerns a substantial portion of the Goals, we believe that a task force should be set up at the Cabinet Office, and, after serious parliamentary debate, the Plan should be approved by the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development (CIPESS). Secondly, a timeframe needs to be established. The Plan should be ready by March 2024, so that it may contribute to the preparation of the next Economic and Financial Planning Document. Thirdly, as the Plan is to be defined in cooperation with civil society and local authorities, we propose that the Sustainable Development Forum set up at the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security (MASE) be involved immediately.

Urgently implement the National Strategy to gear sectoral policies towards sustainable development

The new National Strategy approved by the Government a month ago regarding the **construction of a robust** *ex ante* system to assess policies against the various SDGs should be followed up, and its definition should involve Parliament. Furthermore, structural analysis of the state budget with regard to the 17 Goals should be undertaken, using the methodology adopted by the Court of Auditors two years ago for the General State Accounts.

The National Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PAN PCSD) envisaged in the National Strategy should be immediately implemented, so that the latter forms the reference framework for all public policies. A similar assessment system should be adopted for **the policies of local and regional authorities** in order to identify their contribution to the achievement of the objectives set out in the National Strategy, as well as the coherence of the public policies drawn up by the Government, regions, provinces and municipalities, which is vital in the current planning phase of the new European and national cohesion funds.

In this context, we deem the introduction of the ex-ante assessment of public policies with regard to their impact on the intergenerational justice criterion recently introduced in the Constitution (youth check) to be essential. This proposal also appeared in the current majority's election manifesto. The relevant methodology should be defined by involving the National Youth Council and other youth organisations active on this issue, using the guidelines developed by the Cabinet Committee for Assessing the Generational Impact of Public Policies (COVIGE), which was published in July 2022.

In order to emphasise to the public the importance of pursuing sustainable development from all angles, and to respect the rights of future generations, we propose the **establishment of a National Sustainable Development Day**, to be celebrated on 22 February, the date on which Constitutional Law 1/2022, which amended Articles 9 and 41 of the Constitution, was published in the Official Gazette.

Enhance and approve the PNACC and the PNIEC. Launch a Climate Law

The draft National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) and the draft National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PNACC) should be strengthened and finalised, with a view to guiding a wide range of economic, social and environmental policies, and adequately managing the necessary funding. Italy should then adopt a Climate Law, as other major European countries have done, if possible, with a favourable vote from all political forces, as was the case for constitutional reform.

Specifically, the Law should: enshrine the goal of net zero by 2050, including intermediate targets, and set a total carbon budget and sectoral budgets that map out a pathway to zero greenhouse gas emissions for the various economic sectors; establish an efficient institutional governance system to achieve the set objectives, defining the roles of the Government, the Parliament and local authorities in light of the current constitutional organisation; set up a Scientific Climate Council that, with technical support from existing agencies, assists public decision makers in the preparation of interventions aimed at achieving objectives and monitoring the results obtained, evaluating their consistency with the intermediate objectives; set a timeframe for eliminating subsidies and other public grants that harm the environment and human health; and establish procedures for the participation and engagement of economic and social actors in the definition and implementation of climate policies.

ASviS's proposals for "transformational" policies

In order to help institutions implement the necessary actions to quickly put Italy on a sustainable development path, including by drastically reducing regional disparities, this year's report sets out a range of proposals that encompasses a broad and complex programme of reforms and interventions, aimed at helping to spread a culture of sustainable development. Some of these proposals entail significant financial resources, while others are at zero or almost zero cost. Some regard possible adjustments of recent measures, in order to gear them more towards achieving the SDGs. Many of them seem to be perfectly in line with the specific Recommendations addressed to Italy by the European Council last July and could be used in the preparation of the next Budget Law and related measures, as well as for drawing up the reforms envisaged in the NRRP.

In a nutshell, the proposed actions include 13 areas of intervention:

- fight poverty, precariousness and working poor conditions, ensure care for the non-self-sufficient elderly, redistribute the tax burden to reduce inequalities, manage migration flows and promote the integration of immigrants;
- accelerate technological, organisational and social innovation in the agricultural sector, and strengthen farms' social responsibility;
- optimise the resources and organisation of health services, mitigate the impact of the climate crisis on health, combat mental distress, addiction and family and social violence;
- improve the quality of learning, combat early school leaving, guarantee inclusion, enhance services for children, and educate for sustainable development and global citizenship;
- increase female employment, ensure care work services and sharing, and prevent and combat multiple forms of discrimination;
- put nature protection and restoration at the centre of policies, respect relevant international agreements, and ensure the protection and sustainable management of ecosystems;
- maximise renewable electricity production and make the PNIEC more ambitious;
- reduce the vulnerable labour market conditions of women, young people and immigrants, strengthen active policies, and improve working conditions;
- invest in sustainable infrastructure, gear the system of production towards Industry 5.0, and boost research and innovation;
- improve land governance, and invest in the urban regeneration and ecological transition of cities and other local areas;
- promote environmental and social sustainability in the Public Administration, and engage more consumers in the adoption of virtuous behaviour;
- improve the judicial system, develop an artificial intelligence code of conduct, and strengthen democratic participation;
- promote peace, strengthen the coherence of development assistance policies and improve their effectiveness, and ensure civil society participation in decision-making.

For each of these areas of intervention, concrete proposals are made, which, if implemented, would enable Italy to make substantial progress towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda Goals, reduce regional disparities and make up for lost ground and delays accumulated over the years. These proposals will be explored and discussed at four ASviS Live events to be held during the first 10 days of December.

Conclusions

At the recent UN SDG Summit, despite the enormous current problems and geopolitical tensions, the entire world confirmed its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda. The summit's final declaration, signed by all countries, bears witness to this commitment, which is no mean feat in these difficult times. As already mentioned, the European Parliament and the Council reiterated that the 2030 Agenda is the strategic option for the European Union.

With approval of the new National Strategy, the Italian government also confirmed its commitment, which must now be translated into concrete actions, especially to ensure that all policies are geared towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as laid down in the National Strategy. Moreover, having signed the summit's final declaration, the Government should rapidly draw up the Acceleration Plan in order to make up for lost ground for the many Goals regarding which Italy is lagging behind.

The Italian people, as borne out by the evidence contained in the report, also seem to be convinced that the path set out in the 2030 Agenda is the only one possible, despite the costs incurred by radically changing our socioeconomic system, which are deemed to be less than those incurred if we do nothing. Rightly, this calls for public policies that assist those who risk being penalised by this transformation, first and foremost by the digital and ecological transition, whilst avoiding the creation of new inequalities and reducing the many existing ones that characterise our country.

Some businesses have also embarked on a significant transformation process, in the realisation that the sooner they invest, the sooner they gain in terms of competitiveness, market share and development opportunities. These businesses rightly expect support policies that are up to the challenges they face, which should, however, reward the most dynamic, most innovative and most entrepreneurial ones, rather than subsidising companies that seek to defend their position or compete unfairly by evading tax and social security contributions.

Aside from paying the usual lip service, among the international community, the European Union, national institutions, Italian society and our businesses, not everyone believes that the 2030 Agenda should be our guiding light. Cultural, political and economic resistance exists, and the battle against sustainability is fought in more or less legitimate ways via the dissemination of deliberate misinformation, which fuels various kinds of denial and selfishness.

President Mattarella spoke about this issue at this year's traditional "fan ceremony", saying that "Many discussions regarding the factual basis of the risks, the level of alarm, and the degree of concern, which are fully justified by what we are living through, seem surprising. We should be fully aware that we are lagging behind. We must act, by increasing our commitment to protecting the environment and combatting the causes of climate change". Just a few weeks ago, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum, wrote: "Once and for all, let us put an end to the irresponsible derision that would present this issue as something purely ecological, 'green', romantic, frequently subject to ridicule by economic interests. Let us finally admit that it is a human and social problem on any number of levels. For this reason, it calls for involvement on the part of all".

ASviS was founded seven years ago in this spirit of civil commitment, engagement and mobilisation of the whole of Italian society, and with the same spirit we will continue to strive to help bring Italy, Europe and the world onto a sustainable development path, in order to achieve a future of peace, prosperity and well-being for all whilst fully respecting nature, of which we are part.

Enrico Giovannini

Scientific Director of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development



The 2030 Agenda at the halfway point



1. The 2030 Agenda at the halfway point

1.1 The Sustainable Development Goals: achievements and setbacks

"At the halfway point the promise of the 2030 Agenda is in peril," says the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, in the UN report "Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet"1, which describes the state of progress in delivering the 2030 Agenda around the world. This statement gives us an idea of the gravity of the situation, based on factual evidence and the awareness that growing tensions between the major players of international geopolitics have significantly weakened the capabilities of international organisations. This is making it extremely difficult to promote shared solutions to the world's major problems, as multilateral diplomatic capacity, which gave rise to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda in 2015, is vital for putting the socioeconomic system on a sustainable path.

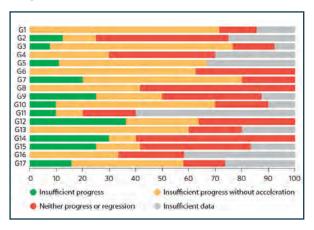
The report points out that, in its initial phase, the global commitment to implementation of the 2030 Agenda produced several important results. For example, the extreme poverty rate at global level fell from 10.8% in 2015 to 8% in 2019; the infant mortality rate has decreased from 20 deaths per 1,000 live births to 18; diseases such as HIV and hepatitis have been more effectively combated, thanks to the collaboration of governments, international organisations, the private sector and civil society; and access to electricity in developing countries has been boosted and the share of renewable energy grew from 16.7% of the overall total in 2015 to 19.1% in 2020. Meanwhile, unemployment has returned to pre-2008 financial crisis levels (with large differences between countries and economic sectors) and the percentage of marine waters placed under some form of protection has doubled.

The pandemic, which began in 2020, had serious social and economic effects and strong negative repercussions, including on the capacity to allocate public and private funds to the eco-

logical transition. Hard on the heels of the pandemic, war broke out in Ukraine, the last of a long series of global conflicts, and there were a number of disasters connected with climate change, setting back or putting at risk much of the progress made in recent years. According to the UN report, taking into account 140 of the 169 2030 Agenda Targets (those for which reliable data is available), only 12% are on the right path to achieve the target values. More than half, however, despite some progress, are deemed to be "moderately or seriously off track". Finally, around 30% of the targets have registered no progress, or are in a worse condition than they were in 2015.

At this rate, by 2030, 575 million people will still

Figure 1 - Progress towards achievement of the Targets of the 17 SDGs. Source: UN



be living in extreme poverty and, in the best-case scenario, only a third of the countries that signed the 2030 Agenda will have achieved the goal of halving their national poverty levels. The growth of global per-capita income is also in peril, partly in view of the recession that might affect various industrialised countries in the second part of this year. This could have a negative impact on the progress already made and on future advances that would help to achieve fair compensation, especially for women and young people, and improve working conditions, given that two billion people have precarious employment, often without any form of social protection.

The figure on world hunger, which has returned to 2005 levels, is also a cause for concern, and at the current rate of progress, 286 years would be needed to close the existing gender and discrimination gaps. In the education sector, the impacts generated by years of insufficient policies and investment mean that in 2030 around 84 million children won't attend school, and 300 million children (or young people attending school) will be unable to read and write.

Regarding the climate issue, the scientific community has repeatedly said that the "window of opportunity" is rapidly closing. We have little time left to keep the earth's average temperature below 1.5C (in 2023 we reached 1.1C)², and, consequently, to avoid worse disasters than those that are already affecting many parts of our planet. Unfortunately, this target seems difficult to at-

tain, given the continual increase in CO2 and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which have reached their highest levels of concentration ever seen in the last two million years. To put the world back on the path mapped out in Paris in 2015, we need to accelerate the transition to renewables, which at the current rate will comprise an insufficient share of energy production in 2030. In 2030, it is also estimated that around 660 million people will still be without electricity, and almost two billion will continue to rely on fossil fuels and other polluting energy sources, including for cooking purposes. A serious lack of progress has also been registered on the environmental protection front. For example, at current rates, at least 25 years will be needed to halt deforestation, while at least one out of 8 million known species risk extinction.

ADVANCES IN WORLDWIDE STATISTICAL MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The need to collect reliable and comparable data on the 169 Targets of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda has spurred significant advances in the field of official statistics, especially in low-income countries. For example, the database containing indicators on the state of progress of the 2030 Agenda Targets, which included 115 indicators in 2016, contains 225 in 2023. The 330,000 data points contained in the database in 2016 had jumped to 2.7 million in May 2023.

Data quality has also improved. In 2016, 39% of the SDG indicators had no standard international methodology, whereas in March 2022 such methodology had been defined for all the indicators. This is vital for ensuring their comparability and accuracy, and also enables robust analysis of the policies adopted by the various countries. Overall, the proportion of clearly designed indicators with good coverage in each country rose from 36% in 2016 to 66% in 2022. However, there are still many areas for improvement, especially with regard to disaggregation of data, geographical coverage and some specific topics such as climate (Goal 13), gender equality (Goal 5), and peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16), for which less than half of the countries are able to provide internationally comparable data.

The role played by national statistics offices in coordinating data collection has also increased, although investment in the collection and processing of high quality official data on the various aspects of the 2030 Agenda (to which one of the Goal 17 Targets is dedicated) are still insufficient. Approximately 23% of statistical offices in low- and middle-income countries are facing severe shortfalls in funding of more than 60% for their statistical programmes, while around 50% have experienced shortfalls of between 20% and 60%. The situation is relatively better for high- and middle-income countries, where 13% of statistics offices are facing severe funding shortfalls, and 50% have experienced modest shortfalls.

The Hangzhou Declaration signed at the World Data Forum in April 2023 therefore emphasises the need for "a sustained and urgent increase in the level and scale of investment in domestic and international data and statistics from public, private and civil society sources, in order to strengthen the statistical capacity of low-income and vulnerable countries, close the data gap for vulnerable groups, and improve the resilience of institutions to economic crises, conflicts, climate change and growing food insecurity".

An overview of the situation regarding implementation of the 2030 Agenda is also provided in a study by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), published in June 2023³, according to which the current economic environment risks exacerbating the gap between high - and low - income countries, so that in 2030, compared to the situation in 2015, inequality between them could widen rather than narrow. Indeed, according to SDSN:

- halfway along the path set out by the 2030
 Agenda "all the SDGs are seriously off track"
 and, in recent years, progress has been slow
 and uneven within and between countries. Indeed, the SDG index shows that, since the beginning of the pandemic, the progress made in
 previous years has stalled. In 2022, the index
 stood at 67%, only one percentage point higher
 than in 2019;
- with regard to combating the climate crisis, at this rate the probability of exceeding 1.5C within the next 10 years is still very high, while water scarcity now affects over 40% of the world's population and it is estimated that 1.8 billion people are dependent on drinking water contaminated by human waste;
- regarding education Goal 4 of the 2030
 Agenda and a key element in spreading a sustainable development culture hundreds of millions of children are illiterate and lack a basic knowledge of mathematics, even after several years of education;
- the greatest responsibility for achieving the SDGs and safeguarding planetary boundaries lies with the members of the G20. Together, these countries account for over 80% of global GDP, around 70% of the world's forests and more than 60% of the earth's population. The G20 should also ensure that financial resources are used for sustainable investment. For example, international financial institutions should incorporate the SDGs and the safeguarding of planetary boundaries within their political manifestos.

1.2 International efforts to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda

The current situation is clearly very serious. This year, the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)⁴, the annual United Nations event set up to monitor the progress of the 2030 Agenda, was held from 10 to 20 July and primarily discussed how to ensure the availability of drinking water taking into account the ongoing climate crisis, the acceleration needed to transform the power system into a renewable energy system, the role of cities and innovation, and the importance of cooperation.

On the water resources front, the HLPF proposed setting up regional scientific centres to share knowledge and strengthen processes designed to include local communities. With regard to clean and affordable energy by 2030, "an unprecedented but still doable challenge", the crucial role that could be played by Goal 9, "Industry, innovation and infrastructure", was emphasised. Indeed, according to the HLPF, innovation can and should be a "turning point" for sustainable development. It was also noted that energy targets are linked to achievement of two-thirds of the 169 Targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The forum also saw discussion on the importance of multilateral processes, which are needed to ensure cancellation of the debt that is overwhelming the world's poorest countries, as well as the need to guarantee universal access to affordable public transport in order to meet Goal 11, "Sustainable cities and communities".

During this year's HLPF, 40 states presented their Voluntary National Review (VNR), policy documents in which countries provide information about the actions they have undertaken to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. For the first time, a Voluntary Review was also presented by the European Union (see page 47 for further details).

Every four years, the annual meeting of the HLPF is supplemented by a summit of heads of state and government (SDG Summit) to discuss strategies and commitments to implementing the 2030 Agenda (see box below). The first meeting in 2019, where the limited progress made in many areas (elimination of poverty and

hunger, the empowerment of women, the fight against inequalities, loss of ecosystems) was noted with concern, led to a joint political declaration⁵ in which the commitment of all countries to achieve the Agenda Goals by 2030 was reiterated, and the decade of 2020-2030 was named as a special period "of action and results", a commitment that paved the way for the "decade of action" proclaimed by Guterres in 2020⁶.

An important event this year will be Conference of the Parties (COP) 28, at which the countries that have ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN-FCCC) will have to carry out the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement (GST) and come up with funds for countries affected by climate change. The event is set to mark a crucial point in the multilateral climate process, even though COP287 will be held in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates - UAE (from 30 November to 12 December) and will in any case be highly significant for a number of reasons, starting with the choice of host country. Indeed, the UAE, in addition to human rights issues, symbolises economic power linked to the extractive industry (especially gas and oil), which is the cornerstone

of the national economy. The UAE has stood out at all the COPs since Paris for its opposition to the phase-out of fossil fuels, although it should be acknowledged that for several years the country has been stepping up investment in renewables and services. However, the association of the UAE with fossil fuels, reinforced by its recent membership of the BRICS nations, is undeniable. Suffice it to say that the summit will be chaired by Sultan Al Jaber, the UAE minister of industry and technological development, and CEO of the oil company ADNOC. Therefore, it will be very hard to conclude COP28 with a clear endorsement of the need to accelerate the transition to renewables and the phase-out of fossil fuels.

But COP28 will also be a crucial turning point for other reasons. After the failure of the talks in Bonn⁸ (an intermediate step in climate policy negotiations between COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh and COP28), the Dubai conference will have to address a series of thorny issues.

THE SDG SUMMIT: CHANGING THE FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

The high-level meeting held on 18 and 19 September 2023, which was attended by numerous heads of state and government, enabled the UN General Assembly to take stock of the Sustainable Development Goals and start preparations for the Summit of the Future, the meeting scheduled for September 2024. The SDG Summit resulted in a political declaration shared by all the participants⁹. This was not a foregone conclusion ahead of the summit, given the many tensions currently rife in multilateral diplomacy. The declaration, which consists of 43 points to revitalise sustainable development ambitions around the world, welcomes and reaffirms the decisions taken during the last High Level Political Forum held in July.

Firstly, governments reaffirmed their intention to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda, which is also seen as an ideal instrument for overcoming the environmental, economic and social crises we are currently facing.

Secondly, the summit once again demonstrated that unless international finance is rapidly and substantially reformed, it won't be possible to build a fairer, more just and inclusive world. Indeed, many developing countries pointed out that they're trapped in the double bind of an environmental crisis and debt crisis, which is why the issues of financial architecture and increased support from rich countries have been widely discussed at recent summits. Regarding this topic, at the start of the meeting, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that to achieve the SDGs, we need to guarantee an annual flow of at least \$500 billion to developing countries.

With regard to the debate on the climate crisis, attention is increasingly focused on the phase-out of fossil fuels, by eliminating subsidies and ceasing coal, oil and gas production.

The items on the agenda will include an analysis of the outcomes of the Global Stocktake, a mechanism set out in Article 14 of the Paris Agreement, which provides for a review (every five years) of the commitments made by states to reduce the emissions they are responsible for. The analysis will enable assessment of whether we are on the right track to keep the average rise in the earth's temperature to below two degrees, whilst doing our utmost to stay below the threshold of 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. However, it's not just a question of testing each country's mettle. The Global Stocktake also lays the foundations for designing future national policies and defines the level of ambition needed to meet the targets set for 2030. Therefore, both Sultan Al Jaber and Simon Stiell, the executive secretary of UNFCCC, have called for 10 the analysis of the Global Stocktake to be an opportunity to "change course" from our current path. This will be a sensitive point in the negotiations, given the contrasting positions of developed and developing countries, as well as the contradictory initiatives undertaken so far by the largest polluters (China, the USA and India).

Another area of debate will regard climate finance¹¹, which was extensively discussed in Bonn, without managing to reach an agreement. COP27 established a loss and damage fund, which should serve to compensate countries that are less responsible for climate change, but which suffer the worst damage. To get this agreement up and running, balanced financing procedures need to be defined and the donor base should be broadened in order to help vulnerable states cope with the consequences of the climate crisis. Some progress was made in Bonn, but whether the new fund should be independent or linked to existing climate finance funds wasn't made clear. Obviously, vulnerable countries prefer the first option, while the rich (and more polluting) countries prefer the second one.

After the failure of COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheikh, the question of gradually phasing out fossil fuels also remains open. On that occasion, a group of 80 countries tried unsuccessfully to obtain a joint declaration affirming the need to take this path. This topic will be discussed again in Dubai. The commitment of richer countries to contribute to and lead the transition towards sustainability is also periodically discussed at other international fora, such as the G7, which Italy will preside over

and host in 2024¹². Under the Japanese presidency, this year's G7 saw the emergence of contradictory signals¹³: on the one hand, the need for stronger climate action was strongly reaffirmed, and on the other, no concrete commitments were made to phase out fossil fuels. New public funding for the gas sector by G7 countries has been seen by many as proof that leaders "are stuck in last year's emergency mode" However, at the same time, the G7 countries have strongly reaffirmed the goal of decarbonising the electricity sector by 2035.

Of potential relevance are the undertakings given by industrialised countries to support international trade reforms and increase public and private investment in order to build sustainable clean energy supply chains in developing countries. This will be done via the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, which Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni also referred to in the speech she gave in Hiroshima¹⁵. However, the means and instruments for this partnership have yet to be clearly defined.

The Italian G7 will focus on five priorities: support for Ukraine, economic security, energy security, migration and relations with Africa. In the words of Italy's chief negotiator, Luca Ferrari, climate and energy issues will be "crucial" 16. International observers hope that the share of investment in renewables will increase, and a clear and unequivocal sign will be given of a phase-out of fossil fuels. The G7 countries will also have to assess the changed geopolitical situation and its repercussions on multilateral institutions, including the increased sway of India, which is chairing the G20 this year, and especially the growth of the BRICS organisation (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which six other countries (Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Iran) have recently joined. This expansion marks an attempt to counterbalance the G7, which consists only of Western countries, although the BRICS countries are extremely diverse. Indeed, the organisation encompasses autocracies (China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Egypt) and more or less advanced democracies and includes various kinds of military relations and cooperation. Above all, a matter of great concern is the dominant role that China would like to play in the organisation, and also at global level. Significantly, all the BRICS countries, including the new members, are committed to the New Development Bank, promoted by China as an alternative to the International Monetary Fund.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, in recognition of the vital contribution that science and technological progress have made to achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed the period from 2024 to 2033 as the International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development (IDSSD), with a view to addressing the complex and intricate challenges of our time through the scientific disciplines and awareness-raising.

1.3 Towards the Summit of the Future in 2024

The diplomatic and political fragmentation described above obviously makes it more difficult to achieve a unified approach that might lead to international agreements that would advance the 2030 Agenda, although the United Nations and other global organisations are not lowering their level of ambition regarding the strengthening of multilateral collaboration. The above-mentioned report from the UN Secretary General emphasises that we cannot expect different results if we don't transform our economic system into a sustainable way of life. To achieve this outcome, he identifies five urgent initiatives that governments should undertake:

- accelerate "transformative and systemic" action over the next seven years, at national and international level;
- promote policies and actions aimed at eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and ending the "war on nature";
- include concrete actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the key points of investment planning;
- implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and mobilise the necessary resources and investment by developing countries to achieve the SDGs:
- strengthen multilateral capacity to address previous and emerging challenges.

In order to help bring about these actions, the UN Secretary General has convened a Summit of the Future in September 2024¹⁷. Guterres hopes that the summit will strengthen United Nations and global governance structures with a view to addressing present and future challenges with greater awareness. The main objective is to draw up a Pact for the Future to make rapid progress towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to prepare important changes in global policy¹⁸. According to Guterres, based on the priority areas identified in this year's SDG Summit (which set out what needs to be done), this pact will act as a "booster shot for the SDGs" and establish how to implement the desired change. To this end, the Secretary General outlined the key issues to be addressed before and during the summit¹⁹, and published a series of policy briefs containing proposals that the Member States will be asked to comment on. These include:

- the decision (which has already been taken) to establish a United Nations Youth Office²⁰;
- the need to give fresh impetus to the Global Digital Compact²¹ in order "to set out shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all":
- establishment of a code of conduct to improve public information;
- new global rules for the peaceful, secure and sustainable use of outer space;
- definition of a New Agenda for Peace²² to provide effective responses to international security risks;
- creation of a new standard to measure prosperity and go "beyond GDP".

The reflection on going beyond GDP is part of a process that has been underway for many years. In 2024, 20 years after the first OECD World Forum on "Statistics, knowledge and policy", a meeting was held in Palermo with the aim of boosting studies on the topic of "beyond GDP". In agreement with the Italian government and on the recommendation of ASviS, the OECD has decided to organise a new forum in Italy, in order to rekindle the debate on collective wellbeing themes and identify future trajectories.

Finally, a "Social Summit" will be held in **2025**, something that the Secretary General has been very keen to organise. Information about the summit is still scarce, but there seem to be many objectives. Guterres calls for²³ "achievement of universal social protection coverage, including universal health care, to be realised at a global summit in 2025". This is also urged by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)²⁴, according to which "universal social protection helps to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and promote economic growth and social justice, as well achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals". This summit could provide a significant update to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development²⁵. Not surprisingly, the preparatory document covers such issues as universal basic social protection, universal health care coverage, adequate housing, education for all and decent work, although it doesn't set out appropriate structured pathways to implement these objectives.

A NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE

World peace, the primary goal of the UN Charter and the main indicator of the effectiveness of multilateralism, is the focus of attention for the proposals to be discussed ahead of the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Europe has recently been caught up in the throes of war, but conflicts around the world have a much broader and more dramatic scope. Official figures report that a quarter of humanity lives in areas affected by conflict. A world war hasn't been declared, but the world is witnessing the highest number of armed conflicts since 1945. In 2021, for the first time, military expenditure exceeded two trillion dollars. In 2021, 89.3 million people were forcibly displaced due to conflicts, the highest figure ever recorded.

In July 2023, Secretary General Guterres published a policy brief entitled A New Agenda for Peace, in which proposals are set out. The policy brief was developed with input from the high-level advisory board on effective multilateralism, and via a consultative process open to civil society; the results were summarised in a report published in April 2023. In the document, priority is given to conflict prevention, to be implemented via an integrated set of measures, broken down into global, national and local levels.

In particular, the new Agenda for Peace (which follows on from the one adopted in 1992) is divided into 12 actions. Among other things, the proposals include: the strengthening of UN governance, with reform of the Security Council to achieve greater "democratisation" of its working methods; stronger active engagement of the General Assembly; investment in the mediation and intervention capabilities of UN regional offices operating in the field; and the allocation of resources to invest in national prevention plans and supranational cooperation, with the help of international financial institutions and regional development banks. Member states will play a key role in initiatives to adopt and implement conflict prevention plans, including the engagement of civil society, with particular attention paid to young people and women, as well as to strengthening the rule of law and social cohesion. Indeed, engagement in prevention is deemed to be an investment aimed at implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and an indispensable tool for dealing with the root causes of conflict. Therefore, Guterres also stresses the vital importance of implementing the proposals set out in his policy brief regarding reform of the global financial architecture.

The proposed actions also include strengthening the capacity to assess the interconnection between risks arising from climate change and the objectives of guaranteeing peace and security. Therefore, "Climate policies must be designed in such a way that they do not lead to adverse effects on societies and economies and do not lead to the emergence of new grievances that can be instrumentalised politically. A business-as-usual approach will fail in a warming world. Innovative solutions to address the climate crisis, protect the most vulnerable, tackle the differentiated impacts on women and men and promote climate justice will send a resounding signal of solidarity".

Other actions recommended by Guterres include: renewal of states' commitment to the banning of nuclear weapons, and the definition of international agreements regarding the prohibition of lethal autonomous weapon systems guided by artificial intelligence, cyberspace security, and the prevention of conflicts in outer space. There are also general commitments regarding the reduction of military expenditure, and the alternative use of these funds for infrastructure and social services.

On 20 July 2023, the Council of the European Union, in its conclusions on EU priorities presented during the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, declared its support for the new Agenda for Peace and its determination to promote the meaningful participation of civil society in decision-making processes in the run-up to the Summit of the Future in 2024.

1.4 Beyond 2030

Looking further ahead, possible scenarios proliferate, especially dystopian ones, as there are many possible causes of a collapse of civilisation, ranging from nuclear holocaust to the alarming social conflicts that might arise from great inequalities between and within nations, and from the catastrophic consequences of an acceleration of the climate crisis to new pandemics, perhaps resulting from degradation of the biosphere. However, these aren't the only possible scenarios. Recent analyses have shown that we have the tools at our disposal to achieve sustainable development in all aspects of our lives, provided that a number of challenges are seriously addressed.

The first challenge regards demographic and social balance. According to the most recent UN forecasts, having passed the 8 billion mark in November 2022, the world's population will top 9 billion in 2050, and then should settle between 10 and eleven billion in the second half of the century, thanks to the spread of family planning policies, and the growing importance of the cultural model based on smaller families, as they become more affluent.

Overall, this is a demographic shift that our planet's resources could sustain, although the large regional disparities in population trends, which will lead to a sharp rise in the population of Africa, should be taken into account. Moreover, a gradual increase in wealth, in the context of a stable population, if properly distributed, could lead to an easing of social tensions. What's more, if the demographic curve continues to decline, leading to a stabilisation of the population by midcentury, then the amount of income to be distributed would rise significantly. Hence the importance of paying attention to demographic policies in the coming years, with even greater emphasis placed on them in international fora than we have seen recently.

However, this outlook doesn't offset the stark imbalances that will create tensions between and within countries, which will lead to large-scale migration, partly as a result of the climate crisis. Most developed countries, including Italy, are experiencing progressive ageing and reduction of the total population, which has serious impacts on social security, as well as on economic balance (decline in overall demand and loss of innovative

capacity). Even China, "the world's factory", registered its first population decline in 2022, losing its position as the world's most populous country to India. This trend is similar to the ones registered in South Korea and Japan, both countries with much higher levels of prosperity, which could affect the development of the global economy.

At the same time, strong demographic growth in other continents, especially Africa, with a population that is expected to rise from 250 million inhabitants in 1950 to 2.5 billion in 2050, foreshadows a social "time bomb" that will be difficult to manage, partly due to the impact the climate crisis will have on the tropical regions of our planet. The World Bank forecast²⁶ predicting 200 million climate migrants by 2050 has been revised upwards, and now estimates that as many as 700 million people may be forced to migrate by 2030, due to droughts alone²⁷.

It should also be noted that in Africa the median age is currently just over 18, while in Europe it's over 44. Every month, millions of young Africans enter the job market with poor employment prospects, which, in addition to fuelling migratory pressure, undoubtedly exacerbates the risk of social hardship. Only medium - and long - term migration management policies, coupled with initiatives to improve the economic situation of the most vulnerable countries, will be able to keep inequalities at a socially "acceptable" level.

The climate crisis is the other major challenge that humanity must address. The aim set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit the rise in the average global temperature to 2C, or better still 1.5C, hasn't been followed up with appropriate policies to mitigate climate change, due to the difficulties described above. Moreover, the policies to adapt to the inevitable consequences of the changes already taking place are insufficient, as has already been clearly stated in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The consequences of rising temperatures aren't linear. Once certain tipping points have been exceeded, irreversible changes may occur. If we continue on the path towards a rise of 3C or more by the end of the century, we might see disastrous consequences long before this date, including the thawing of permafrost in Arctic latitudes, which would trigger the release of large quantities of methane from the subsoil, and thereby further accelerate greenhouse gas emis-

sions. The Gulf Stream could then collapse - an event deemed likely by recent studies - which would make climate conditions in northern and central Europe similar to those currently experienced in Labrador.

Climate change is clearly manmade and derives from the amount of greenhouse gases present in the atmosphere, which is largely due to the consumption of energy produced by fossil fuels. Forecasts from the International Energy Agency (IEA) warn that in the coming years the world will need increasing amounts of energy, especially to meet the requirements of emerging and developing countries, which still need to raise their income to improve the living conditions of their populations. Only appropriate financial and technology transfers, aimed at helping them to use the least polluting energy sources, will enable these countries to successfully tackle the problem of mitigation.

Regarding adaptation, in addition to the national policies already in place in many countries to consolidate hydro-geological structures, cope with extreme weather events and protect themselves against rising sea levels, it will be necessary to operationalise the loss and damage fund envisaged in principle by COP27 in Sharm-el-Sheik, in order to compensate states that are less responsible for the increase of CO2 emissions into the atmosphere, but more exposed to the consequences of climate change (resulting in the problems already described above).

Some common commitments have been made in this regard through 2030 and beyond: halting deforestation by 2030 (commitment undertaken in Glasgow in 2021 at COP26); a 55% cut in emissions in the European Union by the same year; in many countries around the world, ending the registration of new cars powered by internal combustion engines by 2035-2040; and net zero by 2050 in the European Union, and in many countries by the middle of the century (2060 in China, and 2070 in India).

In addition to the speed of the conversion from fossil fuels to renewables, handling these challenges will be strongly affected by technological progress, which we hope will include the production - perhaps beyond the middle of the century of nuclear fusion energy on a commercial scale, the so-called "energy of the stars". If this comes to pass, cheap energy could be available for all humankind. This year, nuclear fusion technology

has taken its first baby steps in the United States, together with expectations surrounding the European-led ITER project, although it's still in an embryonic phase. Similarly, the accumulation of CO2 in the atmosphere could be reduced by carbon capture systems, aimed at putting carbon dioxide produced by combustion processes back into the subsoil. However, for the time being, apart from announcements, the technological results have been scant, and investment by companies in this technology has been low. The vital preservation of tropical forests, and extensive reforestation to reabsorb CO2 from the atmosphere - an area where substantial investments are being made for the first time - are still the most efficient tools for nature-based decarbonisation.

However, these sought-after technological advances must be combined with a radically transformative vision, based on fair distribution of resources, efficient use of energy and materials, the circular economy, energy savings and a rapid transition from fossil to renewable energy sources.

The technological unknowns of the coming decades are spread across other fields as well. Recent advances made regarding artificial intelligence, and wider access to it, have raised important questions about the risk of the so-called "singularity", a coming era in which (according to some futurists) the delegation of human tasks and decisions to machines will have become irreversible, leading to loss of the human mind's capacity to exercise control. Questions also arise about the impact of artificial intelligence on the world of work. While in the past, innovation has always created more jobs than it has destroyed (albeit sometimes involving difficult transition processes), in the current scenario, it's feared that the replacement of human labour by computers and robots could exclude hundreds of millions of workers from production. They would thus lose not only their source of livelihood (thus obliging them to resort to remedial measures, such as a universal minimum wage), but also their recognised status in their community.

Equally challenging are the issues related to bioethics and longer lifespans. While UN forecasts indicate that average life expectancy around the world will only grow by seven years between now and 2100, some scholars predict that, already in the next 15 years, the combination of genetic techniques, medical advances, nanotechnologies and artificial intelligence could lead to theoretical

"biological immortality", thereby vanquishing not only disease but also the ageing of cells. It's not hard to imagine the questions that this prospect might raise, including ethical and social issues.

New technologies should also help in the development of new consumption patterns, entailing less impact on the environment, which is a vital prerequisite for sustainable development. The growth of collective human wellbeing is obviously desirable, but it must be achieved with a reduction in the use of raw materials and greater development of the circular economy, in order to balance the consumption of resources with the planet's actual capacity for regeneration. In 2023, Earth Overshoot Day - namely the day on which humanity has used up all the resources produced by the earth in a given year - occurred on 2 August. Therefore, each year we consume more than one and a half times the resources produced in the same period. There are significant differences around the world: this level of consumption is up to five times in the United States, two and a half times in Italy, and much lower in developing countries.

Can all these objectives be achieved? The answer is yes, under certain conditions, although they will be very difficult, but not impossible, to achieve. In the latest report for the Club of Rome, "Earth for All - A Survival Guide for Humanity"28, published in 2022, via the application of a complex model that takes into account economic, social and environmental aspects, two possible scenarios for the rest of this century are outlined: one is called "Too little, too late", and the other "A giant leap". In the first scenario, an assessment is made of what would happen if the current economic system, which dominates society and the biosphere, continues to function in the way it has done over the past fifty years. The second scenario sets out the steps that would lead to an extraordinary effort to bring about a radical transformation that would put us on a sustainable path.

In the first "business-as-usual" scenario, the world would gradually descend into a state of degradation, with a slight slowdown in the growth of population and the world economy until 2050 and beyond, accompanied by a decline in the employment rate and erosion of trust in governments, and steady increases in our ecological footprint and biodiversity losses. In the coming decades, this model will generate chronic poverty across

most of our planet, and a destabilising level of inequality in the richest parts of the world. Some of the Sustainable Development Goals will have been achieved, and some progress will have been made in terms of our ability to live within planetary boundaries. The economy won't have been revolutionised but will carry on in much the same way as in previous decades. Although the scenario doesn't result in any obvious global ecological or climate collapse by the end of this century, the probability of a social collapse will increase in the years leading up to 2050. In the second scenario, a greater awareness of the challenges we face leads to a sharp rise in investment in the green transition, climate, sustainability and wellbeing (funding is no longer aimed at economic growth and financial stability as an end in itself). These changes will expand financial resources for low-income countries and improve access to investment in renewable energy and green industry sectors. Above all, these changes provide governments with the tools to improve the wellbeing of their citizens, through investment in education, health and infrastructure. The exponential growth of solar, wind and battery technologies, and of electric vehicles, drastically reduces the share of fossil fuels in the energy system. New models of development and trade replace the dysfunctional system that previously perpetuated historical inequalities between countries. Economic inequality is finally recognised as a threat to political stability and human progress. All nations have agreed to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions within this century. The use of coal to produce energy has almost been phased out, and the richest countries are committed to achieving net zero in 2050 or even earlier, while China and India's net zero commitments extend to 2060. In this scenario, the population peaks at around 8.5 billion and starts to decrease in the latter part of the century, reaching approximately six billion by 2100, more or less the same level as in 2000, thanks to a decline in the global birth rate.

Five radical transformations are needed to achieve the "giant leap" proposed in the report: ending poverty; addressing and rectifying growing inequalities; promoting women's emancipation; making the food system healthy for people and the environment; and transforming the energy system by implementing savings and efficiency measures and using renewable and clean energy sources. These five objectives are not new,

and various ways of pursuing them have been described in many international publications. This report's great contribution is to link them together in a dynamic system, showing that, if they are implemented in a coordinated manner, they can provide sufficient impetus to steer the global economy off the destructive course on which it's headed, and bring it closer to a sustainable and more resilient path.

For example, "only" addressing the climate emergency would require a reconfiguration of the global energy system, which underpins all economies, in the space of a single generation. Many of the necessary technical solutions, such as the use of solar panels, wind turbines, batteries and electric vehicles, are already available and spreading exponentially. However, unless solutions are acceptable fair, affordable and inclusive, they are bound to fail. If the energy transformation already underway were to perpetuate historical injustices, it would have a destabilising effect on society. Rather, the framework of transformations proposed in the report, shows that, with a systemic approach, truly lasting and fair success can be achieved.

Obviously, these challenges cannot be met without strong international collaboration, which over the past decade reached a high point with the signing of the 2030 Agenda by all United Nations countries. Unsurprisingly, the "Earth for All" report highlights the need for a total "redesign of the playing field", the elements of which include: cancellation of the debt of countries with low incomes or considerable investment by the Monetary Fund; removal of obstacles to technology transfers; substantial tax increases for the richest 10% of society; new financial instruments to give all citizens a fair share of national income; and a new legislative framework to strengthen workers' rights.

As already mentioned, the UN and other international organisations, as well as political, private and non-profit actors, will discuss possible solutions in different existing areas, including at the Summit of the Future in 2024. By all accounts, the 2030 Agenda, with the achievements and delays registered in recent years regarding its 17 Goals and 169 Targets, is still the blueprint for building a sustainable development path, also taking into account the extent to which governments, civil society, businesses and finance have rallied around it. Discussions on the future

of the Agenda beyond 2030 are likely to begin in 2027, after the end of the term of office of Antonio Guterres, who has generously committed himself to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. But it's patently obvious that it will be very difficult to reach common agreements comparable to those signed in 2015. However, cooperation between countries, with support from multilateral organisations, is the only hope for the planet and humankind, and civil society organisations around the world must do their utmost to step it up.

NOTE

- 1 https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/SDG Progress Report Special Edition.pdf
- ² https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/
- https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2023/2023-sustainable-development-report.pdf
- 4 https://hlpf.un.org/
- ⁵ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit
- 6 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/
- ⁷ https://unfccc.int/cop28
- https://asvis.it/editoriali/1288-17077/proseguono-a-rilento-i-negoziati-sulla-crisi-climatica-in-vista-della-cop-28
- https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/A%20HLPF%202023%20L1.pdf?_gl=1*13goumx*_ga*MTg5NzQ3NDI4 LjE2OTQ2OTg3NDk.*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTY5NjMxODIwNi40LjEuMTY5NjMxODIyNi4wLjAuMA
- 10 https://eccoclimate.org/it/il-cammino-verso-la-cop28/
- 11 https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/path-cop-28-bonn-climate-change-conference-2023-06-16_en
- 12 https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/al-via-conto-rovescia-AEk26bWD
- 13 https://eccoclimate.org/it/verso-il-g7-italia-2024/
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- 17 https://futuranetwork.eu/news/534-3689/guterres-un-vertice-a-settembre-per-preparare-un-summit-del-futuro-nel-2024 -
- https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda The key points of the summit are described in the document "Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow". https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2022/09/Summit-of-the-Future-modal-ities-resolution-Rev-3-silence-proccedure-06092022.pdf
- 19 https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/accelerating-the-sdgs-through-the-2024-summit-of-the-future/
- ²⁰ https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/587/26/PDF/N2258726.pdf?OpenElement
- https://www.un.org/pga/77/wp-content/uploads/sites/105/2022/10/Letter-from-the-PGA-OCA-Global-Digital-Compact-Co-facs.pdf
- ²² https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/priorities-uns-new-agenda-peace
- $^{23}\ https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf$
- $^{\rm 24}$ https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/Flagship.action
- ²⁵ https://www.un.org/en/conferences/social-development
- https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/09/13/climate-change-could-force-216-million-people-to-mi-grate-within-their-own-countries-by-2050
- ²⁷ IPCC highlighted in SDGs Report 2022 (see Goal 13) https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/
- ²⁸ See the ASviS policy brief "The Giant Leap". https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/Policy_brief_n.2_-il_salto_del_gigante_finale.pdf



The European Union and the 2030 Agenda



2. The European Union and the 2030 Agenda

2.1 The EU's progress and setbacks with regard to the SDGs

The European Union's results in the period 2010-2021

Overall, since 2010, the EU has made progress on most of the SDGs, but improvements have been modest and definitely insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of this decade. If the 2010 values of the composite indicators calculated by ASviS on the basis of data published by Eurostat are set at 100, in 2021 12 Goals registered an increase of less than or very close to 5% (the composite indicator for Goal 14 wasn't calculated due to lack of data, and for Goals 6 and 11, the last year with available data was 2020). Only Goal 5 registered a significantly higher increase, whereas three Goals even deteriorated. If we take 2015, the year the 2030 Agenda was approved, most of the composite indicators improved slightly, except for Goals 5 and 8, which registered improvements of more than 5% between 2015 and 2020. Only Goal 15 deteriorates, while Goals 11 and 17 are essentially stable.

One of the key objectives of the 2030 Agenda is to reduce inequalities, as enshrined in the principle "Leave no one behind". Therefore, the graphs in this section show the composite indicators in terms of the European average over time, and, for each year, the distribution of the relative composite indicator for Member States (each point corresponds to the figure for a territory's composite indicator). The grey area shows the range (the difference between the highest and the lowest value of the composite indicator) in which the countries are ranked.

The evolution of the composite indicators for the 16 Goals analysed during the period 2010-2021 shows a reduction in disparities for eight Goals, stability for three Goals, and an increase in disparities for five Goals. If the Goals are grouped together in accordance with the four "pillars" suggested in the 2030 Agenda (environmental, social, economic and institutional), five Goals show greater differences, two of which are social (Goals

5 and 10), two environmental (Goals 7 and 15), and one economic (Goal 12).

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

The composite indicator was largely stable in the first part of the decade. The situation improved between 2016 and 2019, but this upturn was reversed by the pandemic crisis, which partially reversed the progress made in previous years. In particular, between 2019 and 2021 the share of people at risk of poverty (up 0.3 percentage points, or approximately 1.6 million more people), the number of people living in households with very low work intensity (up 0.8 percentage points, corresponding to around 3.6 million people), and the number of people living in dwellings with severe structural problems (14.8% of the population in 2020) increased.

In terms of disparities between Member States, from 2010 to 2016 the average difference between the composite indicators of the five most virtuous and the five least virtuous countries was essentially stable. However, in subsequent years the gap narrowed, as the bottom five countries registered twice as much improvement as the top five. With regard to differences, the pandemic also brought about a trend reversal that has wiped out some of the progress registered in previous years.

Regarding population, in 2021 the top five countries (the Czech Republic, Finland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland) had a population of 61.4 million (13.7% of the European population), while the bottom five (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain) numbered 143.4 million people. Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden) had a population of 47.3 million, and the bottom five (Latvia, Spain, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania) numbered 87.4 million people, the population of the bottom five countries rose significantly (up 56 million), due to worsening poverty in the most populous countries.

GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER

This Goal also reports a substantially stable performance until 2015, while from 2016 steady improvements may be noted. In particular, from 2015 to 2021 government support for agricultural research and development (up from €5.9 per inhabitant in 2015 to €7.5 in 2021), and the share of organic farming (up from 6.6% in 2015 to 9.1% in 2020) increased. During the same period, the increase in the use of fertilisers (up 11.1% between 2010 and 2015) halted, although this performance is still insufficient to reach the European target (a 20% reduction in fertiliser use by 2030 compared to the 2020 figure). The pandemic doesn't seem to have had any negative effects on this Goal, in line with the slight increase in government support for agriculture (up 1.2%) registered between 2019 and 2021.

In terms of differences between Member States, an overall reduction in disparities was registered, due to the fact that the bottom five countries improved at a faster rate than the top five did. The reduction occurred between 2010 and 2019, while the pandemic appears to have first halted the process of convergence and subsequently reversed it. Indeed, between 2019 and 2021, the top five countries were largely stable, while the bottom five deteriorated slightly.

In terms of population, in 2021 the top five countries (Spain, Denmark, Italy, Sweden and Portugal) had a population of 133.2 million inhabitants (29.8% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland and Malta) accounted for 55.6 million (12.4% of the total). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Austria, Finland, Denmark, Spain and Estonia) had a population of 67.3 million people, and the bottom five countries (Hungary, Poland, Luxembourg, Bulgaria and Malta) accounted for 50.6 million, a significant increase (up 65.8 million people) was registered in the population of the top five countries.

GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The composite indicator improved from 2010 to 2015, as well as from 2015 to 2019. In particular, from 2015 to 2019, all the indicators analysed improved, except for the number of hospital beds per capita (17.1 fewer per 100,000 inhabitants). The number of people reporting unmet medical

needs fell (down 1.6 percentage points), and preventable mortality decreased (19.0 fewer cases per 100,000 inhabitants).

Between 2019 and 2021, the trend sharply reversed due to the pandemic, which wiped out the improvements registered in previous years, and caused the composite indicator to fall back to the level of 2016. In particular, between 2019 and 2021 life expectancy decreased (1.2 fewer years), and the numbers of people reporting unmet medical needs and preventable mortality both started rising again.

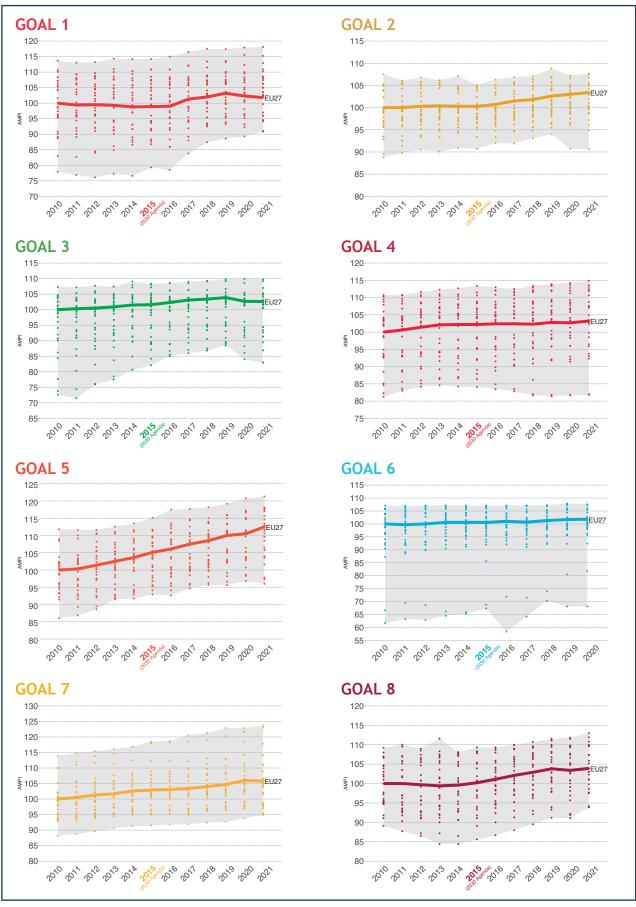
With regard to differences between Member States, an overall reduction in disparities was registered during the period analysed, given that the bottom five countries improved at a faster rate than the top five countries did. In this case too, the improvement occurs between 2010 and 2019, whereas in the last three years the bottom five countries have deteriorated, and the top five countries have largely been stable.

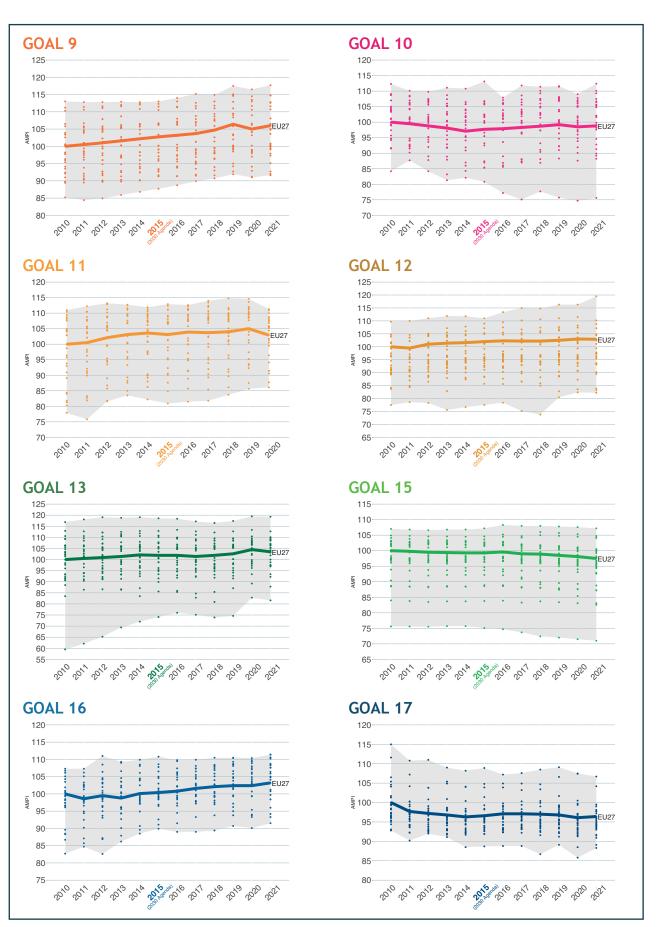
In terms of population, in 2021 the top five countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden) had 114.7 million inhabitants (25.7% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria) amounted to 40.5 million people (9.1% of the total). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Germany, France, Luxembourg, Austria and Finland) had a population of 159.5 million people and the bottom five countries (Hungary, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia) numbered 42.7 million, a significant decrease (44.8 million fewer people) was registered in the population of the top five countries.

GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

In this area, during the period analysed, slight improvements were registered across all the composite indicators. In particular, from 2015 (the year the 2030 Agenda was approved) to 2021, the shares of university graduates (up 4.6 percentage points) and high school graduates (up 3.0 percentage points) rose, while the share of early leavers from education and training fell (down 1.2 percentage points). However, the percentage of students achieving a sufficient level of mathematics and science skills (down 1.1 percentage points between 2015 and 2018) and reading skills (down 2.5 percentage points, also between 2015 and 2018) decreased. The pandemic appears to have halted

Summary indicators for the European Union





the upturn registered until 2019, and it should be pointed that the situation may have been worse than described, as no skills data are yet available for the years after 2019, regarding which experts expect to see a sharp deterioration. In terms of differences between Member States, no evidence has emerged of a reduction in disparities between the best and worst performing countries, which show very similar trends.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Slovakia and Estonia) had a population of 24.4 million inhabitants (5.4% of the European population), which is slightly higher than the figure for the bottom five countries (Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Estonia and the Netherlands) had 38.3 million people, and the bottom five countries (Cyprus, Bulgaria, Portugal, Malta and Romania) numbered 39.4 million, a slight reduction (14.0 million fewer people) was registered in the population of the top five countries.

GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

The composite indicator performed well throughout the time series, except for 2020 when it flatlined. In particular, the period from 2015 to 2021 saw increases in the share of women in managerial positions (up 8.4 percentage points), in the share of female members of national parliaments (up 4.9 percentage points), and in the share of female STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) graduates per thousand inhabitants (up 2.8 percentage points). 2020 saw a sharp decline (the female employment rate fell by one percentage point, followed by a significant increase in 2021, equivalent to 1.5 percentage points).

In terms of differences between Member States, the gap between the best and worst performing countries widened: both showed improvements, but the top five countries improved at a faster rate.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Sweden Denmark, France, Portugal and Finland) had 99.7 million inhabitants (22.3% of the European population), which is far higher than the population of the bottom five countries (Estonia, Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Hungary), amounting to 23.2 million (5.2% of the total). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal) had

a population of 47.6 million and the bottom five countries (Luxembourg, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary and Malta) had 22.9 million people, the population of the top five countries registered an increase (52.1 million more people).

GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

The composite indicator was essentially stable throughout the analysed period. Specifically, from 2015 to 2020 the share of people without sanitary facilities in their home (down 0.7 percentage points), and the share of people connected to wastewater treatment systems (up 2.3 percentage points) improved slightly. Regarding differences between countries, the gaps between the best and the worst performing ones narrowed. In 2021, the top five countries registered no improvement, while the bottom five countries improved their situation compared with 2010.

In terms of population, in 2020, the top five countries (Austria, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark and Germany) had 108.8 million inhabitants (24.3% of the European population), a greater number than the population of the bottom five countries (Bulgaria, Italy, Croatia, Romania and Malta), amounting to 90.5 million (20.2% of the total). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Luxembourg, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands and Denmark) had a population of 40.5 million and the bottom five countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Malta and Romania) accounted for 33.1 million people, both the top five countries and the bottom five countries registered increases ((of 68.3 million people, and of 57.4 million people respectively).

GOAL 7 - CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

For this Goal, the European Union registered continuous improvement between 2010 and 2019, without any significant fluctuations. This performance stems from an increase in renewable energy as a percentage of gross final energy consumption (up from 14.4% to 19.9%), and an increase in energy productivity (from €6.8 to €8.4 per kilogram of oil equivalent). In 2020, the composite indicator rose due to the reduction in energy consumption resulting from the effects of the pandemic and was largely stable in 2021.

Disparities between countries grew throughout the period analysed. The top five countries improved at a higher rate than the bottom five countries. A similar performance was registered in the last two years, as a result of the pandemic.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Austria and Portugal) had 40.5 million inhabitants (9.1% of the European population), which is similar to the 39.3 million inhabitants registered for the top five countries in 2010 (Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, Austria and Portugal), corresponding to 8.9% of the European population. The bottom five countries also maintained a stable population, amounting to 61.7 million people in 2010 (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Poland and Malta), equivalent to 14.0% of the European population, whilst accounting for 65.5 million in 2021 (the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Malta and Bulgaria), corresponding to 14.7% of the European population.

GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

After the overall stability registered between 2010 and 2015, the composite indicator grew steadily until 2019, thanks to improvements in all the indicators, especially the long-term unemployment rate (down 2.2 percentage points) and the number of NEETs (down 2.7 percentage points). In 2020, with the outbreak of the pandemic, the composite indicator deteriorated due to a rise in the share of NEETs and a fall in GDP per capita, while in 2021, with the recovery of economic activity, the composite indicator returned to its 2019 level, partly thanks to an increase in households' gross disposable income per capita (up 5.0% on 2020).

Disparities rose from 2010 to 2013, due to a deterioration in the average of the bottom five countries. In contrast, in the subsequent years until 2019, the group of five worst-performing countries improved at a higher rate than the five best-performing countries did, thereby leading to a reduction in disparities. However, in the last two years the situation has stabilised.

In terms of population, in 2021 the inhabitants of the top five countries (the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and Germany) amounted to 117.5 million, or 26.3% of the European population, while the bottom five countries

(Latvia, Spain, Bulgaria, Italy and Greece) had 126.1 million people, equal to 28.2% of the European population. No significant changes were registered with regard to the population of the first group of countries (the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and Germany), amounting to 112.4 million inhabitants in 2010, nor with regard to the population of the bottom group of countries (Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria), amounting to 118.5 million inhabitants in 2010.

GOAL 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The composite indicator grew steadily between 2010 and 2019, registering no significant changes from 2015 onwards. This upturn was interrupted by the pandemic, but resumed as early as 2021, although in this year it didn't return to the level of 2019. The deterioration in the composite indicator in 2020 reflects the performance of the indicators regarding the share of people using bus and train transport, which fell in a single year from 17.5% to 12.8%, and the percentage of companies offering training to their employees to develop/upgrade information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which declined from 23.1% to 19.7%. Steady improvement was registered throughout the time series in the shares of households with a high-speed internet connection (70.2% in 2021), of employees specialised in science and technology and those with a tertiary education qualification (totalling 48.8% of the population in 2021), and of research and development personnel (1.5% in 2021).

In terms of disparities, the national data reveal an essentially stable situation throughout the entire time series. Between 2010 and 2019, the groups of best and worst performers grew at the same rate, a trend that also continued during the last two years.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands) had 50.8 million inhabitants (11.4% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Latvia, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Portugal) had 49 million inhabitants (11.0% of the European population).

Compared with 2010, an increase in population in the top five countries (Finland, Denmark, Sweden,

Austria and Luxembourg) and a decrease in the bottom five countries (Croatia, Poland, Romania, Greece and Portugal) were noted. The two subgroups had populations of 29.2 million and 84.2 million respectively.

GOAL 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

The composite indicator deteriorates until 2014, then grows slowly again until 2019, albeit insufficiently to return to the level of 2010. In the last two years, the deterioration registered in 2020 was followed by a slight recovery in 2021.

All the indicators deteriorate between 2010 and 2014, especially the net income inequality index (calculated as the ratio between the income received by the 20% of the population with the highest income and the income received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income), which rose from 4.9 to 5.2%. From 2014 to 2019, slight improvements were registered in the income share held by the poorest 40% of the population (up 0.5 percentage points), and in the ratio of the youth employment rate to the total employment rate (up 1.7 percentage points). The latter indicator fell by 2.2 percentage points in 2020, which was only partly offset in 2021 by an improvement in the share of graduates in rural areas compared to those in cities.

An increase in disparities between countries was also registered throughout the period under consideration, including the two-year period affected by the pandemic. The top five countries maintained a steady trend, while the performance of the bottom five countries deteriorated.

With regard to population, the top five countries had roughly the same population between 2010 (the Netherlands, Ireland, Finland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic) and 2021 (Ireland, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Finland and Belgium), amounting to 39.1 and 41.7 million inhabitants respectively, while the bottom five countries saw their population grow from 83 million (Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania) to 126.1 million inhabitants (Lithuania, Greece, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria), significantly influencing Spain's entry into the group of the bottom five countries.

GOAL 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The good performance registered until 2019 thanks to improvements in all the indicators under consideration was followed in 2020 by a sharp decline in the composite indicator, due to an increase in the share of people using cars for transport. This rose 4.7 percentage points in one year, compared with a reduction in the number of road accident fatalities (down 17.6% from 2019 to 2020).

In terms of differences between Member States, from 2010 to 2020 a substantial reduction in the gap between the average levels of the five most virtuous and of the five least virtuous countries was registered, given that the average of the top five countries was substantially unchanged, while the bottom five countries improved their performance considerably.

With regard to population, in 2020 the top five countries (Ireland, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Finland) had a population of 35.7 million inhabitants, while the bottom five countries (Poland, Croatia, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria) registered a population of 70.2 million. Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain and Finland) had a population of 71.6 million people, while the bottom five countries (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria) amounted to 70.8 million people, a reduction was registered in the population of the top five countries.

GOAL 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The steady upturn registered from 2011 to 2021 is primarily due to an increase in the share of recycled municipal waste, which grew by 10.7 percentage points, and an increase in resource productivity.

With regard to disparities, from 2010 to 2021 the gap between the average levels of the five most virtuous and the five least virtuous countries widened considerably; the top five countries improved at a faster rate than the bottom five countries did. It's also interesting to note that between 2019 and 2020 disparities diminished, as the bottom five countries improved more than the top five countries did, primarily due to a steady reduction in the amount of waste generated. However, this improvement levelled off in 2021, as the top five countries were largely stable, while the bottom five countries deteriorated significantly.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (the Netherlands, Italy, France, Germany and Belgium) had 239.1 million inhabitants, more than half of the entire European population, while the bottom five countries (Cyprus, Bulgaria, Finland, Estonia and Romania) stood at 33.9 million people. In 2010, the top five countries (the Netherlands, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium) had a population of 173.4 million, while the bottom five countries (Croatia, Lithuania, Finland, Cyprus and Estonia) had 14.9 million people.

GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

The composite indicator rose slightly until 2014, followed by a three-year period of stability, and then improved until 2020, when CO2 emissions declined sharply as a result of the partial cessation of industrial and commercial activities. In 2021, the situation deteriorated again, with a return to figures close to 2019 levels.

In terms of disparities, from 2010 to 2021 the gap between the average levels of the five most virtuous countries and the five least virtuous countries narrowed significantly, as the former were essentially stable, while the latter improved significantly. This positive performance accelerated between 2019 and 2020, whereas in 2021, when the top five countries were substantially stable and the bottom five countries deteriorated significantly, a downturn was registered.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Sweden, Romania, Malta, Croatia and Lithuania) had 36.9 million inhabitants (8.3% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (the Netherlands, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Luxembourg) amounted to 34.9 million people. Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Sweden, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia and Croatia) had a population of 39.0 million and the bottom five countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Ireland and Luxembourg) had 43.2 million inhabitants, there was a slight reduction in the share represented by the worst-performing countries.

GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND

Apart from 2016, which saw a sharp rise in the number of protected terrestrial areas, the composite indicator steadily declined throughout the time series analysed. Forest cover was substan-

tially stable (43.5% in 2018), while land consumption increased (1.8% in 2018). The only indicator registering improvement was the share of protected terrestrial areas, which rose between 2013 and 2020 (up 7.5 percentage points), but then declined in 2021 (down 0.4 percentage points).

In terms of differences between Member States, from 2010 to 2015 the gap between the top five and the bottom five countries was largely stable. After 2015, the disparities between these two groups increased, with the bottom five countries registering greater deterioration than the top five countries.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Greece and Austria) had 32.7 million inhabitants (7.3% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Belgium, Denmark, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Malta) had 36.3 million inhabitants (8.1%). Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Finland and Slovakia) had a population of 24.5 million, and the bottom five countries (Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Malta) had 38.2 million people, the population of the top five countries decreased while the population of the bottom five countries increased.

GOAL 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Regarding this Goal, the composite indicator was essentially stable until 2015, when it registered an upturn. This trend is mainly due to a decrease in the share of the population reporting occurrences of crime and violence in their area, an increase in citizens' confidence in European institutions (up 11.0 percentage points from 2015 to 2021), and an increase in the provision of digital services to citizens by public authorities (up 18.9 percentage points from 2015 to 2021). The only tricky issues after 2015 regard the average duration of civil proceedings and the share of pre-trial prisoners. In the last two years, under the influence of the pandemic, no significant changes have occurred, except with regard to the provision of digital services to citizens by public authorities, an improvement in prison overcrowding, and a sharp deterioration in the average duration of civil proceedings.

In terms of disparities, from 2010 to 2105 the gap between the average levels of the five most virtuous and the five least virtuous countries narrowed substantially, thanks to an improvement in the latter compared to the former. This positive trend continues until 2017, when the gap starts to widen again.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Finland and the Czech Republic) had 26.0 million inhabitants (5.8% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Romania, Italy, France, Croatia and Greece) amounted to 160.8 million. Compared with 2010, when the top five countries (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Germany) had 117.2 million inhabitants and the bottom five countries (Croatia, Italy, Malta, Greece and Latvia) had 77.3 million people, a significant decline in the population of the top five countries and an increase in the population of the bottom five countries were registered.

GOAL 17 - PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

The composite indicator declines until 2015, and then remains stable. The deterioration in the first five years is due to a reduction in official development assistance (ODA) and a decrease in the share of environmental taxes. From 2010 to 2021, all the indicators analysed deteriorated, except for ODA, whose share of gross national income rose by 0.14 percentage points. From 2019 to 2020, the composite indicator declined as a result of the substantial increase in public debt needed to cope with the first year of the pandemic, while the upturn in 2021 is due to a partial reduction in the latter and an increase in imports from developing countries.

In terms of disparites, from 2010 to 2021 the gap between the average levels of the five most virtuous and the five least virtuous countries narrowed significantly. Unfortunately, this is due to the fact that the former deteriorated at a faster rate than the latter did. It's interesting to note that from 2019 to 2020 disparities increased substantially, as the bottom five countries deteriorated at a much faster rate than the top five countries did; this levelled out in 2021 due to an improvement registered by the bottom five countries.

With regard to population, in 2021 the top five countries (the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Denmark, Poland and Latvia) had 70 million inhabitants (15.7% of the European population), while the bottom five countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Cyprus and Greece) amounted to 36 million. Compared with 2010, when the top five

countries (the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Denmark, Spain and Slovenia) had 78.3 million people and the bottom five countries (Greece, Slovakia, Lithuania, Austria and Hungary) amounted to 37.9 million, no significant changes were registered.

The ranking and performance of European countries with regard to the SDGs

An assessment of the performance of individual Member States, and their position with respect to the EU average from 2015 to 2022, is presented below. The results for each Goal are shown in a bar chart graph, in which a bar indicates the value of the composite indicator for each country in the latest available year (Italy is shown in blue, and the EU average in orange). The chart also shows the performance of the composite indicator compared with the figure recorded in 2015, which is represented by a grey circle.

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

Romania and Hungary registered the greatest improvements between 2015 and 2021, mainly due to reductions in the numbers of severely materially deprived people (down 10.9 and 13.9 percentage points respectively), and in the numbers of people with low work intensity (down 2.7 and 3.5 percentage points respectively). Luxembourg and France show the greatest deterioration, due to increases in the share of people at risk of poverty regarding the former (up 2.8 percentage points), and in the number of people with low work intensity regarding the latter (down 2.4 percentage points).

Italy, which came third last in the European ranking, registered a slight improvement between 2015 and 2021, albeit less than the improvements registered for the EU. In particular, in 2021, the numbers of people at risk of poverty (up 3.3 percentage points), and the number of people with low work intensity (up 1.9 percentage points) were higher than the European average.

GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER

Germany showed the most significant improvements between 2015 and 2021, registering an upturn for all the indicators analysed. In particular, the use of fertilisers fell 30.4%, government support for agriculture rose 35%, and the share of organic farming increased. Finland was one of the

few countries registering a worse situation in 2021 than in 2015, mainly due to a reduction in government support for agriculture (down 28.8%) and an increase in the use of pesticides.

Italy was in third place, registering a performance in line with the European average. In particular, in 2021, an added value of the agricultural sector that was twice the EU figure, and a higher share of organic farming, were registered (16.8% and 9.4% respectively), as well as lower use of fertilisers. Government support for agriculture was particularly low (€5.1 per inhabitant, compared with the European average of €7.5).

GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Estonia registered the greatest improvements between 2015 and 2021, thanks to reductions in the number of people having difficulty in accessing healthcare (down 4.6 percentage points), and in the share of smokers (down 5.0 percentage points between 2017 and 2020). Bulgaria reported the greatest deterioration, registering a 3.3-year reduction in life expectancy, and an increase of 87.2 persons per 100,000 affected by preventable mortality between 2015 and 2020. In 2021, an unsatisfactory situation was also reported regarding 10 EU countries, primarily located in Eastern Europe, which registered indicator values that were far below those achieved by the best-performing countries.

In 2021, Italy was in line with the EU average, having registered above-average improvements between 2015 and 2021. Specifically, the preventable mortality rate (respectively 197.1 and 271.7 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020), and the infant mortality rate (respectively 2.3 and 3.2 per 1000 births in 2021), were below the EU average.

GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

Between 2015 and 2021, Ireland and Portugal showed the most progress, mainly due to reductions in the numbers of early leavers from education and training (down 3.5 and 7.8 percentage points respectively) and increases in the numbers of university graduates (up 8.2 and 11.8 percentage points respectively). Bulgaria, on the other hand, showed the greatest deterioration, due to a reduction in participation in early childhood education and a sharp decline in mathematics, science and reading skills, regarding which Romania

also registered a downturn. These two countries saw a further widening of the gap between them and other EU countries, lagging far behind the other Member States in 2021.

Italy registered a largely stable performance in 2021, standing well below the European average, in seventh to last position. The situation regarding the numbers of university graduates (15.1 percentage points below the European average), and the numbers of high school graduates (down 16.4 percentage points), was critical.

GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

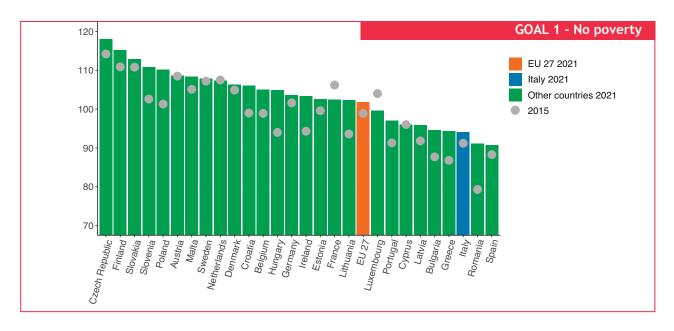
Between 2015 and 2021, Portugal and Austria registered the best performances, thanks to improvements across all the indicators analysed. In particular, there were sharp rises in the numbers of women in managerial positions (up 17.5 and 14.6 percentage points respectively), and in the numbers of female members of national parliaments (up 6.6 and 11.6 percentage points respectively). Hungary, which ranked last in terms of gender gaps, was the only country that showed no improvements between 2015 and 2021, registering a reduction in the number of women in managerial positions (down 8.4 percentage points), and an increase in the gender pay gap (up 3.3 percentage points).

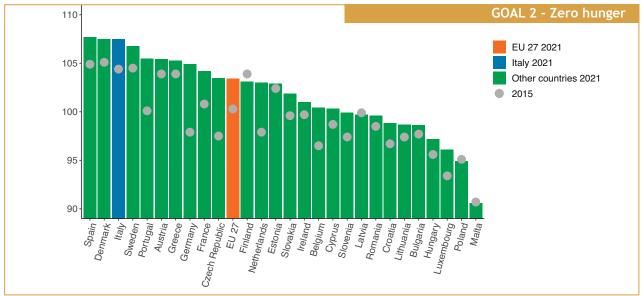
Between 2015 and 2021, Italy reported an upturn in line with the European performance, standing at a level close to the EU average in 2021. In particular, Italy registered performances above the European average regarding the gender pay gap (down 7.7 percentage points), and the number of women in managerial positions (up 8.2 percentage points).

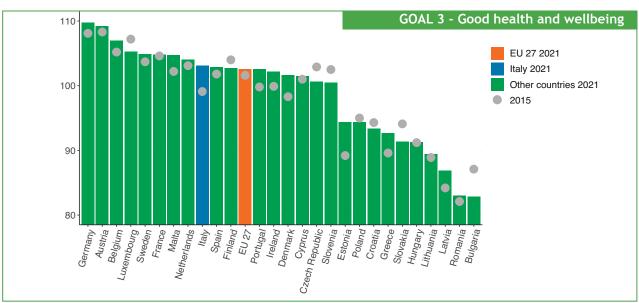
GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Romania and Portugal made the most significant progress between 2015 and 2020. In particular, Romania registered a decrease in the share of the population having neither a bath, or a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household, which fell from 30.5% to 21.2%. Only Greece registered a deterioration between 2015 and 2020, marked by a rise in the country's water exploitation index.

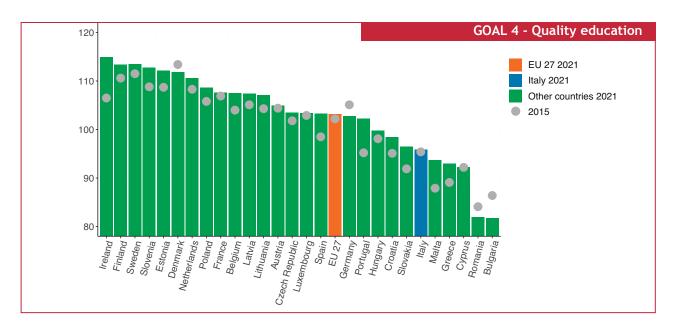
Italy ranked fourth to last among European countries, reporting a slight improvement between 2015 and 2020, thanks to a reduction in the water exploitation index.

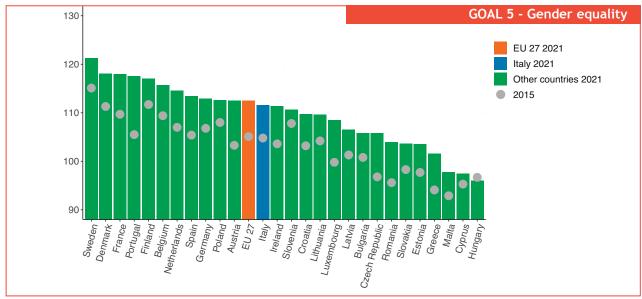


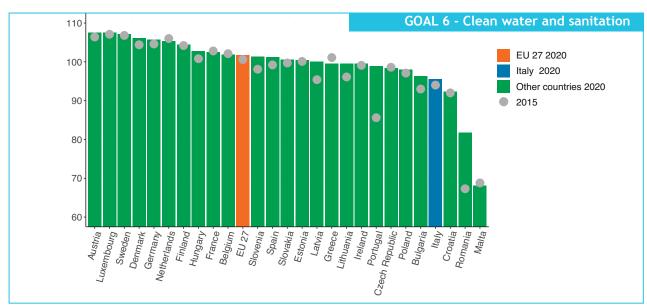


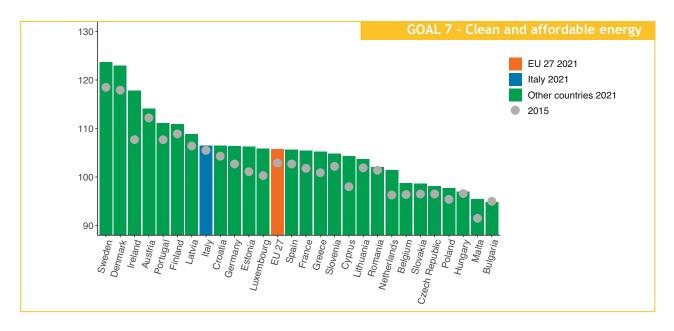


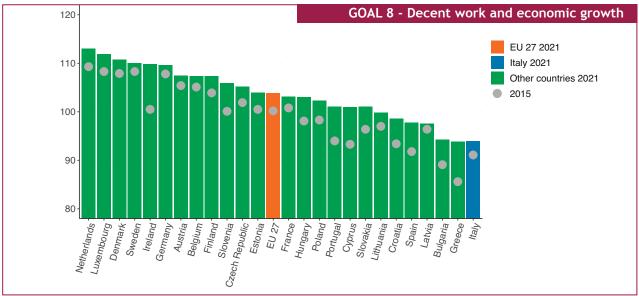


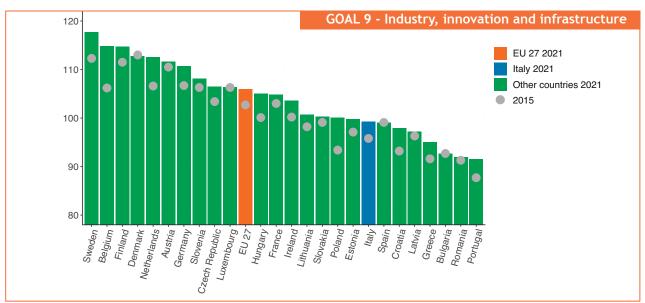


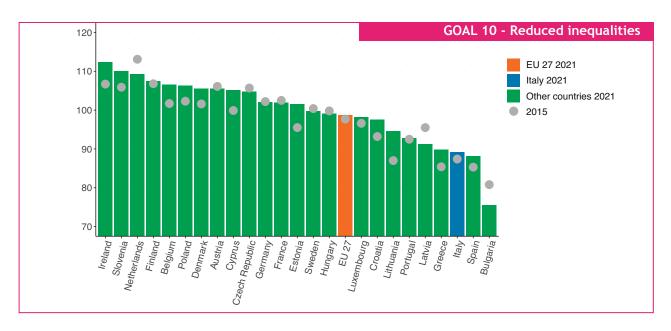


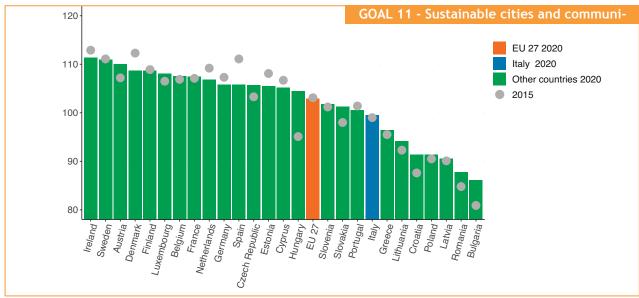


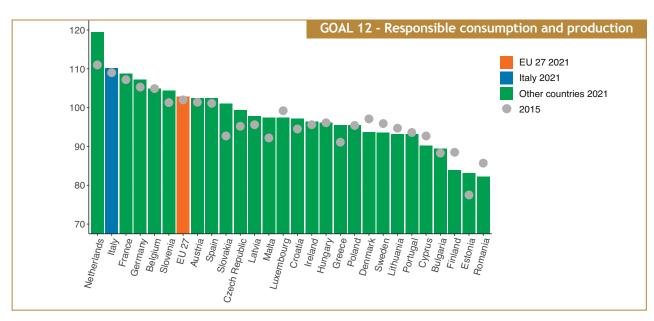


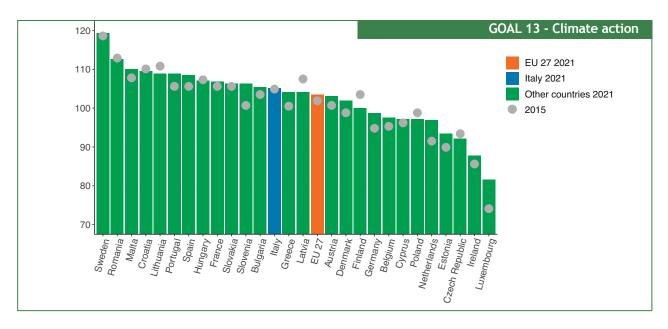


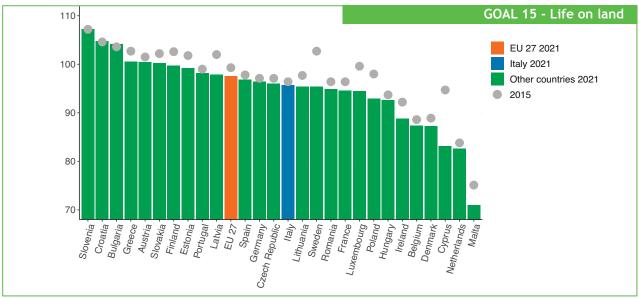


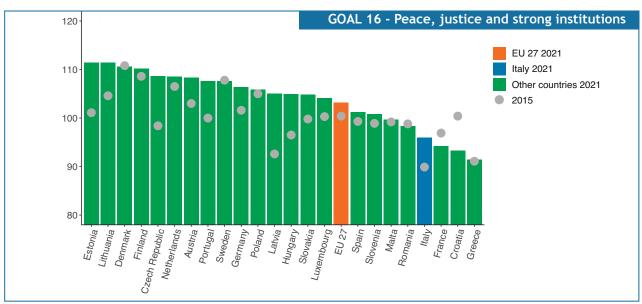




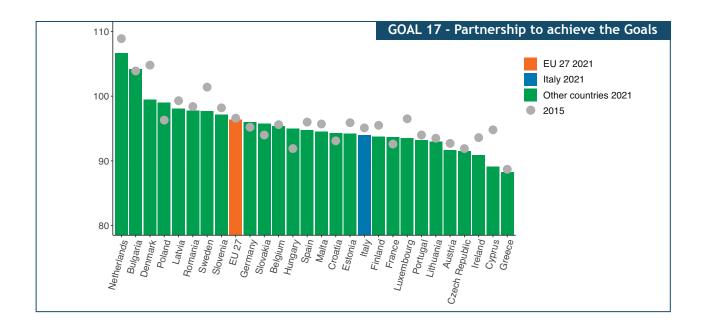












GOAL 7 - CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

Ireland made the most significant progress between 2015 and 2021, primarily due to an increase in energy productivity, which rose from €16.0 to €24.5 per kilogram of oil equivalent. None of the countries registered a downturn during the six-year period, although Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany and Romania reported a largely stable performance for the composite indicator. All three countries improved slightly thanks to increases in energy productivity, offset by lower shares of energy from renewable energy sources that were down 1.2, 0.4 and 1.2 percentage points respectively.

Italy improved slightly between 2015 and 2021, enabling it to rank just above the European average. The share of energy from renewable energy sources rose by a mere 1.5 percentage points, while energy productivity was stable.

GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Ireland and Greece made the greatest improvements from 2015 to 2021, primarily due to a reduction in Ireland's share of involuntary part-time workers (down 25.5 percentage points), and a reduction in Greece's share of the long-term unemployed (down 7.2 percentage points). None of the countries analysed reported a downturn between 2015 and 2021.

Latvia and Sweden made the smallest improvements in the composite indicator. The former registered the greatest progress in gross disposable income of households per capita, offset by an increase in the number of people killed at work, while the latter reported a significant reduction in the share of involuntary part-time workers.

Between 2015 and 2021, Italy was among the countries making the smallest improvements, coming last in the European ranking. Slight improvements were registered for the share of NEETs (down 2.7 percentage points) and for the share of long-term unemployed (down 2.0 percentage points), offset by a higher number of work-related fatalities (up 0.2 deaths per 100,000 employees).

GOAL 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Belgium and Poland registered the greatest improvements between 2015 and 2021, due to increases in the share of households with very high-capacity network (VHCN) connection, which rose by 68.5 and 61.0 percentage points respectively. No country registered a deterioration between 2015 and 2021, although Denmark, Spain, Bulgaria and Luxembourg made no improvement. The increases in the share of households with a VHCN connection are offset by reductions in the share of GDP allocated to research and development (down 0.25, 0.21, 0.18 and 0.23 percentage points respectively).

Italy's composite indicator grew in line with the European average, ranking it among the least virtuous countries. The improvement is due to increases in the share of households with a VHCN connection (up 27.8 percentage points) and in the share of research and development personnel (up 0.4 percentage points).

GOAL 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Lithuania and Estonia register the greatest improvement between 2015 and 2021, thanks to reductions in the income distribution index (down 1.3 and 1.2 percentage points respectively), and increases in the income share of the bottom 40% of the population (up 1.3 and 1.2 percentage points respectively). Bulgaria and Latvia, on the other hand, are the countries that lag behind the most. In Bulgaria, the "ratio between the risk of poverty for non-EU citizens and for resident citizens" and the ratio between the youth employment and total employment rates deteriorated. In Latvia, the ratio between the number of university graduates in rural areas compared to cities deteriorated.

Despite registering a slight improvement between 2015 and 2021, Italy was ranked in third to last position. The upturn derives from an increase in the ratio between the youth employment and the total employment rates (up from 66.6 to 70.8 percentage points), which is still one of the lowest ratios in Europe (the EU27 average stood at 85.9 percentage points in 2021).

GOAL 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Hungary and Bulgaria registered the most significant improvements between 2015 and 2020, mainly due to a reduction in the number of road accident fatalities. Denmark and Spain, on the other hand, showed the greatest deterioration, primarily due to an increase in the number of people using cars for transport.

Italy's composite indicator was below the European average and registered no significant changes. The below average ranking was mostly affected by poor air quality and overcrowded housing.

GOAL 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The Netherlands and Slovakia show the greatest improvement between 2015 and 2021, mainly due to an increase in the recycling of municipal waste. Finland and Romania, on the other hand, registered the greatest deterioration. Finland more than halved its use of recycled materials in 2021, while Romania radically increased its material consumption per capita (up 6.5 tonnes).

Italy ranked second in Europe, thanks to an above average performance across all the indicators under consideration, except for the amount of waste generated.

GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

Luxembourg and Slovenia registered the highest reductions in emissions between 2015 and 2021, while Finland and Latvia recorded the greatest increases.

Italy ranked just above the European average and registered no significant changes during the period under consideration.

GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND

None of the countries showed improvement from 2015 to 2021, and around half of them registered downturns. Bulgaria and Croatia posted the best performances, including increases in forest cover (up 3.3 and 7.4 percentage points respectively). In 2021, both countries registered shares of protected terrestrial areas above the European average (15.0 and 12.1 percentage points respectively), but their land consumption also increased. Cyprus and Sweden registered the greatest deterioration, due to a sharp increase in new land consumption.

Italy ranked below the European average, registering a downturn substantially in line with the European average over time. In particular, Italy recorded small shares of forest areas (down 6.5 percentage points in 2018) and protected terrestrial areas (down 4.6 percentage points).

GOAL 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Latvia and the Czech Republic showed the greatest improvement, thanks to a substantial rise in confidence in European institutions and an increase in the number of digital services provided by public authorities. Croatia and France registered the greatest deterioration, due to increases in corruption and the average duration of civil proceedings.

Italy came fourth to last in the ranking, showing slight improvements between 2015 and 2021 that were above the European Union average. However, in 2021 Italy registered the worst results in the entire European Union with regard to the average duration of civil proceedings and the provision of digital services by public authorities.

GOAL 17 - PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

Poland and Hungary showed the greatest improvement, thanks to increases in ODA and in the share of imports from developing countries, while Cyprus and Denmark registered the greatest deterioration due to reductions in the share of environmental taxes.

Italy registered slight deterioration between 2015 and 2021, which was above the EU average. In particular, in 2021 Italy registered the EU's highest level of public debt (in relation to GDP) and the second largest share of imports from developing countries.

2.2 The EU's sustainable development policies: an initial assessment of the 2019-2024 legislature

The 2030 Agenda at the heart of European Union policies

Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda have been placed at the centre of European Union policies since the European Parliament's "vote of confidence" in Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and her 2019-2024 agenda "A Union that strives for more" at the plenary session of the European Parliament held on 16 July 2019. The agenda was divided into six priorities, the first being the European Green Deal, which included the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 via a "just" transition. The second priority included the objective of achieving an economy that "works for people", as well as more ambitious goals than in the past with regard to social equity and prosperity. The agenda also adopted the European Semester cycle as an instrument for integrating the SDGs into EU policies via coordination of the macroeconomic policies of Member States.

The framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement commitments have been confirmed and relaunched throughout the legislature by all EU institutions, to the extent that the goal of achieving the SDGs guided the design of the measures launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic via the NextGenerationEU programme that financed the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) and the REPowerEU plan, launched in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The commitment to achieving the SDGs was also confirmed in the actions undertaken in 2023, as may be noted in the first EU voluntary review, published by the European Commission on 15 May² and presented to the HLPF on 19 July³, the resolution of the European Parliament of 15 June 2023⁴, the Parliament resolution of 15 June 20234 and the Council conclusions of 20 July⁵. These actions clearly show that the EU institutions are unanimous in supporting an acceleration of the political processes needed to achieve the SDGs in the light of the setbacks that have occurred in recent years due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, and as a response to growing geopolitical instability. In particular, the European Parliament

has emphasised that "the SDGs are the only comprehensive and globally agreed set of goals to respond to the main challenges developed and developing countries will face in the future, and therefore the 2030 Agenda should serve as a beacon to deal with and overcome current uncertainties".

In recent years, the advisory bodies of the European Union, namely the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, have also helped to encourage European debate on policies oriented towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through expression of opinions on strategic actions and ongoing legislative processes, and by constantly calling for greater policy coherence and a stronger commitment from colegislators, to be achieved partly via effective participatory engagement of civil society organisations and regional and local authorities.

In order to turn the above declarations of principle into concrete actions, the EU has drawn up a set of rules to incorporate the SDGs into European policies via a comprehensive governance approach⁶, based on the integration of all the Union's governance instruments (see figure 1). In particular, in addition to the European Semester cycle (see "The proposed reform of the EU's macroeconomic governance" on page 59), the process of guiding the preparation of "better regulation" legislative proposals⁷ has been designed to ensure that each legislative proposal contributes to the implementation of the 2030

Agenda. In this area, the various policies have been underpinned by verification of the European Green Deal's Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle, and by checking coherence with the content of the Strategic Foresight Reports published annually by the European Commission. In order to facilitate consultation and citizens' participation, the "Have your say" web portal was launched⁸, while the situation of the EU and the Member States with regard to the 2030 Agenda is monitored via the annual report published by Eurostat.

As already mentioned, the European Commission has divided the mandate agenda into six priorities, each of which has been linked to several SDGs (see figure 2)9. The progress made by the European Union in the various areas, with reference to political and legislative actions, is summarised below. The picture that emerges from this description confirms the unprecedented commitment of the EU institutions to a radical transformation of our continent's socioeconomic system along the path set out by the 2030 Agenda. In comparison with the decisions taken by other major countries and other geopolitical areas regarding sustainable development, the European Union undoubtedly ranks first in terms of the breadth and depth of its policies, which have also "set the standard" at international level (e.g. the Biden administration's recent plan to drive investment in the ecological transition of the American economy).

Figure 1 - The European Commission's approach to the SDGs

Applying deeply European WHOLE transformative Semester **GOVERNMENT** policies **APPROACH** Engagement of civil Multiannual financial society and other framework & stakeholders NextGenerationEU Monitoring and **Better** reporting Regulation Policy coherence **European Commission** EU engagement for sustainable 2019-2024 in the world development



The SDGs and the six priorities of the 2019-2024 legislature: results achieved

I. Planet and prosperity: the European Green Deal

In the Green Deal, set out in the Communication of 11 December 2019¹⁰, the commitment to tackle climate-related issues and the deterioration of the environment is deemed to be "this generation's defining task". Climate change policies, the protection of biodiversity and zero pollution are included in a new "growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use, and the health and wellbeing of cit-

izens are protected from environment-related risks and impacts".

The Green Deal is broken down into eight macro-objectives via organised strategic frameworks and inclusive plans, some of which have been transformed into binding legislative instruments (see figure 3). Key among these instruments is the European Regulation of 30 June 2021 that establishes a framework for achieving climate neutrality by 2050¹¹ (European Climate Law), to which various legislative initiatives included in the Fitfor-55¹² package adopted in July 2021 regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 2030 and beyond are linked. Some of the original proposals have since been complemented by further initiatives, such as the REPowerEU Plan¹³ adopted in May 2022 in response to the worsening energy crisis triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Figure 2 - Linkage between the European Commission's priorities and the SDGs



The REPowerEU Plan has raised the target for the share of renewable energy sources within the energy mix to 2030 (from 40% to 45%), the energy productivity target (with an 11.7% reduction compared to projections made in 2020) and the production targets for green hydrogen. The package includes specific measures that complement the proposed revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive¹⁴ and various transport sector measures (such as the Regulation on the reduction of CO2 emissions of new passenger cars and of new light commercial vehicles¹⁵), in implementation of the provisions of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy¹⁶ adopted on 9 December 2020. The Plan also includes carbon pricing measures via the revision of the Energy Taxation Directive¹⁷, the revision of the emission trading system (ETS)18 and the introduction of an innovative carbon border tax¹⁹. In order to make the ecological transition "just", a proposal was made to establish a Social Climate Fund²⁰ to finance measures for disadvantaged social groups, in addition to the Just Transition Fund²¹. Finally, the REPowerEU Plan also included a Recommendation²² to Member States aimed at providing effective actions to address the sluggishness and complexity of authorisation procedures, a Solar Energy Strategy²³, various recommendations for energy savings within the EU²⁴ and an EU External Energy Strategy²⁵.

With regard to industrial policies and the circular economy, the Commission has adopted specific strategies and plans that are also reflected in legislative proposals, most of which are currently under discussion. The pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have shifted the focus of the EU's decisions towards adoption of a socalled "open strategic autonomy", in order to reduce the Union's dependence on imports of key materials for European production and therefore its vulnerability to changes in the international geopolitical framework. Against this backdrop, on 1 February 2023 the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the net zero emissions era²⁶ was presented, to be followed on 16 March 2023 by proposals for a Net-Zero Industry Act27 and for a Critical Raw Materials Act28.

The various measures relating to the circular economy framed in the new Plan²⁹ adopted in March 2020, set progress "towards a regenerative growth model that gives back to the planet more than it takes" as their ultimate goal, and have been the subject of several legislative proposals. On 30 March 2022, a package of proposals³⁰ regarding eco-design was issued, including a proposed Regulation³¹ and Work Plan for 2022-2024³², a strategy for sustainable and circular textiles³³, a revision of the Construction Products Regulation³⁴, and a proposal for a Greenwashing Directive³⁵ to empower consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair



Figure 3 - The European Green Deal programme

practices and better information. The topic of greenwashing was also covered in the proposed Green Claims Directive³⁶ of 22 March 2023.

In this context, various proposals regarding waste reduction were also presented, including a proposal for a Regulation on packaging and packaging waste³⁷ of 30 November 2022, a proposal for a Directive regarding common rules on the right to repair³⁸ of 22March 2023, and a proposal for a Directive to reduce food waste and textile waste³⁹ of 5 July 2023. On 15 May 2023, the Commission also adopted a Communication entitled "Review of the EU circular economy monitoring framework"⁴⁰, which includes measurement of the ecological footprint, the greenhouse gas emissions of production activities and import dependency.

With regard to issues relating to the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and the sustainability of agricultural production, on 20 May 2020 the Biodiversity Strategy 2030⁴¹, which envisages the expansion of marine and terrestrial protected areas in the EU by 30%, was adopted in parallel with the Farm to Fork Strategy⁴². Within the framework of these two closely interlinked strategies, the Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production in the EU⁴³ was adopted on 25 March 2021, and the Soil Strategy 2030 on 17 November 2021⁴⁴. The innovative Nature Restoration Law⁴⁵ (approved with amendments⁴⁶ by the European Parliament on 12 July 2023), which provides for the restoration of approximately 20% of the EU's degraded ecosystems, was adopted on 22 June 2022. On the same date, a proposal was adopted regarding a Regulation to reduce the use and risk of chemical pesticides by 2030⁴⁷. These measures complement the ones financed by the Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027⁴⁸. With regard to the soil, in view of the announced proposal for an EU Regulation regarding soil health scheduled for 2023, on 5 July 2023 a proposed Directive on soil monitoring and resilience⁴⁹ was presented.

Climate and biodiversity actions also included the new EU Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation⁵⁰ and the EU Forest Strategy for 2030⁵¹. The revision of the LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) Regulation⁵² regarding absorption of carbon by nature, which was included in the Fit for 55 package, was connected to these strategies.

The Zero Pollution Action Plan⁵³, adopted in May 2021, sets an overall objective for 2050 and specific intermediate targets to be met by 2030, including a 55% reduction in premature deaths from air pollution. In implementation of the Plan, a package of measures was adopted on 5 May to amend the Industrial Emissions Directive⁵⁴, including animal husbandry measures. On 26 October 2022, the proposed revision of the Air Quality Directive55 was adopted with the aim of bringing emission limits into line with the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO), and two proposals were made regarding an Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive⁵⁶ and new standards for the protection of surface water and groundwater⁵⁷.

On 17 May 2021, a Communication on a sustainable blue economy⁵⁸ was adopted, which complements various strategic frameworks that already exist or are in preparation regarding a Green Deal for the sea. The Communication's systemic vision also highlights the strategic need to put the Maritime Spatial Spatial Planning Directive of 2014⁵⁹ into practice.

With regard to sustainable finance, the Commission has boosted the Plan adopted in 2018, by introducing a package of additional proposals contained in the Strategy for Financing the Transition to a Sustainable Economy⁶⁰ of 6 July 2021. In the meantime, the Taxonomy Regulation on sustainable investment⁶¹ was published in June 2020, and then sub-delegated acts⁶² were adopted by the European Commission related to the environmental dimension of taxonomy. Of particular relevance in this context is the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive⁶³, published on 14 December 2022, which Member States must transpose by July 2024, while the relevant reporting standards were approved by the European Commission⁶⁴ on 31 July 2023.

In April 2022, with a view to better incorporating the objectives of the European Green Deal, and by decision of the Parliament and the Council, the EU's Eighth Environment Action Programme⁶⁵, aimed at guiding the design and implementation of environmental policies to 2030, in order to "live well within the planet's boundaries" by 2050, was adopted. Consequently, the Do No Significant Harm principle introduced with the Green Deal also became part of the EU's rules on public finance. Indeed, it was included in the definition of public invest-

ment, especially with regard to infrastructure, and was financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)⁶⁶ and other European funding envisaged by the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

Finally, it should be noted that in July 2022 the Commission also presented a proposal for a Regulation⁶⁷ to measure the contribution of the environment to the economy and the impact of economy on the environment, in order to improve the statistical information to be used in assessing the impact of the European Green Deal.

As part of its international commitments, the EU has repeatedly confirmed its commitment to maintaining a high level of ambition in international negotiations related to the various climate COPs, in order to maintain the objective of keeping the rise in temperature below 1.5C, as envisaged in the Paris Agreement. With regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), thanks to the EU's commitment, COP15 of the Kunming-Montreal CBD accepted proposals to

protect 30% of terrestrial and marine ecosystems and to restore 30% of degraded ecosystems. In June 2022, in line with this approach, the Commission adopted a Communication on international ocean governance⁶⁸. The EU was also one of the promoters of a United Nations Environment Resolution⁶⁹ adopted on 2 March 2022, which provides for the launch of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution, including within the marine environment, by the end of 2024.

Last but not least, on 22 June 2022 a Plan was adopted to make EU trade greener, fairer and more sustainable⁷⁰, on 1 June 2023 the European Parliament approved a Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence⁷¹, and on 31 May 2023 a Regulation on EU trade in certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation⁷² was finally approved and published.

AN ASSESSMENT OF EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), ASviS conducted research, at the halfway point, to assess the effectiveness of EU employment policies with regard to achievement of Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda. The results of the study, presented by the ITUC in New York on 20 July 2023⁷³ at the HLPF, are contained in a specific report⁷⁴, which breaks down into three sections: a comparison of Goal 8 and other related Goals with the framework of initiatives incorporated in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, as well as with the extraordinary measures undertaken in response to the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (SURE, NGEU, REPowerEU); a statistical analysis highlighting the EU's progress regarding decent work and the related inequalities among the 27 Member States; and an assessment of the effectiveness of the EU's external action via its cooperation and development aid policies (examining, in particular, the Global Gateway initiative) and the EU's strategic role in the multilateral system.

With regard to internal action, Target 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan⁷⁵, "by 2030, at least 78% of the population aged between 20 and 64 should be in employment", is used as a reference. The study points out that the "employment" Target is not precisely in line with Target 8.5 of the 2030 Agenda, aimed at pursuing the goal of "decent work", which, according to the International Labour Office (ILO) definition, implies work with a fair income, dignity, equality and safe working conditions. Whilst acknowledging that the Eurostat indicator used to measure what still needs to be done to achieve Target 1 of the Action Plan also includes the working poor, in the second quarter of 2022, the average European employment rate was 74.8%. On the other hand,12% of people are at risk of in-work poverty (i.e. people in work who have a disposable income below the relative poverty line), a trend which is on the rise due to high inflation. Therefore, the Joint Employment Report (JER)⁷⁶ of the European Com-

mission has recommended the introduction of mechanisms for adjusting wages to the rate of inflation in order to safeguard workers' purchasing power, which do not currently feature in EU policy proposals.

Rather than merely covering employment, the pursuit of the "decent work" goal should also encompass Target 3 of the Action Plan, which envisages reducing poverty for at least 15 million people in the EU by 2030. Regarding the latter Target, the study criticises the modest level of ambition in comparison with Target 1.2 of the 2030 Agenda, which aims to reduce poverty for at least half of nations' poor people. Similarly, Target 2 of the EU Action Plan, which provides for at least 60% of adults to participate in training every year (37.4% in 2016), is vital for improving employability, but the measure is only approximately evaluated and lacks evidence to assess its adequacy with respect to the corresponding Target 4.4. of the 2030 Agenda, which calls for a "substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills".

The ASviS study also analyses aspects of inequalities at work (gender and otherwise). The attention paid by the JER to this issue is undoubtedly positive, as is the European Commission's adoption of various initiatives to reduce inequalities and of guidelines to assess the distributional impact of policies in the Member States⁷⁷. However, it should be noted that no EU policy instrument closely and synergistically unites Goal 8 with Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda, and specifically Target 10.1 ("progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average") and Target 10.2 ("promote social inclusion").

With regard to the EU measures in response to the pandemic crisis, the study confirms the European Commission's positive assessments of the SURE⁷⁸ instrument (namely the support provided to Member States to mitigate the risks of unemployment), which provides a positive example of how solidarity between Member States protected 31.5 million workers and 2.5 million companies from pandemic-related losses, thereby paving the way for faster economic recovery. Indeed, together with the general suspension clause of the Stability and Growth Pact, SURE demonstrates that the policies to reduce social protection spending during the previous financial crisis were economically counterproductive, which is also confirmed by statistical data compiled by ASviS. However, the study shows that SURE merely played a limited role as a "buffer", as it failed to cover all dimensions of social sustainability, to the extent that Member States weren't required to prove that their contributions were aligned with achievement of the various SDGs, despite the fact that the EU had chosen the 2030 Agenda as the overall reference point for its policies.

With reference to NextGenerationEU, the study highlights as a critical shortcoming the lack of effective social dialogue in the preparation of national plans by the 27 Member States, as pointed out in the actions adopted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)⁷⁹, the Committee of the Regions⁸⁰, and the ETUC survey⁸¹, which occurred despite the related recommendation contained in the Regulation for financing the NRRPs⁸². Furthermore, it should be noted that the 14 common indicators established by the European Commission⁸³ to monitor the effectiveness of national plans do not include any indicator regarding gender equality and social inclusion, even though they represent specific objectives set by this EU Regulation.

ASviS also evaluated the EU Global Gateway development cooperation initiative⁸⁴. In this regard, the study recalls the critical positions expressed by the EESC⁸⁵, the report of the Counter Balance and Eurodad coalition of NGOs⁸⁶, and the European Parliament⁸⁷, highlighting the need to introduce *ex-ante* and *ex-post* evaluation tools for funded projects in order to assess their effectiveness within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. In the broader context of the EU's commitment to multilateral strategies, the need and urgency to support initiatives aimed at addressing the joint issue of the indebtedness of developing countries and shortcomings in financing the SDGs was highlighted, upholding the most recent proposals of the UN Secretary General.

The report's final recommendations also highlight the need to better align the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the integrated NRRPs with REPowerEU, whilst inviting the EU to consider:

- a policy approach focused on decent work as a key instrument for building the necessary investment capacity to address climate and environmental challenges, whilst ensuring lasting social and economic prosperity;
- a rewrite of Target 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan in line with the "decent work" goal of Target 8.5 of the 2030 Agenda, and adoption of an appropriate set of measurement indicators;
- a requirement for Member States to draw up "integrated national employment and training plans", built up through widespread and inclusive social dialogue, in line with the objectives of the key national strategies regarding the environment, climate and the digital transition, and taking into account changes in demographic trends;
- the definition of regionally differentiated employment targets where appropriate, to be evaluated via effective monitoring systems to measure the effects of adopted public policies;
- a specific focus on assessing the impact of monetary policies on decent work, taking into account
 the level of inflation, in order to maximise the creation and protection of decent work and accelerate the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda Goals;

With reference to external action, the study calls for:

- an approach focused on decent work when evaluating Global Gateway investments within the scope
 of overall alignment with the SDGs, whilst structuring effective social dialogue within the EU and
 with the countries involved;
- setting a list of investment priorities within the framework of programmes agreed with each country⁸⁸;
- coordination of EU cooperation actions by proposing the establishment of a "Forum for partnership
 and consistency with the SDGs", involving the Global Gateway and other development aid initiatives, including those of the G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment and similar
 initiatives undertaken by individual Member States;
- a firm political stance in providing support including financial to the initiatives proposed by the UN Secretary General, such as the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for the Just Transitions⁸⁹, and playing an active role in all multilateral fora in order to support proposals for reforming the international financial architecture⁹⁰.

II. People and prosperity: an economy that works for people

The Action Plan for implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (adopted by the Council, Parliament and the Commission at the Social Summit in Porto in 2021⁹¹) set three priority objectives for employment, training and poverty reduction.

The first sets 2030 as the target date for achieving an employment rate of at least 78% for the population between the ages of 20 and 64, while also setting two sub-targets to reduce the employment gender gap by at least half, and to reduce the share of NEETs aged between 15 and 29, from 12.6% (in 2019) to 9%.

With regard to gender equality in employment, the Directives to strengthen application of the principle of equal pay for the same work and work of equal value for men and women⁹², and to improve the gender balance among the directors of listed companies⁹³, were finally approved, and the European Care Strategy⁹⁴ was adopted. Various initiatives were launched to encourage youth employment. These are summarised in the Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 regarding the Youth Guarantee⁹⁵.

As part of the Action Plan, a package of actions was adopted to encourage inclusive employment, including a proposal for a Directive to improve the employment conditions of workers hired via platforms⁹⁶, an Action Plan for the social economy⁹⁷, and measures to promote lifelong learning and employability⁹⁸.

In pursuit of the goal of decent work, on 19 October 2022 the Directive regarding an adequate minimum wage in the EU⁹⁹ was finally approved.

In this regard, it should also be noted that, in the European Semester's spring package, the Commission annually renews the Council's guidelines regarding Member States' employment policies¹⁰⁰, which take into account and complement the content of the Recommendation related to ensuring a fair transition to climate neutrality¹⁰¹ that was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 7June 2022. Moreover, as part of the EU's global action, a Communication on decent work worldwide¹⁰² was adopted on 2 February 2022, which was followed on 9 September 2022 by a proposal for a Regulation on prohibiting products made with forced labour in the Union market¹⁰³.

With regard to the reduction of poverty and inequalities, a Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion¹⁰⁴ was published on 30 January 2023, while on 28 September 2022 the Commission adopted a Communication on better assessing the distributional impact of Member States' policies¹⁰⁵.

On 18 May 2021, a Communication on business taxation for the 21st century¹⁰⁶ was published, following on from the EU Tax Package¹⁰⁷ of July 2020. EU tax policies will be instrumental in the pursuit of the Green Deal objectives, the digital transformation, and the European Pillar of Social Rights, whilst also addressing the manipulation of national tax systems by the digital economy, including via international agreements such as the global minimum tax of 15% agreed at OECD-G20 level.

III. People and prosperity: a Europe fit for the digital age

Within the framework of the Digital Europe Programme, updated on 9 March 2021 with the Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade 2021-2030¹⁰⁸, the Commission, the Parliament and the Council jointly signed the European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles¹⁰⁹, which enshrines the EU's commitment to pursuing an inclusive, equitable, secure and sustainable digital transformation that puts people at the centre and respects fundamental human rights. In implementation of this commitment,

on 2 February 2022 the Commission adopted the European Standardisation Strategy¹¹⁰, aimed at pursuing technological sovereignty, reducing dependence, and protecting the EU's values and objectives, to be implemented via the Union's engagement in the definition of standards at international level. On 15 February 2022, a proposal for a European Regulation on semiconductors¹¹¹ was presented, aimed at quadrupling chip manufacturing capacity in the EU, given the growth in demand and the need to be less dependent on imports.

In February 2022, within the framework of the European Data Strategy¹¹², a proposal for a Regulation regarding harmonised rules on access to and fair use of data¹¹³ was adopted, while 21 April 2021 saw adoption of proposal for a European Regulation on artificial intelligence (AI)¹¹⁴ (approved with amendments¹¹⁵ by the European Parliament on 14 July 2023), aimed at ensuring that the development of AI respects EU rights and values.

In November 2022, the European Regulation on Digital Markets¹¹⁶ and the European Regulation on Digital Services¹¹⁷ were approved, with the aim of enforcing the principle of equivalence (whereby what's illegal offline is illegal online), in order to make digital market operators accountable, and establish fair competition rules. On 16 December 2020, the Cybersecurity for the Digital Decade Strategy¹¹⁸ was finally adopted.

IV. People and peace: promoting our European way of life

Within the overall framework of the European Skills Agenda¹¹⁹, the European Education Area¹²⁰, and Goal 2 of the above-mentioned European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (which envisages the participation of at least 60% of adults in training courses each year), in June 2022 three Recommendations were adopted by the Council regarding individual learning accounts to promote the training of working-age adults¹²¹. In connection with the first Recommendation, the publication of GreenComp¹²² by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, which defines a European set of sustainability competences and implements Target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda, should be noted. GreenComps include LifeComps¹²³ and Dig-Comps¹²⁴, developed for basic skills training for people who live and work in the European Union. Finally, it should be noted that in January 2022, the European Strategy for Universities¹²⁵, to which the Council Recommendation on building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation¹²⁶ of 5 April 2022 is linked, was approved.

In keeping with the European Union's engagement in this area, 2023 has been designated as the European Year of Skills, with the aim of accelerating the training and retraining of workers, in order to realise the full potential of the green and digital transitions in a socially equitable, inclusive and fair manner. The development of the initiatives has resulted in precise objectives, implementation measures and a governance system, which are set out in the Decision of the European Parliament and Council¹²⁷ of 10 May 2023.

With regard to health, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and following the realisation that health is a precondition for a smooth-running society and economy, a complex set of initiatives was launched, in the awareness that a greater response and coordination capacity regarding European policies, which are primarily a national responsibility, is required to reduce health risks. Within the scope of the European Health Union¹²⁸, adopted on 11 November 2020, various legislative proposals were put forward, including a Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe¹²⁹ of 25 November 2020, and a proposal for a European Health Data Space Regulation¹³⁰ of 3 May 2022. Other health-related initiatives include the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan¹³¹ of 3 February 2021, and the recent Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health¹³² of 7 June 2023.

Occupational health and safety matters are dealt with in the new EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027¹³³ of June 2021, while in July 2021 the Commission also adopted the Green Paper on Ageing¹³⁴, as a follow-up to the Report on the Impact of Demographic Change¹³⁵ of June 2020, which was one of the innovations included in the political mandate for the five-year period 2019-2024.

The EU is also playing a proactive role in the global arena as a promoter of the Global Pandemics Treaty¹³⁶, and in November 2022 the European Commission adopted the EU Global Health Strategy¹³⁷, linking it to the EU's international cooperation measures via the Global Gateway initia-

tive¹³⁸. Connected to relations with non-EU areas, and integrated in priority IV, is the issue of migration. Noteworthy in this context are the new Pact on Migration and Asylum¹³⁹, adopted on 23 September 2020, which has led to targeted initiatives such as the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration¹⁴⁰, and the new Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025)¹⁴¹, while specific supplementary rules and measures have been adopted for the reception of refugees from Ukraine.

Finally, with this mandate the European Commission has strengthened its commitment to guaranteeing the rule of law, including publication of an annual report that contains specific recommendations for each country. The fourth edition¹⁴² of the report was published on 5 July 2023 and includes a section on the situation of the rule of law in Italy¹⁴³.

V. Partnership: a stronger Europe in the world

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a sharp decline in multilateral cooperation and has conditioned some of the initiatives the EU has undertaken with regard to the rest of the world, without compromising its ongoing dialogue with the G7 countries and alignment with the positions taken by the UN Secretary General, as reiterated in the Council's conclusions at the 78th General Assembly the United Nations¹⁴⁴.

In recent years, the EU has signed bilateral agreements with all the non-EU G7 countries in order to work together on the Goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, and to achieve a human-centred digital transformation. The Union has also signed cooperation agreements relating to the same issues with the Asian countries of ASEAN¹⁴⁵ and the Latin American and Caribbean countries of CELAC¹⁴⁶, while at the EU Summit held in February 2022 with the African Union (AU) a joint declaration was signed¹⁴⁷ regarding a common vision to 2030.

In order to strengthen international cooperation, the Global Gateway initiative was launched, and formalised by the Commission in a Communication of 1 December 2021. With this initiative, the EU aims to help support investment in the digital, health and energy sectors in developing countries, in full accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The initiative seeks to raise in-

THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE: CITIZENS' PROPOSALS

Strengthening European democracy by boosting participation in elections to the European Parliament, and promoting transnational debate on European issues, were the main objectives of the Conference that began on 9 May 2021. The most innovative proposals put forward by citizens' panels during the Conference that were supported by the European Parliament, include the election of members of Parliament through voting on Union-wide or "transnational" lists, and the possibility of direct election of the President of the Commission or the use of a system based on lead candidates on electoral lists. In addition, the Parliament would be granted the capacity to take legislative initiatives, which it is currently not allowed to do under the Treaty. Moreover, according to citizens, the Council's decision-making mechanism should be revised, providing for a qualified majority with unanimity required only in the event of accession of new countries to the EU or changes to the European Union's fundamental principles. Citizens are also demanding that the transparency of the decision-making process be enhanced, in order to engage national, regional and local representatives, social partners and organised civil society.

Obviously, any implementation of these proposals would entail reform of the Treaties, and no plans and precise commitments have been made in this regard ahead of the upcoming European elections 9 June 2024. However, a Resolution of the European Parliament of 9 June 2022, does call for the convening of a Convention to revise the Treaties¹⁴⁹ (see p. 155).

vestment worth €300 billion via the so-called "Team Europe" approach, pooling the resources of the EU¹⁴⁸ and its Member States, European financial institutions, and national development finance institutions, while endeavouring to mobilise private sector resources and skills and support access to sustainable finance.

With a view to helping all countries around the world to implement the 2030 Agenda, approval was granted to the Communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 17 February 2021 on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism¹⁵⁰, and to the Communication of 18 February 2021 on "an open, sustainable and assertive trade policy review"¹⁵¹, which proposes reform of the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with the aim of underpinning the organisation's actions with sustainable development, and pursuing the concrete objectives of environmental and social sustainability.

VI. People and peace: a new push for European democracy

A key element in addressing this priority is the European Democracy Action Plan¹⁵², adopted on 3 December 2020. In implementation of the Plan, in September 2022 the Commission adopted a proposal for an EU Regulation on European media freedom¹⁵³, and, deliberately ahead of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament, has this year scheduled the presentation of a defence of democracy package, focused on transparency, strengthening civic space, and promoting a commitment by public authorities to inclusive and effective engagement of civil society organisations and citizens.

As an integral part of its efforts, the Action Plan also mentions the European Climate Pact¹⁵⁴, and various actions to engage young people, including the designation of 2022 as European Year of Youth¹⁵⁵. In May 2023, the Council adopted Conclusions on the social dimension of a sustainable Europe for youth¹⁵⁶, while a specific European Commission staff working document¹⁵⁷, which accompanied the 2023 voluntary review of the SDGs, sets out various proposals for further actions aimed at improving the situation of young people and their active participation.

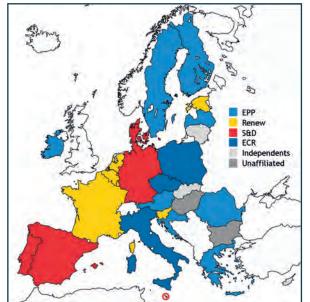
On 8 May 2022, the participatory process of the Conference on the Future of Europe¹⁵⁸ ended with the drawing up of conclusions in a final report¹⁵⁹, which also included citizens' proposals (see box on the previous page. On 17 June 2022, the Commission published a Communication¹⁶⁰ in which it presented a detailed assessment of what

needs to be done to follow up the Conference proposals, with particular attention paid to those to be implemented that don't require reform of the Treaties. Significantly, the Commission declared its support for the European Parliament proposal to reach an agreement on electoral law in the Council, which, for its part, presented a preliminary technical report¹⁶¹ on 30 November 2022 regarding the outcomes of the Conference, deeming that almost 95% of the proposals can be implemented within the framework of the current Treaties.

In order to combat inequalities and discrimination in the EU, the Commission has adopted a series of initiatives for a "Union of equality" (gender equality, protection of LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities and the Roma population). Other measures include an Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025¹⁶² and an Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027¹⁶³, drawn up within the framework defined by the Strategy to strengthen the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU¹⁶⁴ of December 2020.

As part of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025¹⁶⁵, an annual report is published on gender equality in the EU¹⁶⁶, while on 8 March 2022 a proposal was presented for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence¹⁶⁷, regarding which the Council agreed on its position in June 2023¹⁶⁸. On 11 May 2022, a

Figure 4 - Composition of the European Council on 20 September 2023 (source Wikipedia)



Strategy for the Rights of the Child¹⁶⁹ was adopted, which led to the new EU Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+)¹⁷⁰ and a proposal for an EU Regulation to prevent and combat child sexual abuse¹⁷¹.

2.3 Outstanding issues ahead of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament

The presentation of the EU's first voluntary review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the HLPF in June 2023, less than a year before the European Parliament elections, has fostered debate on the path taken so far and the direction still to be taken in the coming years. The European Parliament, the European Council and the institutions representing the social partners and the regions have expressed their opinions on these issues throughout the year, concluding that, given the mounting difficulties in the international geopolitical arena, ongoing wars and conflicts, the accentuation of the effects of the climate crisis and environmental degradation, the high levels of inequality and the major challenges related to healthcare, the management of migration, and the need to ensure the sustainability of the economic and financial system, the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda must be strengthened at all levels, by accelerating rather than slowing down the policies it has inspired.

In particular, the Council, in its conclusions of 20 July 2023¹⁷², stated that "the EU will step up its efforts to achieve a full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda", reaffirming its full support for the proposals of the UN Secretary General described in chapter 1, through the active participation of the Union ahead of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and the Social Summit in 2025.

Such declarations of intent are a necessary but clearly insufficient condition for pursuit of the SDGs, which must be turned into concrete actions, at national and European level. In this regard, it must be emphasised that the political debate on outstanding issues and actions to be taken in the future is strongly influenced by the deadline represented by the elections to the European Parliament in June 2024, and the subsequent appointment of the new European Commission.

While, as described here, the EU has made a significant qualitative leap on behalf of sustainability in the last four years, despite difficulties and tensions between national governments, the European Commission and the Parliament, more than six months before the elections, are already forging new alliances between political groups in the European Parliament that tend to slow down or postpone adoption of the proposals presented by the European Commission, with particular reference to the framework of the Green Deal.

The differences of opinion that have emerged in the political majority, which has so far supported the presidency and the programme of the Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, as well as changes of government in some countries (including Italy), have already affected various actions of the European Parliament in 2023, as well as the postponement of European Council decisions (e.g. the revision of the Energy Performance of Building Directive and the Regulation on the Restoration of Nature). Nevertheless, national governments around 50% of which are supported by centre-right political parties - that sit on the EU Council, have approved the above conclusions of 20 July 2023, thereby confirming their willingness to redouble their efforts to achieve a full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE EU'S MACROECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

The European Semester coordinates national economic policies within the European Union on an annual basis. Established in 2010 after the 2008 economic crisis, in response to the need to better align national budgetary, growth, employment and social policy objectives, whilst taking into account the objectives set by the Member States at EU level, it derives from Articles 121 and 148 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the so-called six pack, namely six legislative instruments. Since 2019, with the new Commission, the European Semester has formally become the instrument for combining efforts to achieve the SDGs in national policies via macroeconomic coordination of the Member States. In particular, the overall guidelines for coordination of national policies are set out in a European Commission package adopted in the autumn of each year with reference to the following year. Then, in the spring, after interaction between the Commission and Member States, the Commission publishes an annual performance assessment for each Member State and prepares specific recommendations, which are then approved by the Council.

In order to strengthen integration with the SDGs, since 2020 national reports have contained detailed analysis and monitoring regarding achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the contribution of macroeconomic policies to their implementation. Based on the country reports, the Commission's proposals for country-specific recommendations highlight the contribution national reforms make to progress towards achieving specific SDGs.

First the pandemic and then the evolution of the European political framework (with the approval of the NextGenerationEU) have called into question not only the application of the rules of the Growth and Stability Pact, which was suspended in 2020 precisely because of the pandemic, but also its structure. Therefore, in February 2020, discussion began on reform¹⁷³ of macroeconomic governance, aimed at drawing up rules to implement Green Deal investments and ensuring compliance with the Europeans Pillar of Social Rights, while safeguarding the stability of public finances. During the discussions over recent months, it has been pointed out that the impacts of the climate crisis on the stability of financial markets and public finances are intensifying, which should lead to imposition of greater coherence between policies to finance the fight against climate change and policies aimed at financial stability.

The reform proposal¹⁷⁴ presented by the European Commission on 26 April 2023 (currently under discussion at the Council) is also explicitly based on the lessons learnt from the Union's political response to the Covid-19 crisis and aims to prepare the EU for future challenges. Via a four-year National Medium-Term Structural Budget Plan (extendable up to seven years), the new rules would enable Member States to implement the reforms and investments set by EU priorities, with specific reference to the European Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, the objectives of the Member States included in integrated national energy and climate plans, and the national roadmaps for the Digital Decade.

It was decided that the reference values of the Growth and Stability Pact, namely 3% for the annual budget deficit to GDP ratio and 60% of GDP for public debt, will remain the same as under the current rules, although a gradual return to these parameters will be allowed via the measures envisaged in the above Plan. The Plan will be evaluated for approval by the Commission and the Council, and annually assessed via the European Semester cycle.

Compared to the request made by the European Parliament in June 2022 and in June 2023, the proposed reform lacks a more explicit and direct reference to the 2030 Agenda, although the new system should allow Member States to introduce complementary support and accompanying measures aimed at implementing the Directives and Regulations approved at EU level, also taking into account the possibility of benefiting from state aid in line with the ongoing regulatory development of the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the net zero era¹⁷⁵. Finally, the reform proposal establishes as a principle the participation of social partners, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders in the European Semester, in order to ensure the definition of transparent and inclusive policies. However, the principle is not developed via a specific obligation to be fulfilled by the Member States, as explicitly requested by the EESC in its opinion on the reform of April 2023.

Also, ahead of the forthcoming European elections, the results of the polls recently published by Eurobarometer, the survey conducted by the European Commission to monitor the state of public opinion in Europe, are particularly interesting. In June 2023, the survey (referring to March) focused on democracy in the European Union¹⁷⁶ reported that the top five topics deemed by Europeans to be priorities for the European Par-

liament are: combating poverty and social exclusion (mentioned by 38% of respondents, 33% in Italy), public health (33% overall, 38% in Italy), action to fight climate change (31% and 28% respectively), supporting the economy and creating new jobs (31% and 43%), and democracy and the rule of law (26% and 19%).

A new climate change survey¹⁷⁷ was then published on 20 July 2023, based on data collected in May

2023, which reveals that Italians are paying more attention to this issue than the average for EU citizens, thus confirming the results of a similar survey conducted in 2021. Indeed, 96% of Italians (93% for the EU average) believe that climate change is a serious worldwide problem (83% of Italians - 77% for the EU average - consider the problem to be very serious, while 13% - 16% for the EU average - deem it to be fairly serious), and 66% of Italians (58% for the EU average) think that the transition to a green economy needs to be accelerated. Furthermore, according to the survey, for 74% of Italians (67% for the EU average) their national government isn't doing enough to tackle climate change, for 89% (84% for the EU average) addressing climate change and environmental issues should be a priority in order to improve public health, for 87% (75% for the EU average) the costs of damage caused by climate change far outweigh the costs of the investment needed for a green transition, for 86% (78% for the EU average) more public support is needed for the transition to clean energies, for 82% (73% for the EU average) a reduction in imports of fossil fuels from countries outside the EU would increase energy security and offer economic benefits to the EU, and for 86% (78% for the EU average) undertaking actions to combat climate change would foster innovation and make European companies more competitive. Finally, in answering the question about who should be responsible for combating climate change (here more than one answer is allowed), Italians apportion 51% (56% for the EU average) of this responsibility to the European Union, 46% (56% for the EU average) to nation states, 43% (53%) to business and industry, 26% (36%) to regional and local authorities, and 20% (35%) personally to respondents.

The European Parliament's stance

Projections made in July 2023¹⁷⁸ regarding the composition of the future European Parliament show a sharp reduction in the numbers of party members representing the current majority (PES, Renew, EPP) and of the Greens/EFA group, and a net increase in the Conservatives/reformists and the unaffiliated. Albeit down compared to the previous election result, the current centre-left alliance would, however, still have an absolute majority (with 390 seats out of 705), with a gap of 12 seats compared to a hypothetical alliance of the EPP with the entire right-wing camp.

In its latest Resolution¹⁷⁹, as in its previous Resolution¹⁸⁰ of June 2022, the European Parliament pointed out many outstanding issues, highlighting some of the EU's shortcomings in advancing the commitments of the 2030 Agenda, despite the efforts made and the results achieved so far.

In particular, the European Parliament emphasised the lack of a comprehensive EU strategy for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including more effective governance instruments and a periodic update process. According to the Parliament, this strategy should include:

- a new governance framework, led by a single high-level European Commissioner;
- a revised set of goals and indicators that are concrete, measurable, valid at EU level and time-bound;
- an up-to-date monitoring system that ensures a minimum level of data disaggregation, which takes into account regional and local geographical location, demographic aspects and the internal and external impact of the Union's economic activities;
- the introduction of indicators that measure wellbeing "beyond GDP", such as the new inequality marker¹⁸¹;
- a single integrated financial plan that refers to the various relevant policies, the lack of which prevents thorough monitoring of expenditure for achievement of the SDGs in the EU budget;
- a plan for the EUs diplomacy and international cooperation geared towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda, led by a "special envoy for the SDGs";
- establishment of a participatory platform involving all civil society actors and regional and local governments, and preparation of a public awareness raising and media engagement plan.

The Parliament then proposed that reform of the European Semester cycle (see box on p. 59) be more strongly linked to coordination of policies aimed at achieving the SDGs, via an integrated and coherent approach based on a new "sustainable development pact", so that the recommendations for countries also regard commitments to achieving the SDGs.

Furthermore, the Parliament requested that the European Semester be implemented via a structured participatory process involving civil society and community-based organisations, the private sector (including SMEs), trade unions, cooperatives, academia and research institutes, regional and local authorities, and "marginalised groups".

The European Parliament also highlighted cases of incoherent European policies that are still widespread in various EU sectors, especially "food, energy, trade and taxation policies, which have particularly worrying impacts on developing countries". Therefore, it deems it necessary to ensure adequate funding for developing countries' actions aimed at achieving the SDGs, which can only be brought about via a radical overhaul of the global financial architecture based on alignment of the actions of the various institutions, taking into account the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and global commitments on biodiversity.

Echoing the positions set out by Secretary General Guterres, the Parliament also calls for the worsening debt situation of developing countries to be addressed, by drawing up "a new contract between the North and the South" that sets rules to prevent new debt crises.

The Council's stance

In its above-mentioned Conclusions on EU priorities in the context of the United Nations during the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, The European Council, in keeping with the proposals made by Secretary General Guterres, upheld the need to reform the global financial architecture¹⁸² "for the benefit of the most vulnerable, whilst safeguarding global public goods", and stressed the importance of mobilising additional financial resources in the meantime, in line with Guterres's request, as part of the SDG Stimulus Plan¹⁸³ (at least \$500 billion per year to be allocated to developing countries).

Ahead of the Summit of the Future¹⁸⁴ in September 2024, the European Council, as mentioned in the report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism¹⁸⁵ appointed by Secretary Guterres, also confirmed its support for several of the other points to be discussed at the summit:

 an Agenda for Peace based on strengthening the United Nations' conflict prevention capacity, and on reform of the UN Security Council (with better structuring of global democratic mechanisms and greater participation in decision-making by under-represented regions,

- with actions regarding the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, accompanied by the definition of multilateral regimes to control arms exports);
- creation of a platform to provide a more coordinated and coherent global response to complex global crises, prioritising the needs of the most vulnerable and most affected communities;
- a global "digital pact" that integrates shared, human-centred principles based on respect for human rights, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by new technologies, in order to accelerate and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs;
- a global code of conduct regarding the trustworthiness of information on digital platforms, aimed at ensuring that individual information sector actors are held accountable, and supporting capacity building to promote disinformation-proof societies;
- meaningful and systematic engagement of young people in all UN decision-making processes, including by guaranteeing quality education, in line with the ambitions of the Transforming Education Summit¹⁸⁶ of September 2022.

Finally, the Council expressed its determination to promote the meaningful participation of a diverse and independent civil society, and of all other stakeholders, in the decision-making processes of the United Nations.

The positions of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

The participation of civil society in the life of the European Union primarily takes place via the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). Through consultation with various civil society organisations, the EESC has set out its point of view on the EU voluntary review in a specific report¹⁸⁷, which was presented in July 2023. In particular, the EESC has made recommendations for each Goal of the 2030 Agenda, proposing three key actions:

 definition of an overall EU strategy for the SDGs, as also requested by the European Parliament, in order to strengthen the connections between the various existing sectoral strategies, and set out a plan of initiatives to be implemented, also taking into account the impacts of EU decisions on other countries;

- move beyond the approach based on the individual SDGs, so as to take into account the interactions between them. In order to provide a more operational and holistic framework for the implementation and assessment of the SDGs, it is proposed to take account of the six strategic areas defined in certain studies, including the report by independent scientists¹⁸⁸ established by the UN Secretary General: human wellbeing and capacity; sustainable and just economies; sustainable food systems and healthy diets; decarbonisation and universal access to energy; urban and peri-urban development; common environmental goods;
- significant engagement of civil society, either by relaunching the participatory platform on the SDGs or, as also requested by the European Parliament, via a new multistakeholder and multilevel forum, also involving local communities.

In its opinion on reform of the European Semester¹⁸⁹ of 27 April 2023, the EESC also requested that social partners and civil society organisations be involved in the consultation process in a permanent and structured manner, by means of a specific or pre-existing body to which these functions are legally attributed. Without prejudice to the freedom of each Member State to identify relevant bodies and procedures for engagement, the committee also proposed definition of regulations that provide basic criteria and principles to be used by individual states, including: deadlines, procedures for meetings and public access to documentation, and public communication of government proposals and responses.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), in its opinion on the state of progress of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁹⁰ of 8 February 2023, **clearly expressed its support for the 2030 Agenda**, affirming that "all efforts and initiatives aimed at crisis resolution may be seen as an opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, and to give fresh impetus to this process".

The committee called for greater EU commitment and an integrated strategy for the implementation of the SDGs, based on a detailed definition of specific targets and integration of the country recommendations of the European Semester with those aimed at achievement of the

SDGs. The committee also stressed that a bottom-up approach should be adopted for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with regional and local authorities having a greater capacity to engage the various economic and social partners, as well as highlighting the need for local and regional authorities to prepare voluntary local reviews to be incorporated into national reviews, the European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

2.4 Strategic foresight for the European Union

One of the innovations of the von der Leyen Commission's mandate has been the focus on strategic foresight as a tool for anticipating future risks and seizing opportunities, with a view to mapping out possible transition paths, and thereby preparing the EU to withstand shocks and shape the future we want. Accordingly, the Commission publishes a yearly report on this topic, in order to integrate the process of checking the adequacy of legislative proposals, as envisaged in the Better Regulation programme.

The 2020 report also introduced monitoring of Member States' resilience to economic, social and environmental shocks, which was subsequently included within the framework of the European Semester. In parallel, a network of "ministers for the future" was set up to draw the attention of national governments to these issues.

The European Commission's analysis and projections actually look beyond 2030, pursuing the objective of shaping the transition towards a green, digital and just Europe, affirming coherence with the values enshrined in the Treaties and with the political guidelines of President von der Leyen's mandate, and taking into account various megatrends, such as climate and environmental changes, technological developments, demographic trends, and geopolitics. These future projections are clearly similar to those made at the United Nations and what has been established, on the basis of scientific evidence, in the 2030 Agenda, namely the action plan in UN Declaration Rio+20 "The Future We Want". In order to strengthen the effectiveness of strategic foresight and alignment with the response to global challenges, the European Parliament in particular recommends in its Resolution on Better Regulation¹⁹¹ that the results of the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) be systematically taken into account during the preparation of annual reports.

The report published in July 2023¹⁹² focused on sustainability and people's wellbeing, at the heart of Europe's open strategic autonomy (a central theme of political discussions at European and national level). In analysing the various

aspects of the topic, the Commission highlights the critical aspects of questioning the foundations of multilateralism and the rules-based international order, stemming from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the strategic decisions made by China and the United States, which are "galvanising global geopolitical, economic and technological rivalry". Moreover, the Commission points out that the pandemic, war and growing geo-economic confrontation have highlighted the fragility of global supply chains and the EU's vulnerability to strategic dependence, which can also hamper the flow of green goods, services and technologies.

To address this situation, the Commission suggests that any solutions must entail the reshoring of industrial production, highlighting the urgent need for powerful responses to support a reformed multilateralism. It also stresses that opting for sustainability will be a prime source of long-term competitive advantage for the EU. Indeed, "avoiding the disruption of critical natural systems, such as the water cycle, respecting planetary boundaries and halting biodiversity loss" are essential preconditions for building resilient societies and sustainable economies that are able to manage the dense network of interdependencies between the economy, the environment and social needs.

The Commission underlines the risk posed by questioning policies related to the transition to sustainability. In an analysis of the state of health of democracy in EU countries, the report describes the "disenfranchisement, growing discontent, and lack of a positive agenda", combined with "an erosion of trust in public institutions, polarisation, and an enhanced appeal of extremist, autocratic or populist movements", and increasingly situations in which political leaders are considered more important than political parties. In this context, the polarisation of political debate is fuelled and amplified by disinformation, social media group dynamics and "algorithmic bias".

In order to meet the challenges identified, the Commission sets out 10 key areas for action (figure 5), recommending in the first point a new European social contract fit for a sustainable future. This should be implemented by committing the Member States to develop a high-quality welfare state that improves people's ability to contribute to the economy, while realising their potential and personal aspirations.

Several areas of action regard a change in production and consumption patterns aimed at combating climate change and reducing our ecological footprint, with the support of reforms and appropriate financing measures, via public budgets in keeping with these objectives, and the adoption of metrics that go beyond GDP and reflect the interdependence of economic activities, people's wellbeing and the environment.

Another key area for action is the engagement of the EU and Member States in all multilateral forums, in order to define and promote the instruments needed to pursue the SDGs and contribute to the debate on their future after 2030. A particularly innovative aspect is the integration of the concepts of "civil prevention" and "civil protection", which entails strengthening capacities to strategically foresee potential disastrous events and prepare responses to their impact.

In its conclusions, the Commission emphasises the need to build a positive vision and preserve a sense of opportunity and optimism as a vital factor in building broad democratic support for the necessary changes. "For current and future generations of Europeans, this will mean living healthier and longer lives, finding private and professional fulfilment and having a greater say in the future they want".

Figure 5 - The European Commission's Strategic Foresight 2023 areas for action

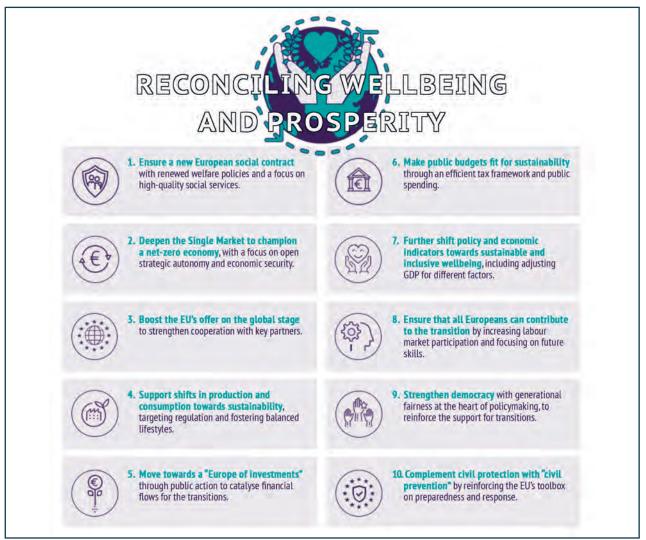
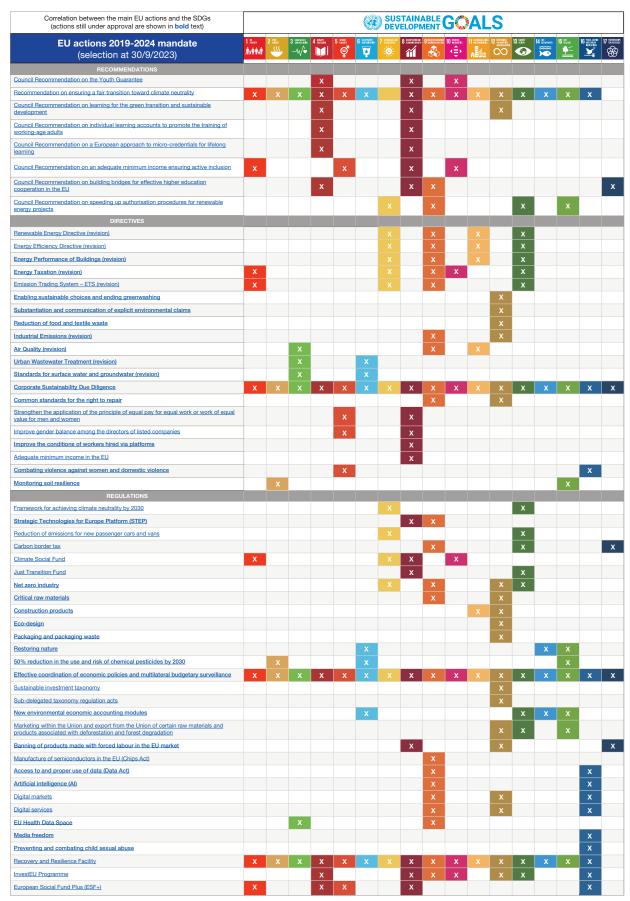


Table 1

Correlation between the main EU actions and the SDGs (actions still under approval are shown in bold text) EU actions 2019-2024 mandate (selection at 30/9/2023)	SUSTAINABLE GOALS																
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STRATEGIES, PROGRAMMES, ACTION PLANS																	
European Green Deal		Х				Х	Х		Х		Х	Х	х	Х	Х		Х
European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan	Х		Х	Х	Х			Х	_	Х						Х	х
Digital Compass of the Digital Decade 2021-2030				Х					Х							Х	х
Better Regulation system																Х	
New Circular Economy Plan									Х		Х	Х					
Eco-design Work Plan 2022-2024							Х		Х			Х					
Sustainable and Circular Textiles Strategy									Х		Х	Х					
Eco-design proposals package									Х			Х					
Revised monitoring framework for the circular economy							Х					Х	Х	Х			Х
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030											Х			Х			
Farm to Fork Strategy			Х											Х	Х		
Organic Farming Strategy															Х		
EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy		Х							Х		Х		Х	Х	Х		
EU Forest Strategy for 2030							Х					Х	Х		Х		
Common Agricultural Policy 203-2027															Х		
Zero Pollution Action Plan		Х							Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х		
Fit for 55 package	Х												Х				
REPowerEU Plan	Х								Х				Х				
Hydrogen Strategy for a Climate-Neutral Europe	Х								Х				Х				
Solar Energy Strategy									Х		Х		Х				
Energy Efficiency in the EU											Х		Х				
EU External Energy Strategy													Х				Х
Sustainable Blue Economy									Х				Х				
Strategy for Financing the Transition to a Sustainable Economy		Х					Х	Х	Х		Х	Х	х	Х	Х		Х
EU International Ocean Governance Strategy														Х			Х
Making EU trade agreements greener, fairer and more sustainable										Х			Х				Х
Social Economy Action Plan								Х		Х							
Better assessing the distributional impact of Member States' policies	Х							Х		Х							
Corporate taxation in the 21st century								Х	Х	Х							х
EU Tax Action Plan								Х		Х			Х	Х	Х		Х
EU Care Strategy	Х		Х		Х			Х		Х							
Decent work worldwide	Х							Х				Х					Х
EU Standardisation Strategy									Х			Х					Х
EU Data Strategy									Х							Х	
New Cybersecurity Strategy the Digital Decade									Х							Х	
EU Skills Agenda				Х				Х									
EU Education Area				Х				Х									
EU Strategy for Universities				Х				Х									Х
Decision of the European Parliament and Council on the European Year of Skills 2023				х				х									
European Health Union			Х							Х						Х	х
EU Pharmaceutical Strategy			Х									Х					х
EU Beating Cancer Plan		х	х					Х		Х		Х					
Comprehensive approach to mental health			Х					х									
EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027			Х					х									
Green Paper on Ageing	Х		Х							х						х	
EU Global Health Strategy			Х														Х
New Pact on Migration and Asylum	Х									х						х	Х
EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration	X									X						Х	X
Renewed EU Action Plan Against Migrant Smuggling (2021-2025)	Х									Х						Х	Х
Global Gateway	X		х							Х							X
Strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism			^													х	X
EU Trade Policy Review												х					Х
European Democracy Action Plan																х	
EU Climate Pact													х			Х	
Council Conclusions on the social dimension of a sustainable Europe for youth				Х												X	
Strategy to strengthen application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights																	
																Х	
Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025					Х			Х		Х						Х	
Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025	Х							Х		Х						Х	
Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027	Х							Х		Х						Х	
Strategy for the Rights of the Child	Х		Х	х						Х						Х	
EU Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+)				Х												х	
ES STATES OF A SOLIS INCRESS OF TABLE (STATE)																	
New European Bauhaus									Х		Х	Х					



For updates see: https://asvis.it/rubrica-europa-e-agenda-2030/

Table 2 - List of elementary indicators used to calculate composite indicators for European Union countries, and their positive (+) or negative (-) "influence" on the performance of the composite indicators

Indicator	
GOAL 1 Notation	
People at risk of poverty after social transfers (tipslc20) Severe material and social deprivation rate (sdg_01_31)	
People living in households with very low work intensity (sdg_01_40)	-
In work at-risk-of-poverty rate (sdg_01_41)	-
Population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation or rot in window frames of floor (sdg_01_60)	-
GOAL 2	
-	
Gross value added of the agricultural industry (tag00056) Agricultural factor income per annual work unit (sdg_02_20)	+
Area under organic farming (sdg_02_40)	+
Ammonia emissions from agriculture (sdg_02_60)	-
Harmonised risk indicator for pesticides (sdg_02_51)	-
Consumption of inorganic fertilizers (aei_fm_usefert)	-
GOAL 3 -4/-	
Standardised preventable and treatable mortality (sdg_03_42)	_
Life expectancy (demo_mlexpec)	+
Infant mortality rate (TPS00027)	-
Smoking prevalence (sdg_03_30)	-
Hospital beds (hlth_rs_bds)	+
GOAL 4 🔰	
Early leavers from education and training (sdg_04_10)	
Participation in early childhood education (sdg_04_10)	+
Adult participation in learning (sdg_04_60)	+
Tertiary educational attainment (tesem030)	+
Underachievement in reading (sdg_04_40)	-
Underachievement in maths and science (sdg_04_40) At most lower secondary educational attainment (tps00197)	
At most toner secondary educational actuminent (tpsoot//)	
GOAL 5 ♥	
Seats held by women in national parliaments (sdg_05_50)	+
Female graduates in tertiary education: science, math, computing, engineering, manufacturing, construction (educ_uoe_grad04)	+
Female employment rate (sdg_08_30)	+
Gender pay gap (sdg_05_20) Positions held by women in senior management positions (sdg_05_60)	+
rosicions neta by women in semior management posicions (sug_ob_ob)	<u> </u>
GOAL 6 💆	
Population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household (sdg_06_10)	-
Population connected to at least secondary waste water treatment (sdg_06_20)	+
Water exploitation index (sdg_06_60)	-
GOAL 7 🌞	
All the second of the second o	
Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption (sdg_07_40) Energy productivity (sdg_07_30)	+
GOAL 8 m	
Real GDP per capita (sdg_08_10)	+
Investment share of GDP (sdg_08_11)	+
	+
Adjusted gross disposable income of households per capita (sdg_10_20)	-
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (sdg_08_20)	
	+
Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (sdg_08_20) Employment rate (sdg_08_30)	

GOAL 9 🧥	
**	
Share of rail and inland waterways activity in total freight transport (sdg_09_60) Share of busses and trains in total passenger transport (sdg_09_50)	+
High-speed internet coverage (sdg_17_60)	+
Air emissions intensities from industry (sdg_09_70)	
Enterprises that provided training to develop/upgrade ICT skills of their personnel (isoc_ske_ittn2)	+
Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (sdg_09_10)	+
Human resources in science and technology (tsc00025)	+
R&D personnel (sdg_09_30)	+
GOAL 10 〈€〉	
Income distribution (sdg_10_41)	-
Income share of the bottom 40 % of the population (sdg_10_50)	+
Ratio between rural and urban graduation rate (edat_lfs_9913)	+
Ratio between non EU citizen and reporting country income poverty rate after social transfers (sdg_01_20a)	-
Ratio between youth and total employment rate (lfst_r_ergau)	+
GOAL 11 🚛	
Premature deaths due to exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) (sdg_11_52)	_
Use of cars for passenger transport (tran_hv_psmod)	
Overcrowding rate (sdg_11_10)	-
Road traffic deaths (SDG_11_40)	-
GOAL 12 CO	
Resource productivity (sdg_12_20)	+
Material consumption per capita (sdg_12_20)	-
Circular material use rate (sdg_12_41)	+
Generation of waste (sdg_12_50)	-
Recycling rate of municipal waste (sdg_11_60)	+
GOAL 13 🕟	
Greenhouse gas emissions (sdg_13_10)	_
GOAL 15 壁	
Share of forest area (sdg_15_10)	+
Surface of terrestrial protected areas (sdg_15_20)	+
Soil sealing (sdg_15_41)	-
Soil sealing index (sdg_15_41)	-
GOAL 16 💃	
Standardised death rate due to homicide (sdg_16_10)	-
Population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area (SDG_16_20)	-
Population with confidence in EU istitutions (sdg_16_60)	+
Corruption Perceptions Index (sdg_16_50)	+
E-government activities of individuals via websites (isoc_ciegi_ac)	+
Civil and commercial litigious cases duration (Cepej)	-
Prisons overcrowding (crim_pris_cap)	-
Percentage of pre-trial prisoners over total prisoners (crim_pris_tri)	-
GOAL 17 🕸	
GOAL 17 🛞	
Official development assistance as share of gross national income (sdg_17_10)	+
	+ +

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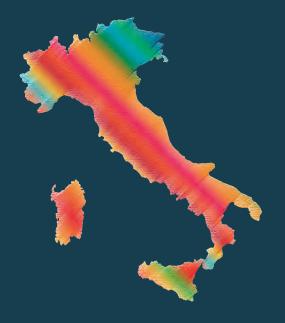


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Italy's steps towards implementing the 2030 Agenda: what stage are we at?



3. Italy's steps towards implementing the 2030 Agenda: what stage are we at?

3.1 Public opinion and 2030 Agenda: support, scepticism and contradictions

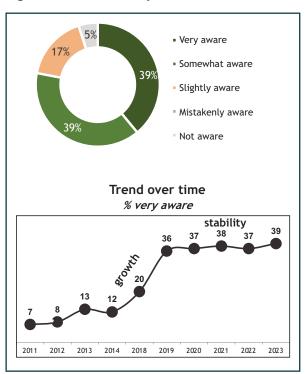
The SDGs first appeared on the global sustainability scene in 2015, an important year and a "turning-point" in Italians' awareness of the topic. This was marked by increased acknowledgement of the issues related to the unsustainability of the current socio-economic model: almost four out of ten people in Italy now believe they are fully aware of which elements are essential for a sustainable development.

The percentage of people who know the SDGs, and recognised their "logo"1, is very close to that of those who have a good knowledge of sustainability: in both 2022 and 2023, the figure was 34%. This was also thanks to the work carried out by the educational world on these issues: 58% of students fell within this category, a significant increase from 2019 (43%). The most significant source of information was in fact identified as being schools and universities, whilst families ranked last.

According to 19% of the population (11% in 2019), all the SDGs should have equal dignity and be considered as a whole. The remaining 81% identified certain priorities, which are partially related to the current climate. In 2023, first place was taken by "climate action", followed by "decent work and economic growth" and "health and wellbeing", which are rising through the ranks at the expense of "clean and affordable energy" (which certainly came to the fore in 2022 due to concerns around energy security) and "life on land". At the bottom of the list, we have the issues of "clean water and sanitation", "responsible consumption and production", "industry, innovation and infrastructure", topics less familiar with the majority of the public. Last, and by a long way, is Goal 17, related to partnerships and which potentially isn't seen as key to fully achieving sustainability.

Despite the delight with the growth in awareness and attention to sustainability, also due to the definition of the SDGs, which provide solid measurement criteria and a reference framework defining the general concept of sustainability, in recent years, there has been growing scepticism regarding efforts and our actual ability and willingness to create a more sustainable world. In Italy (not the only country to be affected), the sceptics have risen by 9 percentage points in five years, from 13% to 22%. This is also due to scandals (for example, dieselgate) and an excessive emphasis on the proposals and future actions promised by governments and businesses, detrimental to the reporting of effective progress, resulting in a growing suspicion that greenwashing is taking place. Between 2020 and 2023, the percentage of "supporters" of the transformation has in fact only risen by one percentage point (from 22% to 23%), whilst that of people who are "open" fell from 41% to 38%, compared with stable figures for those who are "unconcerned", approximately 17% of the population.

Figure 1 - Sustainability awareness



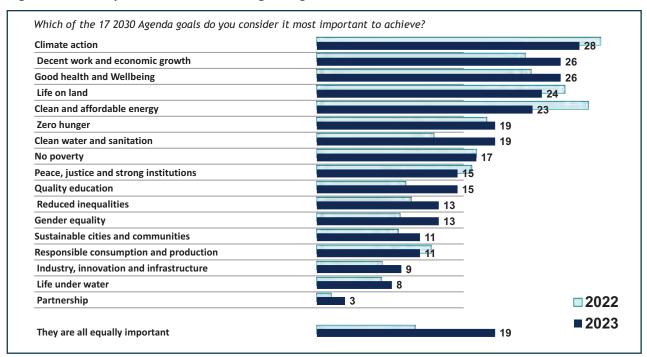


Figure 2 - The importance of the 2030 Agenda goals

We now move on to assess public opinion on a series of aspects related to the various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, collected through several surveys conducted by Ipsos.

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

'No Poverty' ranks halfway down the table (eighth position) among the priorities included in the 2030 Agenda goals. Just 17% of people interviewed considered it one of the most significant priorities, whilst 5% of people ranked it in first place. Italy as a country is seen as characterised by a great social divide between the rich and the poor (61%, especially those in the working class). 8 out of 10 citizens believe that, in their municipality, poverty has risen in recent years (above all, in central Italy, in the Islands and among the working class).

In addition, on an individual basis, 66% of people interviewed placed themselves in the lower part of the social pyramid (one out of four Italians struggles to get to the end of the month or feels they are poor). Italy's social elevator is significantly blocked: in recent years, only 5% of people have experienced an improvement in their social status (10% of those in the middle class), whilst 26% of people believe their social condition is worsening (51% in the working class) or stable, but in any case negative (38%).

The financial difficulties incurred by families and the significant stall in the improvement of their life conditions are primarily related to low wages (according to 55% of people interviewed, above all those between the ages of 31 and 50), the precarity of work and employment (49%, above all in the South and North-West), excessive taxation (42%) and corruption (31%).

This negative trend projects itself into the near future (40% of people expect their household's financial situation to worsen in the next 6 months) and on to long-term expectations: among those in the middle class, 88% believe that their children will be able to improve or maintain their original social status, whilst 63% of those in the working class expect their children's status to be unchanged or worse (one out of four) compared with that of their family of origin.

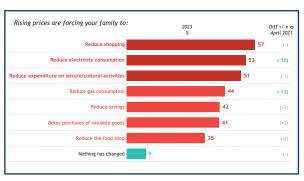
Figure 3 - Italy's social pyramid



GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER

On the scale of importance of the SDGs, 'Zero Hunger' ranks in sixth place, with 19% of people including it among the priority Goals (5% ranked it in first place). Food security is not deemed to be a significant problem for Italy, given that, in 2022, only 1.3% of households showed signs of food insecurity, down from 1.7% in 2021. However, on the one hand, there has been an increase in the gap between southern (2.7% in 2022) and northern and central Italy (0.7% and 0.6%, respectively), on the other, the recent crises have had an impact on the ability of households to regularly feed themselves and maintain a healthy and balanced diet2. As a result of the pandemic and rising inflation, in 2022, 32% of Italian households claimed to have occasionally incurred difficulty in covering their food expenses (36% in southern Italy and 61% in the working class). In July 2023, 35% of households declared that, due to rising prices, cuts had to be made to their food shop (61% in the working class) and 22% changed their diet to try to cut costs (up 5 percentage points from September 2022).

Figure 4 - The impact of inflation on consumption



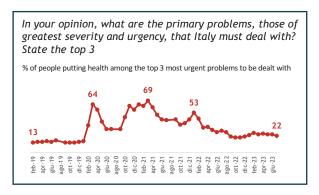
On another hand, evidence of malnutrition in developed countries comes in the form of overweight people, as a result of a sedentary lifestyle and poor diet. Italy is not exempt from this issue: in 2021, 33.3% of children between the ages of three and five were overweight (up 2.5% from 2017), whilst for those between the ages of 3 and 17 the figure reached 27%. Among households with children of school age, only four out of ten consume fruit daily, and even fewer eat vegetables (29%); regular consumption of organic and locally sourced products is still limited (10%), whilst sweet and savoury

snacks (consumed by 57% and 47% of households with children, respectively), cheese (56%) and cured meats (51%) are consumed several times a week.

GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

At the top of the table for the 17 SDGs, third place is taken by "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", mentioned by 26% of those familiar with the 2030 Agenda. Nearly four years after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, more than one of five people interviewed (approximately double compared with pre-pandemic figures) are still seriously concerned about the state of Italy's health system.

Figure 5 - The Health System



Telemedicine is still deemed a great prospect to focus on for the future: despite 77% of Italians being in favour of an increase in the use of telemedicine, as of today, only 23% found no difficulty in using digital health services, and one out of three people continues to prefer in-person interaction with a doctor/health worker for all types of consultation, despite it being much more time consuming.

At a time where technology plays a key role in all our daily relations, perhaps we are not yet ready to abandon human contact between doctors and patients, a risk which inevitably arises from a virtualisation of the health system. On the other hand, perhaps we have not yet grasped how technology could be a great and constant ally for health. Given the openness of a large portion of the population to these issues, the future challenge will be to develop technological platforms that are efficient and capable of making the citizen feel cared for and looked after as a person, if not better.

GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

Providing quality, equal and inclusive education ranks in the second half of the table of the priorities included in the 2030 Agenda Goals (in tenth place, deemed as one of the most significant by 15% of those interviewed). Nevertheless, education is a sensitive subject: the current school system was awarded a rating just above the pass mark (6.3 out of 10 in 2023), in line with 2021. This indicates minimal changes in the various levels of education: the highest vote was awarded to universities (6.7), followed by pre-schools (6.5) and elementary schools (6.4). Nursery schools received a vote of 6.3, whilst high schools of 6.2, both just above the pass mark. The lowest vote was awarded to middle-schools (6.0).

The main deficiencies of the Italian school system are related to outdated curricula, which are too theoretical (48%), the lack of motivation of teachers (45%), the inadequacy of school buildings and scholastic infrastructure as a whole (44%, rising to 52% in the Islands), poorly trained teachers (39%, an issue raised particularly by the middle and working classes) and inadequate equipment (38%). On the other hand, people believe that the best schools are located in northern Italy (64%), and in the main cities (40%, sharply down from 52% in 2021), whilst 39% of people think there are no differences. The negative opin-

ions also regard the school system's ability to provide adequate skills for the labour market: only 42% of those interviewed think it is more than or sufficiently capable in providing adequate language and digital skills. Only 29% of people believe that it is capable of providing training on sustainability issues, which are crucial for future green jobs.

As a result, the Italian school system has been given a vote just above the pass mark, but seems to fail its role in creating an inclusive society, able to settle differences and build the basis for a more equal society: outdated curricula and a far too theoretical approach are seen as a serious hurdle in this process. Coinciding with a critical period in the education of the young, the greater weakness is seen in middle schools, where the problems related to the motivation of teachers and scholastic infrastructure and equipment have intensified. On the other hand, for those who have access, universities are deemed more than capable of meeting the needs of students and their families.

GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

Despite the fact that fighting against gender inequality is a fundamental tool in achieving sustainable development and key to combat poverty, only 13% of those familiar with the 2030 Agenda

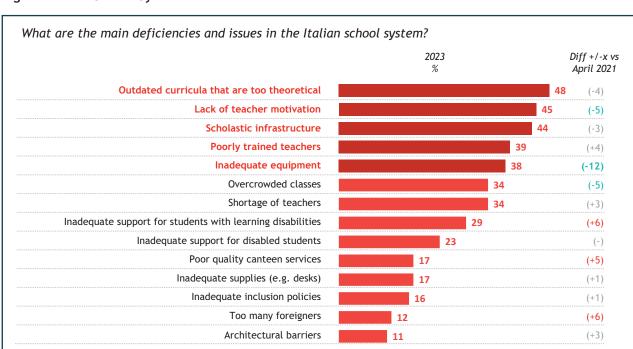


Figure 6 - The School System

listed this Goal as a priority, relegating it to sixth from last. However, the European Institute for Genger Equality (EIGE), which from 2013 calculates the Gender Equality Index to measure the progress on gender equality in the European Union, awarded Italy a vote of 65 out of 100, 3.6 points below the European average. Since 2013, the index shows constant growth that offers hope, but, still today, only 30% of the population thinks that women are the group of people primarily subjected to unequal and unfair treatment in Italy, compared with 5% who believe men are those most affected.

Figure 7 - Gender equality index



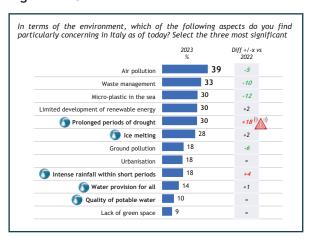
The study "Dreaming of the future and work. Opinions and attitudes of young Italian students", conducted by ValoreD in collaboration with Ipsos, highlights how the career choices made by students in middle schools still reflect gender stereotypes. Female students are primarily driven towards humanistic professions, whilst male students towards scientific professions, which provide greater income and career growth opportunities. Overall, 26% of males, compared with 15% of females, aim for professions related to a technical/scientific sector, even though, compared with 2018, there has been a reduction in the gap between the two groups: in four years, the figure for male students has fallen by 5 percentage points, whilst the figure for female students has risen by 7 points.

GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Clean water ranks in seventh place among the priorities included in the 2030 Agenda Goals, and 19% of people placed it among the most impor-

tant. If water is considered a fundamental resource, potentially the most important of all, given that it gives rise to and supports life in all its forms, access to it is often taken for granted in Italy. In reality, the drought problem is real, complex and multifactorial, and has worsened over time, becoming a serious emergency in 2022: 30% of those interviewed expressed their concern over this issue, a significant increase from 12% in 2022. In addition, 37% of people predict that, among the climate crisis events, prolonged drought will be the most concerning over the next 10 years.

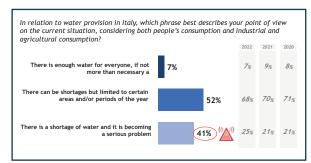
Figure 8 - Concerns for the environment



Since 2022, there is a growing feeling that droughts are becoming a significant problem. In 2022, only 25% of the Italian population considered droughts to be a problem, whilst today, 41% of Italians are concerned.

Reviewing consumption habits would be the first step to take, but there is a misconception about daily water consumption among the population: on average, a family consumes approximately 500 litres of water a day, making Italy one of the EU countries with the highest level of freshwater usage. However, 63% of people are convinced that

Figure 9 - Water provision in Italy



a family's daily water consumption amounts to less than 100 litres, and only 46% of people are aware that Italy's water consumption is greater than the European average.

GOAL 7 - CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

Clean and affordable energy maintains a high ranking in the table of the 17 2030 Agenda goals, sitting in fifth place, with 23% of those interviewed placing it among the most important to achieve. The significance of this issue is related to the persistent concern about rising energy prices, energy security and the focus on sustainable development. Despite the drop in major concerns on rising energy and gas prices compared with 2022, today 35% of people are still very concerned about energy bills and 25% think that their costs will continue to increase.

The causes of this situation are attributed to speculation and international crises that have highlighted the EU's dependency on producing countries. This is also accompanied by concerns regarding the delay in the energy transition and the general feeling that Italy is not doing enough to develop renewable sources.

In addition, there is an affordability issue: in the current climate, affected by a series of crises, energy poverty remains a problem of the utmost importance, with a growing number of Italian households affected (8.5% in 2021 compared with 8% in 2020). However, it is an issue that the population is not very familiar with: only 6% of people understand the concept clearly, whilst 60% of people have a rough understanding.

Energy poverty is exacerbated by rising inflation, a main source of concern that has led to individuals and households feeling more vulnerable: 27% of people fear that they will not be able to meet their household bills. At the same time, new awareness is being acquired and priorities are being reviewed: in particular, households are open to energy communities (59%) and "prosumerism", to the extent that three out of four people interviewed believe that installing self-production energy systems would have a positive impact on their lifestyle.

GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Decent work and economic growth take second place in the table of priorities, overtaken only by climate action. This ranking is of no surprise in a society that cites work in the first article of its Constitution, a key element for a democratic republic.

Work is considered to be an aspect that must be in tune with our lives, but also necessary to reach our own personal goals, provided that a correct balance is achieved with private life

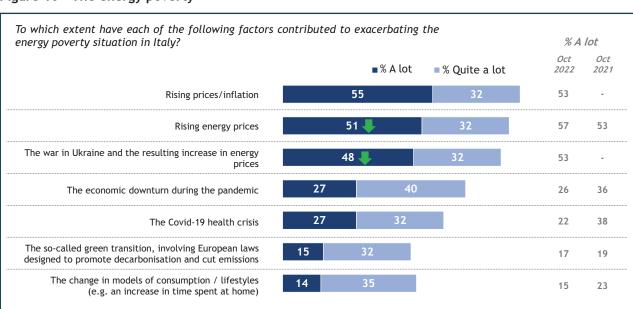
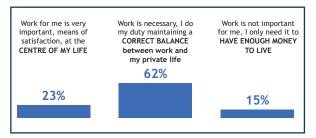


Figure 10 - The energy poverty

(62%). For 23% of people, work is considered the focus of their life, whilst only a small proportion considers it to be a mere means of financial support (15%).

Figure 11 - The role of work in people's lives



In the last 10 years, the perception of work has significantly changed: in 2021, 43% of Italians stated that, compared with previous years, the world of work had evolved, whilst in 2021 the figure had reached 69%. It is an evolution with highs and lows: there has been a greater positive focus on issues related to Corporate Social Responsibility and greater inclusion; on the other hand, there is a dominant feeling that there has been a worsening of wages, benefits and corporate welfare, something confirmed by the actual data. Between 1990 and 2020, Italy recorded a reduction in real salaries, and if there has been an increase in corporate welfare programmes, as regards to workers, they often follow a top-down approach, meaning that they do not begin with an assessment of specific individual needs.

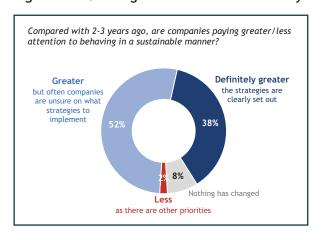
Generally, people who live in Italy are satisfied with their work, with over 80% stating this. The judgement is related to a series of factors, including satisfaction, career development, training, incentives and interaction with work colleagues. On the other hand, those who are not satisfied complain about an absence of or overly formal training, not in line with expectations, a strict working environment and inadequate pay. The surveys carried out show how employees increasingly want to feel that they are "partners" rather than just "employees", expect the business to find solutions of mutual benefit, and believe that a balance between work and rewards is key. This requires a rethink of corporate welfare and internal leadership and relation mechanisms, so as to build relationships that are increasingly personalised.

GOAL 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 9 ranks in fifteenth place in the table, with 9% of people placing it among the most important. Thanks to a waste recycling rate that almost doubles the EU average, Italy excels in the circular economy. However, the results of an Ipsos survey conducted in 2021 show how the opinion of business owners on Italy's transition process towards sustainability is uncompromising: 45% think that Italy is behind other countries, whilst only 2% believe it to be ahead. There is no doubt that, compared with previous years, companies are paying greater attention to behaving in a sustainable manner. Nevertheless, 52% of business owners believe that companies are often unsure on what strategy to implement.

The company's size has a positive impact on the approach and implementation of the process of transitioning towards sustainability, thanks to the available financial resources, knowledge of the subject and the close relationship with global markets, which in turn leads to addressing the matter and embracing it, with a view to strategic competitiveness. However, there are concerns regarding resources, as shown by the unanimous belief that there is a need for state aid to accelerate the transition towards sustainability (95% of business owners deemed it necessary).

Figure 12 - Growing attention to sustainability



With regard to innovation, as highlighted by a report prepared by Ipsos in 2023, open innovation as quickly become the norm: 72% of European companies are carrying out partnership

projects with start-ups and 67% consider this phenomenon crucial or essential for their organisational strategy. Sustainability, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity are the three primary topics that companies intend to explore in partnership with start-ups. By collaborating with the latter, companies can take advantage of the potential offered by outside knowledge and gain access to ideas, technologies and innovative business models, reducing risks and costs. For their part, start-ups can benefit from the resources, experience and market access enjoyed by more established companies.

According to the report, Italy leads in the use of open innovation in Europe, with the highest percentage of companies that initiate partnership projects with start-ups in the whole of Europe (80.4%), and the highest percentage of those who deem it to be critical for their own organisational strategy (56.1%). Italy also has the highest percentage of successful partnerships (71%) and of companies that want to collaborate on sustainability issues (72%).

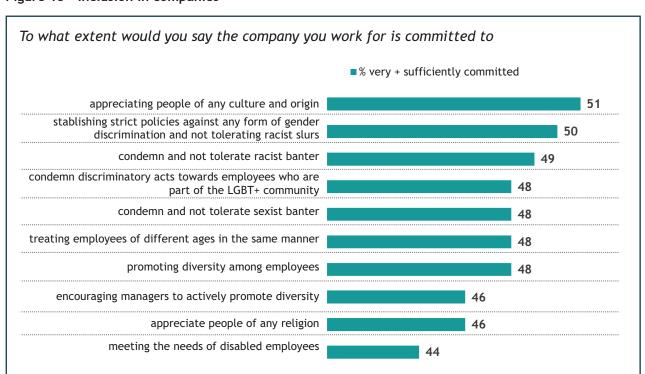
GOAL 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reducing inequalities within and between countries is not considered a priority: sitting in

eleventh place in the table of the 17 SDGs, only 13% of those familiar with the 2030 Agenda consider it as such. Despite this, 40% of Italians believe that the country is not doing enough to promote equality, and that it is time to go a step further.

The Government and public institutions are the primary entities on which citizens rely on to establish regulations and policies for inclusion, but companies are also handed a significant portion of responsibility: 66% of people believe that the commitment of companies to developing an inclusive internal environment plays a key role in shifting society as a whole towards greater inclusivity for all. On the other hand, only 57% of workers recognise an effective and actual push towards inclusion within their company: specifically, companies appear to be increasingly committed to appreciating employees of different cultures and religion and establishing strict policies against gender discrimination or racist slurs, rather than fully meeting the needs of disabled employees that are already in the company. They also appear to be less mindful of religious differences, one reason why it is deemed necessary to encourage managers to actively promote diversity.

Figure 13 - Inclusion in companies



GOAL 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The creation of sustainable cities and communities falls in the lower part of the table of priority SDGs (13th place), mentioned only by 11% of people who are familiar with the 2030 Agenda. However, with over half of the world population residing in cities and the sharp increase expected over the coming decades, it is clear that "cities will play a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals", as stated by Kristi Daniel, Manager of the "Liveable cities program" at Canada's Health Bridge Foundation.

On the other hand, there are clear concerns with regard to the urban situation: for example, almost half of the population (45%) expresses a very critical opinion on the level of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency achieved in Italian cities. At the same time, the quality of air is also deemed critical: only 20% of residents in metropolitan areas are fully satisfied and there is a general feeling that the quality of air has worsened in the last two years in Italy and, above all, in metropolitan areas. In addition, there is a further problem: approximately six out of ten people are disappointed with the lack of urban green space in metropolitan areas.

The above data show how the population perceives a significant difference between the sustainable city ideal and the reality in which they live. Nevertheless, albeit with some reservations, certain green solutions have begun to be introduced in Italy, indicating a greater focus on a more sustainable urban life. Even though electric vehicles are not yet widespread among car owners, there has been a slight increase in the use of shared vehicles in the last two or three years, above all with electric scooters. However, shared mobility is still seen as a "niche" phenomenon, due to the inconsistency across the country and the concentration among the young and in metropolitan areas. It is Generation Z that is pushing the use of shared vehicles in recent years, especially electric and traditional scooters and bikes, followed by millennials.

GOAL 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Responsible consumption and production ranks in 14th place in the table, and is placed among the priority Goals by 11% of Italians. On the other hand, almost one out of two people (45%) are familiar with the circular economy principles (one of the key issues of Goal 12 in the 2030 Agenda), up five percentage points compared with five years ago, particularly up over the last year. In 2023, 29% of the population have extensive knowledge of the issue, significantly up from 17% recorded in July 2018.

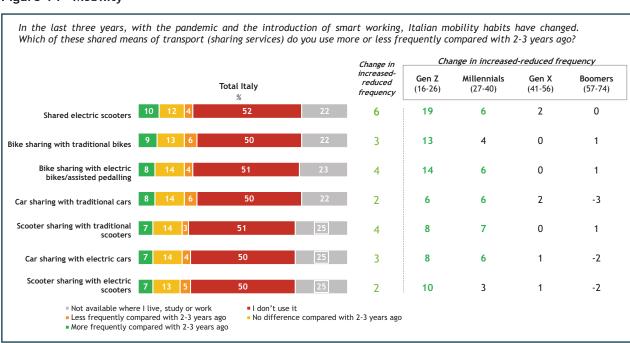


Figure 14 - Mobility

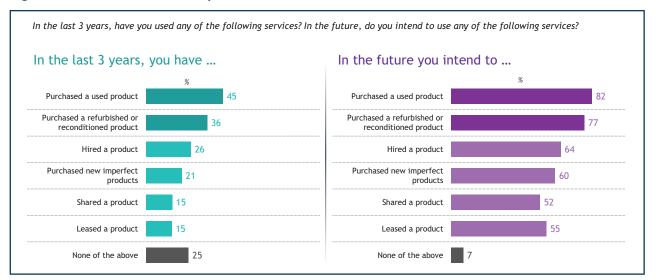


Figure 15 - Alternatives to new purchases

The increase in awareness is partly due to the attention given to this topic in Europe. In March 2020, the EU published a first set of measures to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy, as an alternative to the current economic model based on an intensive use of resources, providing for initiatives across the whole product selling chain: from planning and production through to making consumers more responsible.

This last point is key to changing the citizen's lifestyle with sustainable acts: the Ipsos survey of 2023 shows how a transformation in consumer behaviour towards more sustainable practices is already under way in Italy. In the last three years, almost half of the population purchased a used product and over a third purchased a refurbished or reconditioned product. At the same time, there has been an increase in the general propensity to use alternatives to new purchases, based on the everything old is new again logic: approximately eight out of ten people intend to purchase a used product in the future, whilst 77% will purchase a refurbished or reconditioned product and approximately 60% is ready to lease a product and purchase a new product with slight imperfections, usually aesthetic.

GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

The thirteenth Goal concerns the fight against climate change, and is considered the most important by the Italian population. In addition,

28% of people believe it to be the most urgent. This can be attributed to the direct threat that climate change poses to the environment, human health and ecosystems.

On a global scale, climate change ranks seventh among the problems perceived as most concerning by citizens, according to the monthly survey 'What Worries the World', conducted by Ipsos in June 2023 across 29 countries to examine people's opinions on the issues that raise the most concern. Italy is the fourth most concerned country and, compared with the previous month, concern regarding climate change has increased by five percentage points, returning to levels seen in August 2022.

Despite Goal 13 being revealed as a priority with respect to others, the actual awareness of an environmental crisis is not so widespread: the 2022 "Mobility styles" observatory shows that one out of five people strongly or completely agree with the statement "the environmental crisis is not as serious as they say", and one out of three is fairly in agreement. Among the various metropolitan areas, Florence (44%) and Milan (37%) are the cities that agree with the statement the most.

In addition, 45% of people believe that the protection of the environment is a public responsibility, and the individual citizen can only do so much: this determines a general feeling of individual helplessness. In any event, the other half of the population (55%) would like to behave in a more respectful manner towards the environment

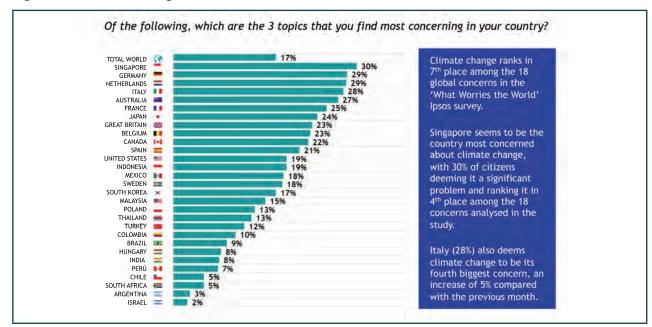


Figure 16 - Climate change: level of concern

but believes that it is too complicated given their lifestyle: with regard to mobility options, 77% of people highlight the convenience of using cars, believed to be more appropriate for their lifestyle, whilst 72% would not give theirs up.

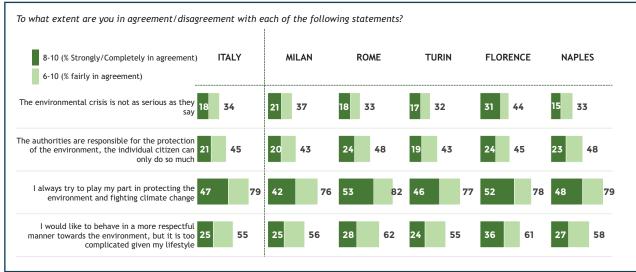
GOAL 14 - LIFE UNDERWATER

The purpose of preserving and making sustainable use of sea resources takes the second to last place in the ranking of the 17 SDGs, only mentioned by 8% of those familiar with the 2030 Agenda. However, the attention towards seas and water quality is a topic that seriously concerns

Italians, who feel personally engaged in this challenge. A staggering 93% of citizens believe that plastic pollution in the sea is one of the most urgent environmental problems to tackle, and for a good reason: WWF estimates that every year 450 million tonnes of plastic are produced, and 8 of these end up in our oceans, seriously damaging the ecosystem. Therefore, an efficient strategy suitable for all is the reduction of plastic consumption, which is deemed fundamental by 93% of Italians.

The EU has estimated that, every year, each European citizen generates almost 180 kilos of waste from plastic packaging, a figure that is con-





stantly rising. To reverse this ecologically unsustainable trend, the Commission has proposed regulations on packaging, aimed at reducing plastic waste and improving the recycling of the plastic in circulation. One of the proposals is to reduce the amount of disposable plastic and polystyrene packaging found in stores for fruit and vegetables not yet treated (therefore excluding, for example, fruit salads or soups). Just over one out of ten people are aware of this proposal: however, 80% of the population is in agreement with it and nine out of ten people are ready to make sacrifices to protect the environment, arguing that it will not be so "difficult" to adapt to this new law.

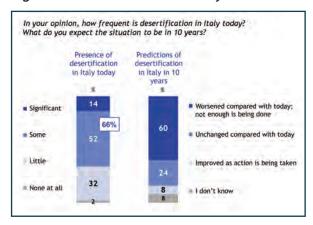
GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND

Italians rank the Goal of protecting and restoring ecosystems in fourth place among the priorities, in line with the crucial necessity of fighting climate change, which is top of the table. In recent years, Italians, along with citizens in the majority of the world, have been affected by phenomena and events that forced them to take action following dramatic consequences deriving from the neglection of the world we live in. The Vaia storm in 2018, the extreme drought in 2022, the most recent floods in Emilia-Romagna, the invasion of blue crabs, who destroy mediterranean ecosystems and native species, are only some examples seen in Italy and that have had great media coverage.

Over time, Italians have become increasingly aware of these issues, but, unfortunately, also increasingly sceptical on whether something is actually being done to rectify the situation. For example, the desertification of Italy leads to the deterioration of land, the extinction of the biosphere (plants and animals) and the transformation of the natural environment into an area that is increasingly dry, and deprived of water or not able to preserve it. In Italy, and also in the EU, it is considered one of the main causes of global warming: 66% of Italians say that desertification is a problem and 60% believe that in 10 years the situation will be worse, not only due to uncontrollable exogenous events, but because not enough will have been done to deal with the issue.

Focus is also increasing on animal welfare and the quality of crops. Over 56% of Italians (compared with 33% on a global scale) suggest that in the future they will reduce their consumption of animal

Figure 18 - Desertification in Italy



protein to contribute to the fight against climate change, and 46% also thinking of reducing their consumption of milk and dairy products (44% globally).

As a result, public opinion shows a growing level of awareness, which, however, does not translate into sufficient actions to protect what is still intact and attempt to recover what is damaged. In addition, even if apparent, the response from the public and business is insufficient, and this leads people to reduce their propensity to make individual sacrifices.

GOAL 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Goal 16 ranks in ninth place among the most important, with 15% of people indicating it as one of the most important. The stability of democratic institutions in Western societies has been put under pressure in recent years, a continuous "stress test" seen especially with a general feeling of greater level of injustice and inequality, to which the political and institutional system often is not able to provide adequate answers. In recent years, the overall level of trust in Italian institutions is consistently below the 50% mark, with few "spikes" coinciding with public elections in 2018, the so-called rally around the flag effect, as seen in the first months of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, and a slight uptrend following the general election in September 2022. This lack of trust is felt by all the primary members of the political/institutional system: the courts (average figure for the period at 43%), Parliament (Senate 30% and the Chamber of Deputies 29%) and political parties (17%). Trust remains high in the vari-

Generally, what is your overall level of trust in Italian institutions? Answer with a score between 1 (no trust) and 10 (significant trust).

% of who has trust (votes between 6 and 10)

feb-18: 53

apr-20: 49

48

Figure 19 - Trust in institutions

ous armed forces (close to 70%), in the President of the Republic (60%) and local authorities (city councils 54%, regional authorities 51%).

There is a widespread opinion that, overall, the country's institutions are performing poorly in tackling social injustice: three quarters of people believe that poverty and inequality are rising in Italy, and the 'State' is considered a primary cause of such disparity, rather than as key to closing the gap. Trust in institutions is also strictly related to financial status: among those who are struggling or unemployed, the percentage of those who have sufficient trust in institutions is over 10 points below the average.

Therefore, social justice issues and tackling inequality are seen as the key to redeeming institutions. In recent years, Italians have felt a constant downturn in these issues, and are now more inclined to new and potentially radical solutions (to which 48% of those interviewed are in favour) to revise the framework and, at the same time, ensure that institutions are useful for all and efficient in their work.

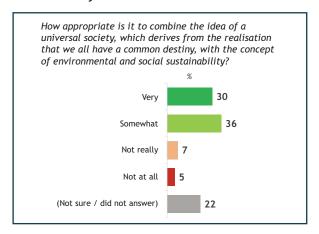
GOAL 17 - PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

The creation of partnerships is the last of the priorities: only 3% of the population place it among the most important Goals, although it should be noted that 19% believe all SDGs are equally important. The scarce significance of partnerships is related to the general feeling on society and relationships among individuals. Specifically, Italian society shows signs of "closure", due to a lack of

mutual trust: 80% of people fear that others would take advantage of them and only 52% of people believe that most people are worthy of their trust. In addition, there is a general view of an unequal society (51% of people believe inequality is a significant issue) and of differences in values: 71% of people believe that conflict between people is rising, due to the different mindsets regarding society and life.

These differences could be settled by understanding that we all have a common destiny: 63% of people who live in Italy believe that humans have more common problems than not (only 26% of people disagree), 55% of people feel that they are citizens of the world rather than of their country and two out of three Italians think it is appropriate to combine the idea of a universal society with the concept of environmental and social sustainability.

Figure 20 - The universal society and sustainability



3.2 ASviS's activities in the first seven years

In the same way that this Report is an attempt to take stock of the progress made in implementing the 2030 Agenda globally, in Europe and in Italy, it is also necessary to assess the activities undertaken by ASviS in the seven years since the Alliance's foundation and the results achieved. Given that it would be impossible to report on everything that has been done in just a few pages, readers are invited to refer to earlier Reports for more detailed information on the Alliance's activities.

As previously reported, in what was a crucial year for the definition of global ambitions with the aim of finally embarking on a sustainable development pathway, 2015 saw the following events: the publication of Pope Francis's Laudato si' encyclical; the definition by the Addis Abeba Conference on development cooperation of an Action Plan designed to make a major contribution to supporting implementation of the post-2015 development agenda; approval by the UN General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda; and signature of the Paris Agreement on efforts to combat climate change at COP15. This global "revolution" also had an impact in our country, with growing awareness of the importance of the role played by civil society in the above processes, and of the need to join forces to best shape the ideas, proposals and initiatives involved in mobilising public organisations, businesses and people to help deliver the 2030 Agenda.

It was on this basis that, after initial approaches to around 50 organisations in December 2025, the Alliance was established on 3 February 2016. This was followed, on 11 March of that year, by an event before the Chamber of Deputies, held to present the Alliance, which already had 80 members, to the public. ASviS immediately brought together leading civil society organisations and networks: associations committed to specific objectives in the 2030 Agenda; organisations representing social partners; local authority networks, universities and public and private research centres; collective entities operating in the cultural and educational sectors; foundations and foundation networks; Italian entities belonging to international associations and networks focusing on sustainable development.

ASviS's approach was clearly spelt out in the first editorial that appeared on the Alliance's website in March 2016, a key extract from which states the following: "The Alliance aims to bring together those who, for many years, have been addressing the economic, social and environmental problems faced by our country, alongside issues around international cooperation, and those who, more recently, have decided to make a contribution to building an Italy able to rise to the challenge of achieving sustainability in all areas of national life. The task we face is enormous and it would be only too easy to view the initiative as some kind of utopian dream. But everyone behind the Alliance's creation - from businesspeople to social service providers, from those who defend the rights of women and the most vulnerable in society to environmental campaigners, from people in the media to voluntary organisations, from scientific researchers to local government - believes that it is possible to build a fairer, more sustainable future, in which organisations from different areas of society can work more closely together". At a time when the so-called "disintermediation of intermediate bodies" appeared to be an unstoppable trend, accompanied by a passing obsession among certain political leaders with the idea of "leaderism", ASviS has demonstrated the importance of building collective intelligence based on a range of civil society actors, combining their forces to achieve a common goal. Continuous dialogue among our members and the resulting cooperation form the heart of what the Alliance does, bringing together over 320 organisations committed to responding to the challenges set by the 2030 Agenda and united in their collective determination to build a sustainable future.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

Since the Alliance's establishment, it has taken the form of an umbrella association, whose strength derives from the participation of all its member organisations, with support in the early years provided by a centralised unit, the Secretariat, staffed by volunteers and employees. This structure has enabled ASviS to take the form of a smaller, more agile organisation, avoiding any overlaps with the activities of individual members whilst on the contrary benefitting from their contributions and exploiting them as part of a network.

To organise and rationalise members' contributions, ASviS consists of Working Groups which, for each Goal, bring together experts nominated by members themselves with the aim of producing shared analyses and proposals during the year. These are then included in the Alliance's annual reports, other publications and Sustainable Development Festival events. Each Working Group is coordinated by one or more people appointed by members, supported by one or more staff forming part of the Secretariat and tasked with ensuring coordination among the Groups.

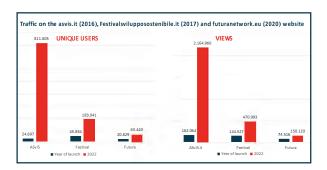
The decision to operate in this way has proved a success, also in managing the addition of new members to the network. Over time, the Working Groups focusing on the various SDGs have been joined by others with responsibility for cross-cutting issues, such as Education for Sustainable Development, Culture and Finance, or that bring together certain specific types of member, such as those dedicated to business confederations, foundations and youth organisations connected to members. Several Groups have subsequently led to the creation of permanent or temporary subgroups to focus on matters of an even more specific nature. This Report, for example, has been produced by approximately a thousand experts across twenty Working Groups, proof of the importance and the size of the network created by ASviS.

The rapid growth in activity inevitably led to an expansion of the original organisational structure: following extensive discussions with all Alliance members, the organisational structure was altered in 2023 and the Alliance's Bylaws were revised. Instead of one president, the presidency is now shared by two people, bringing a greater breadth of experience at the head of the organisation and ensuring gender parity. The powers and responsibilities initially assigned to the General Assembly of members have been confirmed and formalised and new roles have been created: a Scientific Director, whose role is similar to existing positions in other major organisations and who coordinates a Scientific Committee made of leading national and international experts; the General Secretariat, which organises the various activities; and the Council, made up of the coordinators of the Working Groups and external experts who give their time to ASviS on a voluntary basis.

MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY

In these first seven years, the Alliance has expanded and strengthened its activities. The Alliance has often taken on the role of public bodies, with which it engages in continuous dialogue, regardless of the parties in government or whoever has a majority in Parliament. This has enabled ASviS to be recognised by the UN, the European Commission and the European Parliament as an example of international best practice, unique at global level in terms of organisational model, breadth of activity and results achieved.

ASviS is the main source of information and communication in Italy regarding sustainability and the 2030 Agenda. The quantity and quality of information and communication has increased significantly: the asvis.it website attracts tens of thousands of visitors every month and, in May 2020, the futuranetwork.eu site was launched with the aim of stimulating discussion of the decisions to be taken to ensure a sustainable longterm future. Weekly newsletters keep a wide readership up-to-date with news from around the world. In collaboration with ANSA, the Alliance has launched the Ansa2030 portal, whilst also producing Alta sostenibilità (All-out sustainability), a weekly radio programme broadcast by Radio Radicale.

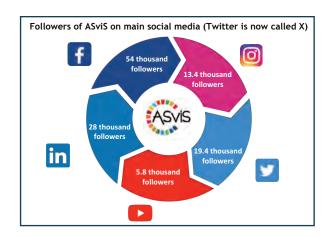


The Alliance regularly organises events that are open to the public, involving representatives from government bodies, the private sector, key stakeholders and civil society. Since the first event held on 30 May 2016, and awarded a Medal by the President of Italy, the number and the quality of the events has risen constantly, at the same time attracting greater attention from the media and Italian society. Our collaborations with the media have resulted in a number of structured projects and specific partnerships with different partners, above all RAI, which makes use of the scientific materials produced by the Alliance, ranging

from periodic reports to papers on specific issues (the number of times ASviS publications have been quoted from has increased tenfold in seven years, rising from 388 in 2026 to over 3,000 in 2022).

ASviS is also active on social media, above all Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. ASviS uses these channels to run periodic awareness-raising campaigns, including those produced in collaboration with the world of art and culture and with RAI, which has become the Alliance's regular media partner for the Sustainable Development Festival.

The involvement of an ever wider public in getting to know more about the 2030 Agenda also extends to partnerships with the worlds of music, theatre and entertainment. During the Sustainable Development Festival, ASviS showcased testimonials such as Fiorello, Fabio Volo, Elisa and many others. The Alliance also takes part annually in the mobilisation campaign run by the United Nations called the SDG Action Campaign. It has also entered into partnerships with organisations such as the Music Innovation Hub, One Campaign and the Turin Book Festival with the aim of familiarising large numbers of people with the issues covered in the 2030 Agenda.



Since 2017, ASviS has organised the Sustainable Development Festival across Italy. This widespread initiative is unique at national and international level. The Festival lasts 17 days, the same number as the SDGs, and involves hundreds of events (almost a thousand in 2023), reaching millions of people in person, online and on social media. In 2019 and 2020, the Festival was chosen from thousands of projects as one of the finalists in the "SDG Action Awards" run by the UN's SDG Action Campaign, which cited the innovative nature of the initiative and its uniqueness at global level. Since 2020, in collaboration

THE RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC: AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE OUR GAME

During the initial stages of the pandemic, in February 2020, ASviS was the first public or private organisation in Italy to introduce the "ASviS Live" format, consisting of events that were live-streamed over the Alliance's own channels. This approach was then widely adopted from March of that year, both in Italy and overseas. In addition, the Alliance launched #AlleanzaAgisce, a solidarity campaign designed to gather, disseminate and provide immediate access to hundreds of initiatives rolled out by ASviS members. These ranged from projects that aimed to manage the difficulties caused by the health emergency to work on preparing the ground for a more sustainable, more resilient future. The campaign brought together a total of 214 projects that were included in a special section of ASviS's website where, during the lockdown, the Alliance published news, interviews and in-depth coverage to publicise the concrete actions being taken by ASviS members.

The project received the "Solidarity Award" introduced by the UN's SDG Action Campaign and presented to the 50 best solidarity initiatives carried out throughout the world in response to the Covid-19 emergency. Good practices concerned all areas of society, although a leading role was played by the Network of Universities for Sustainable Development (RUS), which carried out approximately a hundred initiatives. In addition to adapting their teaching methods to meet the changing needs imposed by the pandemic and continuing to serve their students, the universities provided support for local communities. This ranged from support for businesses and health facilities, provided free of charge and consisting of research, studies focusing on Covid-19 and product certification, through to remote counselling for students, video recipes and online keep-fit sessions.

with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the Festival has also opened up a window on the world, with a series of events held at Italian embassies and cultural institutes overseas.

In total, the first seven editions of the Festival have involved more than 5,500 events, organised in collaboration with ANSA, RAI and the Cabinet Office's Department for Information and Publishing, designed to support all ASviS's campaigns. The seventh edition, held between 8 and 24 May 2023, saw the return of the approximately 25 events organised directly by ASviS. These took a new format compared with past editions, which had seen the main events held in Rome due to the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic.

ASviS has promoted many innovative educational initiatives in the field of sustainable development, making a major contribution to ensuring that the 2030 Agenda is included in legislation governing civic education courses. A Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education has been in place since 2016, covering schools of all types and levels and provincial adult education centres. Under the Memorandum, major teacher training initiatives have been organised, with free access being provided to the e-learning course on the "2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals" being provided since 2019. Awareness campaigns for students have also been run. The Alliance's e-learning offer has been expanded over the years to include courses focusing on specific topics and recipients.

In addition to including a database collecting the good practices developed by Alliance members in the field of education for sustainable development on its website, ASviS has produced a range of products and initiatives for different age groups, such as: a cartoon entitled the "Global Goals Kids' Show Italy" for younger children; a teaching pack for children, teachers and educators; a sustainable finance education platform for teachers; the Italian version of the "GoGoals" board game; the Italian version of the UN manual "Education for the Sustainable Development Goals"; an e-book for university teachers; video courses, training courses for teachers produced in collaboration with publishers and interactive platforms providing in-depth information for teachers and students. The Goal 4 and Education Working Groups have published the paper, "Education for sustainable development and global citizenship: Target 4.7" and space has been provided on the Alliance's websites for testimonials, projects and innovative actions from the world of education.

The Alliance has also organised street art projects, competitions and other permanent projects and exhibitions, including the Alliance's participation in the Advisory Board for the Sustainability Gallery at the Trento Science Museum, opened in 2021 during a Sustainable Development Festival event focusing on Goal 4. ASviS also participates in the multi-actor roundtable promoted by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, contributing to the drafting of the National Strategy and Plan for Global Citizenship Education, and is a founding member of the Rete EducAzione project, set up to combat educational poverty and promote the rights of children and adolescents in Italy.

In 2016, the Alliance helped to establish the Italian University Network for Sustainable Development (RUS), currently consisting of 85 universities, with which ASviS is working on the inclusion of sustainable development topics in the various curricula. The partnership between RUS and ASviS has resulted in the elearning course produced by ASviS on the 2030 Agenda being made available to university students and teachers, and led universities to organise hundreds of Festival events. Finally, ASviS has promoted the creation of a national doctorate in "Sustainable Development and Climate Change".

ASviS is directly engaged in running higher education courses on sustainable development for managers in the private sector, regional and municipal authority personnel, whilst also working with public and private organisations looking to bring about a sustainable transformation of their operations. Eight schools were directly set up by ASviS in collaboration with other institutions in the two-year period 2022-2023, including the Conference of the Regions. A second edition of the "Territorial School" for civil servants in the Lazio and Puglia regions was organised, alongside second and third editions of the "Regional Schools", open to all regional authorities and self-governing provinces, and a fourth edition of the "Siena International School on Sustainable Development".

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS: REPORTS, PAPERS, POSITION PAPERS AND POLICY BRIEFS

Since 2016, our first year of activity, ASviS has published an annual report, assessing the progress made by Italy with regard to the SDGs and the nature of the policies adopted, and putting forward concrete proposals for drawing up a sustainable development governance framework and improving economic, social and environmental policies. The annual report is an original initiative that is unique in Italy and in Europe and is the result of the work of the Alliance's various Working Groups. The report has also been made available in English since 2018 with the aim of offering international readers the opportunity to take a closer look at the Alliance's analysis of what is happening in Italy.

The "Territories Report" has been published since 2020. This annual document provides data and analysis at regional, provincial and metropolitan city level, produced by the Alliance's research units. The Territories Report plays a key role in promoting the "territorialisation of the 2030 Agenda" recommended by the UN, the OECD and the European Commission. In implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy of 2017, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security has over the years encouraged regional authorities, self-governing provinces and metropolitan cities to prepare local sustainable development strategies to be included in long-term planning.

In a specific publication, the Alliance annually assesses the impact of the Budget Law (and, from 2022, the NRRP) on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, something that is unique in our country. During the pandemic, in 2020, ASviS continuously monitored the measures introduced in response to the crisis (the Cura Italia, Liquidità, Rilancio, Semplificazioni and Agosto decrees), analysing the individual measures both with respect to their impact on the various SDGs and using the policy classification scheme based on the concept of "transformative resilience" developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. The scheme is based on the fact that policies must prevent future shocks, prepare for them, protect against them, and promote and transform the socio-economic system. In addition, in the same period, ASviS published a document indicating specific priority areas for targeted investment, a model that then became the NRRP.

In addition to the three reports described above, which are published annually, ASviS publishes other documents based on contributions from the experts who make up the Working Groups:

- ASviS Papers, publications produced by one or more authors, providing in-depth analysis and commentary on a specific topic in the 2030 Agenda. The opinions expressed reflect the point of view of the author or the Editorial Team and not necessarily the views of ASviS;
- Position Papers, documents produced by the Working Groups, or their sub-groups, expressing the
 viewpoints of the experts that make up the Groups and not necessarily those of the Alliance as a
 whole. These texts deal with a range of topics, providing definitions, analysis, commentary or operational proposals regarding public policy;
- Policy Briefs, documents that aim to publicise the Alliance's views on issues of the moment and stimulate public debate by making proposals and recommendations, presented in greater detail than in the views expressed in ASviS's reports. Policy Briefs include contributions from the Working Groups and Alliance staff and, where appropriate, from the Scientific Director.

Other publications, of a different type, describing "manifestos", "ten-point plans" and "pacts" and presenting collections of good practices and research, are prepared by the Working Groups (or their sub-groups), under the supervision of the Editor-in-chief and, where appropriate, the Scientific Director.

All the documents produced by ASviS, 94 in total (including seven translated into English), are available on the Alliance's website.

In addition, the Alliance works with the National School of Administration on training in sustainable development and in the sustainable man**agement of public organisations**, with a series of master's courses for subjects relating to sustainability. This includes the provision of original elearning courses developed by the Alliance: "The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals", "Business 2030 - Sustainable development opportunities3" (one introductory and the other focusing on the digital transition for the SDGs⁴) and "PA 2030 - The territorialisation of the SDGs⁵", all targeting public organisations. An update for the "2030 Agenda⁶" course was produced in 2023, whilst a version of the "PA 2030" course for central government, "PA 2030 - Opportunities and challenges of the sustainable transformation", was developed. ASviS's e-learning offering was also expended in 2023, with the addition of a course in "Strategies and policies for the Just Ecological Transition", based on the ASviS paper⁷ published in 2022.



Finally, the Alliance works on a regular basis with numerous institutions and organisations that promote the spread of a sustainability culture, including museums and libraries, with which we regularly organise events and projects. In this regard, the Alliance played an active role in preparing for the G20 in Italy (2021) and was the scientific partner for the Italian pavilion at Expo 2020 in Dubai (due to the pandemic, the event was actually held in the autumn of 2021), working on the creation of the pavilion that hosted the very best that our country has to offer, conceived very much with sustainability in mind.

ASviS periodically measures and monitors the positions of the EU and Italy with respect to the 17 SDGs and the progress made, using innovative statistical and cognitive tools. The assessment is conducted through the construction and analysis of individual and composite statistical indicators, selected from those made available by leading official sources (Eurostat, ISTAT, the Bank of Italy, ISPRA, etc.). Since 2020, ASviS also monitors the

position of the various Italian territories with regard to the SDGs, examining the situation at both regional and provincial level. Moreover, in October 2021, an experimental analysis was carried out of the position of the G20 countries with respect to the SDGs.

The data is analysed using two approaches: the calculation of composite indicators enabling measurement of the progress made over time, starting from 2010, by the EU, Italy and its territories with respect to the SDGs (overall, a total of approximately 180 elementary indicators are used in the monitoring); measurement of the distance from the detailed quantitative targets set by the 2030 Agenda or by European strategies, where Italy has given explicit commitments to achieve them.

ASviS also uses the data produced to support local authorities (regional, metropolitan, provincial and municipal authorities and groups of municipalities) in drawing up local sustainable development strategies. Over the years, the Alliance has worked with 13 organisations (six regional authorities and seven metropolitan cities and municipal and provincial authorities), also providing training to the related personnel.

THE IMPACT ON POLICYMAKING

One of ASviS's key tasks is to influence, through its proposals, the political debate and promote changes to the socio-economic system to enable full implementation of the 2030 Agenda at local, national, European and international level. From the very earliest events organised to present the Alliance and above all in the first Report on "Italy and the Sustainable Development Goals", presented to the lower house of Parliament on 28 September 2016, in addition to specific economic, social and environmental policy proposals, a number of general recommendations were made. These regarded the need to build an institutional framework able to accelerate Italy's progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda, coordinate public policy and promote a sustainability culture at all levels.

Seven years ago, the country was unaware of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs. Very few people or organisations were talking about sustainability in all its aspects, with the term commonly used to refer primarily to financial matters ("the sustainability of public debt") or environmental issues.

For this reason, ASviS's proposals were at best considered "abstract" and at worst "utopian".

For example, in the 2016 Report stated that "if sustainable development is to become the reference paradigm for both public policy and the behaviour of businesses and people, the first recommendation is that this principle be added to the Italian Constitution. [...] This inclusion would lead to a binding obligation to ensure that future legislation is not in contrast with this principle, regardless of the approach adopted by the government of the day. This would make it possible to devise and pursue policies of a more medium- to long-term nature, something that is much needed, not only in Italy". Following years of promoting this idea and thanks to the commitment of all the political parties, on 22 February 2022 the Constitution was amended. For the first time, the basic principles now include the need to protect the environment, ecosystems and biodiversity, including for future generations, among the tasks to be undertaken by the Republic. The amendments also state that economic activity may not be damaging to health and the environment (articles 9 and 41).

In addition to this achievement, considered "historical" by constitutional experts and many other observers, who acknowledge that without ASviS's efforts there would have been no constitutional amendment (as was the case in the past with previous proposals), the Alliance has had an impact on many public policy decisions. For example, with regard to the proposals put forward in the 2016 Report:

- the decision to draw up the National Sustainable Development Strategy of 2017 based on the 2030 Agenda as a whole and not (as in the past) primarily on environmental concerns, a proposal accepted by the Gentiloni Government;
- transfer to the Cabinet Office of responsibility for coordinating the policies involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda, under Law 221/2015 assigned to the Ministry of the Environment, a decision confirmed until 2021, when the Draghi Government transferred it back to the Ministry (a decision confirmed by the Meloni Government);
- transformation of the Interministerial Economic Planning Committee into the Inter-

ministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development (CIPESS) by the second Conte Government at the beginning of 2020. This ensured prior assessment of public investment decisions in light of their expected impact on the SDGs, as indicated by Prime Minister Draghi in a Directive issued in 2021. The methodology to be used is currently being defined;

- creation of a Permanent Consultative Committee on the 2030 Agenda and sustainable development policies, with the participation of experts in the relevant areas and representatives of social partners and civil society. This took place in 2018 with the setting up a specific Forum at the Ministry of the Environment;
- annual publication of a "Report on sustainable development in Italy" to assess the country's progress towards achieving the SDGs which, absent a Government initiative in this regard, has been produced by ASviS;
- attention to the 2030 Agenda in Parliament, with the establishment of a Permanent Committee within the Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Affairs Committee, which has created a system for "tagging" Acts of Parliament with the Goals and the Targets of the 2030 Agenda. Cross-parliamentary groups focusing on sustainable development have also been set up in this and the previous legislature;
- the rollout of an extensive, long-term information campaign on issues relating to sustainable development, which has in part happened through the media, partly thanks to inclusion of the 2030 Agenda in the service agreement with RAI;
- the launch of a national sustainable development educational programme, aimed at educating future generations, made possible by inclusion of the 2030 Agenda in the civic education law, by the partnership between ASviS and the Ministry of Education and thanks to the efforts of the Network of Universities for Sustainable Development;
- production of an "official" database with statistical indicators relating to the 2030
 Agenda produced by ISTAT and other national statistical bodies, an initiative launched in 2018 and broadened each year thereafter.

Over the years, the Alliance has made other proposals that have been implemented, such as reestablishment of the Interministerial Committee for Urban Policies (CIPU) during the Draghi Government, with the explicit task of, among other things, producing an Urban Sustainable Development Strategy, a localised form of the national

strategy. ASviS has directly and indirectly exerted significant pressure to convince the European Union to put the 2030 Agenda at the heart of its policymaking. This commitment came to fruition with the arrival of the new Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen and has led to the actions described in Chapter 2.

FROM THE RIGHT TO THE ENVIRONMENT TO THE RIGHT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Angelo Buonfrate and Antonio Uricchio (Aldo Moro University in Bari)

The expression sustainable development, nowadays widely used in scientific texts and in everyday language, refers to the possibility to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To do this, we must find a way to successfully combine economic growth, social inclusion and protection of the environment. To sustain means in fact "to support", with the result that development "supports" if it is of a lasting nature, taking on a diachronic perspective in the relationship between today and tomorrow, and putting science and technology at the service of nature, managing to recover without destroying the resources it uses. The combination of environmental, social, human, educational, behavioural, economic and above all ethical sustainability thus represents the multi-dimensional nature of sustainability.

In going beyond the earlier "polluter pays" principle, a form of compensation based on the precautionary and preventive principles, the scientific world and the global community have adopted a values-based approach. At the heart of this is the relationship between the rights of people and the rights of nature, the principles of social responsibility, the obligation of solidarity and social rights. The spread of this principle and its ability to change attitudes have gradually contaminated European and national decision-making, giving shape to new social and economic models.

In this regard, the "right to the environment" has naturally evolved into the "right to sustainability" which, in certain respects, draws lifeblood and support from the new formulation of article 9 of the Italian Constitution. This has extended protection, previously referring simply to the landscape (even in the broader interpretation proposed by the Constitutional Court), to the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems in the present and in the interests of future generations, with the manner and form of animal protections to be established in government legislation.

Going beyond an anthropocentric vision, the new article of the Constitution effectively combines the rights of humans with those of nature and with the principles of social responsibility and the obligations of economic and social solidarity, linking environmental concerns with growing social and geographical inequalities. The right to environmental sustainability has thus become a new archetype or, better still, an essential paradigm influencing private lifestyles, the productive system and public policymaking, thus becoming the necessary, inescapable framework for regulation, legislation and promotion.

The 2030 Agenda, the European Green Deal and Next Generation EU are part of this approach, bringing together three highly complex systems forming the pillars of sustainable development: the environmental, economic and social systems. Sustainable transformation is a prelude to the current era of major transitions (ecological, energy, climate, digital and economic), which should enable us to move on from the existing crisis situation (environmental, climate, energy, economic, etc.) to a new equilibrium, based on resilience. This will depend on the ability of systems to not only overcome and respond to challenges, but to transform themselves in a just, sustainable and inclusive way. To sum up, the Green Deal should enable us to switch to a growth model that gives back more to the Planet that it takes, within an approach based on intra- and intergenerational justice.

The fourth part of this Chapter contains a summary of what has been done so far in terms of public policies and the definition of strategies of relevance to the 2030 Agenda, to some of which ASviS has contributed its ideas. One of ASviS's proposals that became reality was the one put forward, together with the Inequality and Diversity Forum, during the first Covid lockdown regarding the introduction of an Emergency Income scheme. This was intended for people who did not benefit from other welfare schemes and was taken up by the second Conte Government at a total cost of €1 billion (see page 112).

Over our seven years in operation, ASviS has remained fully independent of public institutions. Our role has been systematically recognised by the various governments in power during this period, starting from the Gentiloni Government, in power at the time of the Alliance's establishment, by which ASviS was invited to represent civil society at the High-level Political Forum of 2017, during which the National Sustainable Development Strategy was presented. Later Governments have followed suit, with leading members of the various coalitions attending the events organised by ASviS. Major recognition of the role played by the Alliance was also demonstrated by the participation of the Italian President, Sergio Mattarella, at the Festival of 2019 and by the attendance of various EU Commissioners, Deputy Secretary-Generals of the UN and the OECD, and representatives of other international bodies and of regional, metropolitan city and municipal authorities at events organised by ASviS.

Further recognition of the importance and the quality of the work carried out by the Alliance was provided in 2021, when the Director, Enrico Giovannini, was appointed Minister of Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility in the Government led by Mario Draghi, remaining in office until the close of the eighteenth legislature. This was followed, in 2023, by the decision by Italy's President to nominate one of the Alliance's Co-Presidents, Marcella Mallen, as one of the independent experts to sit on the new National Council for Economics and Labour.

3.3 Italy's situation with regard to the SDGs: a very mixed bag

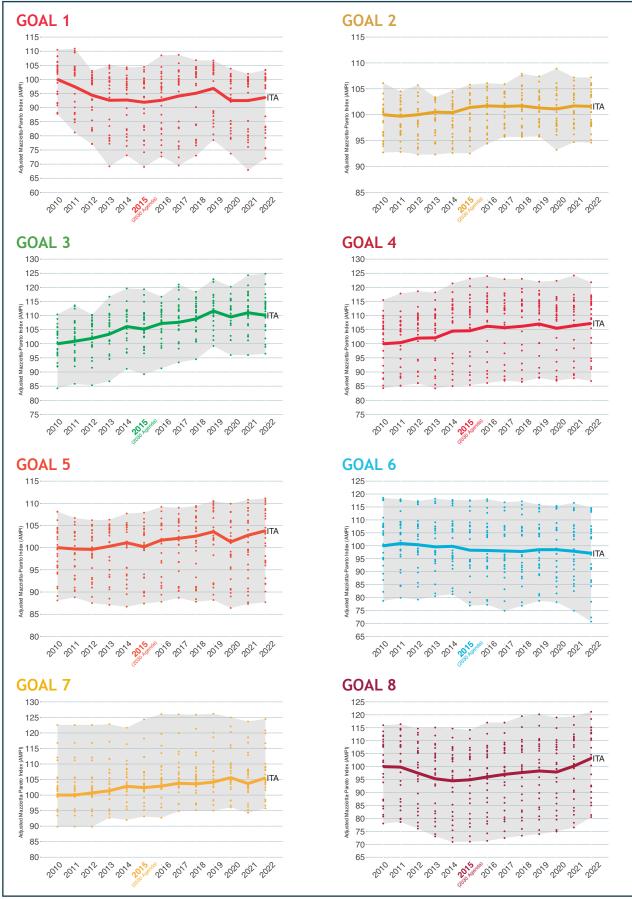
Key results

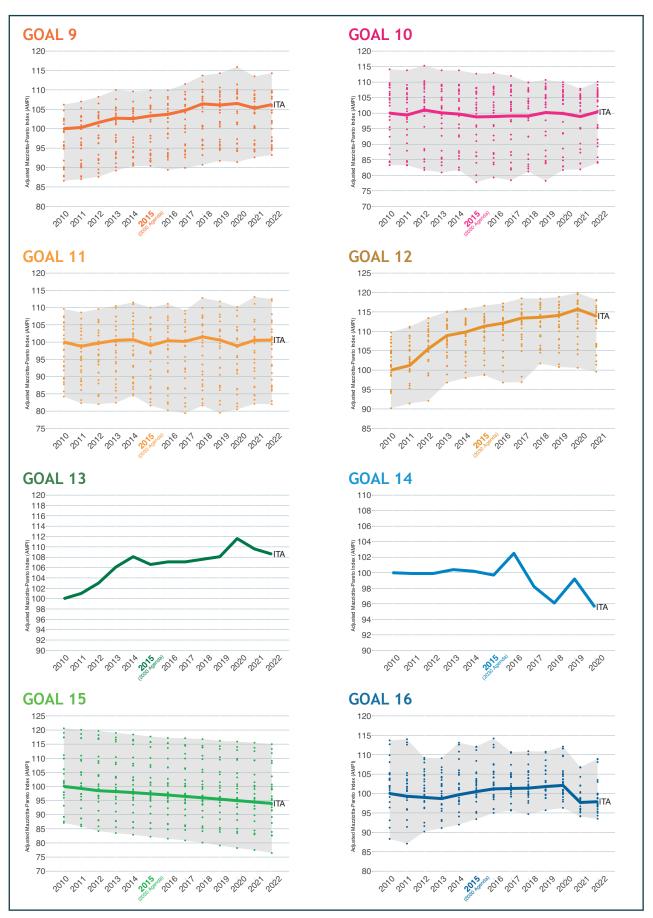
The composite indicators created by ASviS based on the data produced by ISTAT and other official statistical bodies show that the performance of our country is decidedly unsatisfactory in relation to most of the 17 SDGs8. Between 2010 and 20229, the situation regarding Goals 1 (poverty), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 14 (life under water), 15 (life on land), 16 (governance) and 17 (partnership) worsened, whilst the trends for Goals 2 (food), 10 (inequalities) and 11 (sustainable cities) remained broadly stable. The other eight Goals registered moderate improvements: the improvements in all the indicators were all below 10%, except for Gaol 3 (health) and Goal 12 (circular economy). Compared with 2015, the year in which the 2030 Agenda was signed, the situation has not improved. In fact, for the Goals where there has been overall progress, the improvement tends to be less apparent.

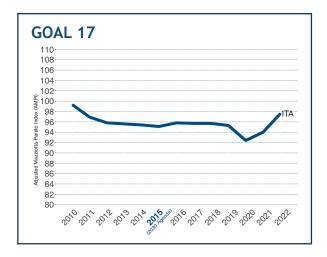
As was done with the composite indicators for the EU, a specific analysis of regional inequalities has been carried out. To this end, the following charts show the performance of the indicator over time and, for each year, the distribution of regions and self-governing provinces based on the related composite (each point corresponds with the figure recorded by each territory)¹⁰. Looking at the performance of the indicators in the period 2010-2022 for the 14 Goals for which territorial data is available, there was a reduction in inequalities for two Goals (10 and 16), stability in the case of five (2, 8, 9, 12 and 15) and a significant increase for the remaining seven Goals. This contrasts completely with the 2030 Agenda's key "leave no one behind" principle.

In conclusion, although we shall return to this aspect later, in 2022 Italy appears to be not only far away from achieving most of the Goals and Targets set for 2030, but is also subject to major disparities and hampered by problems of a structural nature. There has, moreover, not been any "transformative" change in such aspects in a positive sense in recent years. This means that only a radical change in public policymaking, in the behaviour of businesses and citizens and in the commitment shown by Italian society as a

Composite indicators for Italy







whole can drive the progress necessary to enable our country to achieve, or at least get close to, the Goals set by the 2030 Agenda, thereby improving the social and economic conditions of the Italian population and the environment in which it lives.

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

There was a downward trend for this Goal between 2010 and 2015, caused by an increase in absolute poverty (up 3.4 percentage points) and in people living in housing with structural problems or damp (up 3.6 percentage points). There was a slow improvement from 2015 to 2019, thanks to a decline in people in serious material and social deprivation (down from 12.1% to 6.4%) and people living in housing with structural problems or damp (down from 24.1% to 14.0%). This improvement is not, however, sufficient to return to 2010 levels.

With the pandemic, 2020 registered a sharp decline, with the figure for absolute poverty standing at 9.4%, the worst level in any of the years under analysis. In the last two years¹¹, there have been signs of a slight recovery, thanks to a reduction in serious material and social deprivation (down 1.7 percentage points between 2020 and 2022).

In terms of regional disparities, the period from 2010 to 2017 saw an increase in the gaps between the various regions: both the top and the bottom five saw deteriorations in their averages, though the declines registered by the latter far outstripped those recorded by the former. Inequalities began to decline again between 2017 and 2019, as the top five regions maintained the av-

erage registered in 2017, whilst the bottom five improved, reversing the earlier trend. From 2020, however, gaps began to grow again: the bottom five regions saw a deterioration, the top five remained stable. Compared with 2015, therefore, the territorial gaps for Goal 1 have remained broadly unchanged.

GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER

The positive trend between 2011 and 2015 reflected a reduction in the percentage of people who were overweight and an increase in organic farming. The indicator was broadly stable from 2015, with the increase in the share of agricultural surface area used for organic farming offset by a reduction in the number of people with adequate nutrition.

The last two years saw a reduction in obese or overweight people (44.5% in 2022 versus 45.9% in 2020) and in the number of people with adequate nutrition (16.8% in 2022 versus 18.7% in 2020). The share of agricultural surface area used for organic farming has continued to rise (reaching 17.4% in 2021), as has agricultural investment.

In terms of regional disparities, between 2010 and 2022 the distance between the averages of the top and bottom five regions remained broadly stable, reflecting a slight improvement in both figures. This trend was maintained during the pandemic.

GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The composite indicator improved both between 2010 and 2015 and in the following years through to 2019, above all thanks to an increase in life expectancy, which rose by 1.4 years over this period. 2020 saw a significant change, with a decline in life expectancy and an increase in behaviour that is a risk to health, such as alcohol consumption and smoking.

The following two years witnessed a slight improvement, but not sufficient to return to the levels seen in 2019. The drag on the performance primarily reflected increases in smoking and in people who do not engage in physical activity, which from 2019 have reversed the positive trend seen in earlier years. Above all, the share of people who say they smoke rose by 1.51 percentage



points from 2019 to 2022, whilst the percentage of people who do not engage in physical activity is up 0.8 percentage points.

In terms of regional disparities, the gap between the averages of the top and bottom five regions has grown. This reflects the fact that the top five regions have improved at a faster pace than the bottom five. This means that, whilst the national average has improved, there has been a significant increase in internal gaps in our country.

GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

The composite indicator performed well between 2010 and 2019, thanks to an increase in the share of university graduates (up 7.8 percentage points) and a reduction in the shares of early school and training leavers (down 5.0 percentage points), even if adoption of the 2030 Agenda, from 2015, there have not been any major changes.

The deterioration seen in 2020, linked to the pandemic, reflects a sharp decline in mathematics and Italian, whilst the renewed growth seen in 2021 and 2022, when the indicator returned to the level of 2019, reflected a sharp increase in the share of the population involved in lifelong learning (up from 7.1% in 2020 to 9.6% in 2022) and a sharp reduction in early leavers (down from 14.2% in 2020 to 11.5% in 2022).

Regional disparities increased between 2010 and 2018: in terms of performance, the top five regions improved at a faster pace than the bottom five. Between 2019 and 2021, the gaps remained stable, followed by a slight reduction in 2022, thanks to an improvement recorded by the bottom five regions. This was not, however, sufficient to make a significant contribution to reducing disparities, with the low in the time series remaining the figure for 2010.

GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

The indicator was stable between 2010 and 2015, when the number of women elected to regional councils and an increase in the ratio between the employment rates of women with children and women without children were cancelled out by an increase in women in involuntary part-time work. Between 2015 and 2019, the indicator improved significantly due to increases in female life expectancy (up 0.9 years) and in the share of

women with a STEM degree (up 2.0 percentage points).

2020 registered a sharp deterioration in the situation, due to the impact of the pandemic, whilst the following two years recorded renewed improvement, allowing the indicator to return to the levels seen in 2019: between 2020 and 2022, the female employment rate rose (up 2.9 percentage points) and the share of women in involuntary part-time work fell (down 3.0 percentage points).

In terms of regional disparities, between 2010 and 2019, the top five regions recorded an improvement in the average, whilst the bottom five remained broadly stable, driving a widening of the gap. In the last three years, however, despite certain shifts due to the pandemic, the gaps between the various regions remained broadly unchanged.

GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

This indicator was broadly stable between 2010 and 2014, as the improvement in the number of households wary about drinking tap water was offset by a deterioration in the efficiency of water distribution networks. From 2014, the composite indicator slowly worsened: the share of households dissatisfied with the continuity of water supply rose from 8.7% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2022 and the percentage of water supplied to users compared with the amount input into the network fell from 59.9% in 2014 to 57.8% in 2020.

In terms of disparities, there was an increase in regional gaps between 2010 and the years 2015 and 2016: whilst the average for the top five regions remained stable, the figure for the bottom five worsened. The gap then remained unchanged until 2022 when there was a sharp increase, as the bottom five saw their average decline faster than the average for the top five.

GOAL 7 - CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

The positive performance between 2010 and 2020 was fairly continuous: in this period, the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption improved (up from

13.0% to 20.4%), as did energy efficiency (measured as gross final energy consumption in tonnes of oil equivalent as a percentage of value added), which rose 12.3%. The greatest improvement took place in 2020, in concomitance with the pandemic and the resulting cut in energy consumption.

With the economic recovery in 2021, the indicator worsened, returning to 2019 levels: the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption fell 19% (production remained stable, whilst consumption rose) and energy efficiency returned to the levels seen in 2017. 2022, on the other hand, saw a sharp improvement, thanks to a renewed increase in energy efficiency (up 6% on the previous year), whilst the share represented by renewables remained stable.

Territorial disparities between 2010 and 2019 were unchanged, following similar improvements for both the top and the bottom ranked regions. In 2020, on the other hand, the gaps widened as the top five regions improved, whilst the bottom five remained in line with 2019. In the last two years, the gap between the two groups lessened, but not sufficiently to return to pre-pandemic levels.

GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The indicator worsened from 2010 to 2014 due to a reduction in gross investment as a percentage of GDP and an increase in involuntary part-time work. The following, slow upturn through to 2019, due to reductions in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and in non-participation in the labour market, was insufficient to return to the levels of 2010.

With the pandemic, growth in the indicator halted in 2020 before picking up again in the last two years: in the period from 2021 to 2022, there was a significant increase in gross investment as a percentage of GDP (up from 18.0% to 21.8%) and a sharp fall in NEETs, down from 23.7% to 19%.

Regional gaps widened through to 2019: the average for the top five regions remained broadly stable over the nine years, whilst the figure for the bottom five worsened. In the three-year period 2020-2022, there was a slight decline in dis-

parities (as the bottom five improved faster than the top five), but the distance between the top and bottom five still remains higher than in 2010.

GOAL 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The net improvement between 2010 and 2018 was driven by sharp increases in the share of households with fixed and/or mobile broadband connectivity (up 30.3 percentage points) and in the share of companies introducing product and/or process innovations (up 21.9 percentage points). From 2018 to 2022, however, the indicator was broadly unchanged: the increased spread of broadband was negatively offset by a fall in the share of people aged 14 and over using public transport several times a week, a percentage that has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels (11.8% in 2022 versus 15.1% in 2019).

The gap between the top and bottom five regions is relatively unchanged: after the increase seen between 2010 and 2020 (the performance of the top five improved faster than the performance of the bottom five), the last two years saw a reduction in disparities due to a fall in the average figure for the top five regions. These trends have returned the situation to the position recorded in 2010.

GOAL 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

The composite indicator is broadly stable throughout the period in question. Between 2010 and 2021, the indicators for the youth employment rate, up from 65.1% to 66.1%, and for the share of non-EU citizens with long-term residence permits, up from 50.5% to 64.3%, improved. There were instead significant deteriorations in the ratio between the income received by the 20% of the population on the highest salaries and by the 20% with the lowest incomes (up from 5.7 to 6.2) and in the risk of poverty: the percentage of people with income below or equal to 60% of the median figure over the total number of residents increased from 18.7% to 20.1%.

Regional disparities were broadly unchanged from 2010 to 2020, as the average for the top five regions declined at the same rate as the figure for the bottom regions. In the last two years, the gap

has eased thanks to an improvement in the average for the bottom five regions, whilst the figure for the top five was unchanged.

GOAL 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Also in this case, the composite indicator was broadly stable between 2010 and 2022, after a slight improvement between 2015 and 2018, the year that witnessed the best performances for the air quality indicator (measured as the number of times daily PM10 limits are exceeded, amounting to 28 days) and for the share of people travelling to work in a private vehicle (71.0%). Partly due to the pandemic, between 2018 and 2020 the use of private vehicles to travel to work rose and the local public transport offering declined. The latter recovered in 2021 and 2022, when illegal construction also declined, standing at 15.1% in 2022.

Between 2010 and 2016, the gaps between the top and bottom five regions rose, with the former remaining stable whilst the latter registered a deterioration. The gaps then stabilised through to 2019, with the two groups of regions recording similar performances. Between 2019 and 2022, the gaps reduced: whilst the top five regions remained stable, the bottom five saw an improvement in their average, even though they failed to return to 2010 levels.

GOAL 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The composite indicator improved between 2010 and 2020, thanks to improvements in all the related indicators. These included the figure for separate waste collection, which rose by 27.7 percentage points, and the quantity of material consumed per capita, which fell by 33%. It is interesting to note that, unlike the Goals primarily regarding economic and social aspects, Goal 12 performed well in 2020 thanks to improvements in most of the indicators in question. In 2021, however, the trend was reversed, due primarily to an increase in per capita material consumption (up 11.7%) and a reduction in material circularity (down 2.2 percentage points), which fell for the first time in eleven years.

In terms of territorial disparities, there were no noticeable changes in the gap between the top-

and bottom-ranked regions, as the two groups performed in line. Despite this, it is interesting to note that in 2021, a year in which both groups registered declines, the five bottom regions deteriorated at almost double the pace of the five top ones.

GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions¹² declines between 2010 and 2014, before rising through to 2017 and falling back again through to 2019. There was a sharp decline in 2020, due in part to the shutdown of businesses. This was reversed in 2021 and 2022 as the economy reopened, returning the figure to the levels seen in 2019.

GOAL 14 - LIFE UNDER WATER

The composite indicator¹³ performed negatively overall: beyond major variations, the situation in 2020 was far worse than in 2010. This reflected an overall increase in overfishing (up 11.2 percentage points between 2014 and 2020) and an increase in fishing (up 34.5% between 2010 and 2018). There were significant improvements in 2016 and 2019, due to reductions in overfishing. This trend did not, however, continue in the following year.

GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND

The indicator reveals a negative performance in all the years in question: there were deteriorations in the indicators regarding soil sealing, which stood at 7.1% in 2021, and the share of land that is highly fragmented, which in 2021 was 44.7%. The share of terrestrial protected areas remains stable, rising by a mere 0.1 percentage points between 2012 and 2022 to 21.7%.

Regional disparities also worsened, though at a slower rate: the top five regions saw a decline in the composite indicator between 2010 and 2022 that was slightly lower than the reduction recorded by the bottom five.

GOAL 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The composite indicator initially worsened between 2010 and 2013, due to an increase in the predatory crime rate, which was up from 16.5 to

24.2 offences per thousand inhabitants. The indicator then improved, reflecting a reduction in overcrowding in prisons, an increase in the general public's confidence in institutions and a reduction in the predatory crime rate. 2021, on the other hand, saw a significant decline in the composite indicator, due to a decline in social participation, which fell by 9.5 percentage points in just one year to 19.9%. The recovery in participation registered in 2022 was cancelled out by an increase in fraud and cybercrime, ensuring that the indicator was stable for that year. This meant that it remained well below the level of two years earlier.

Territorial disparities declined between 2010 and 2019: the bottom five regions improved as the top five remained stable. 2020, however, saw a widening of the gaps as the bottom five regions deteriorated. This was not reversed in the following years, even if disparities continued to be less pronounced than in 2010.

GOAL 17 - PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

After the worsening in the composite indicator¹⁴ between 2010 and 2015, due to a reduction in imports from developing countries, the indicator was broadly stable from 2015 to 2019: the slight improvement in the indicator for imports from developing countries was offset by a reduction in the share of environmental taxes as a percentage of total tax revenue (down 0.2 percentage points).

The deterioration in the composite indicator in 2020 was linked to the pandemic, with a sharp rise in the ratio of public debt to GDP, which rose from 134.1% to 154.9%. The indicator improved significantly between 2020 and 2022, almost returning to 2010 levels. This was driven by an increase in imports from developing countries (up 3.0 percentage points) and a reduction of 10.5 percentage points in the public debt-to-GDP ratio (down from 154.9% in 2020 to 144.4% in 2022).

3.4 Italy's current approach: an overview

The coordination of public policies, within a multilevel governance model, is a priority issue if we are to effectively pursue the Goals set in the 2030 Agenda and respect our international commitments in the various fields. As a result, we need to adopt a coherent, systematic and integrated approach to all of the four dimensions of sustainability, as recommended by the UN and the OECD (see page 165). It is no accident that the ability to put in place an appropriate, effective institutional governance framework is explicitly included in the 2030 Agenda under Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), where this aspect is referred to in Targets 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels) and 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels).

The need for strategic planning at institutional level with the aim of achieving the 17 SDGs has become even more pressing since the European Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen took office. The new Commission has put the 2030 Agenda at the heart of its policymaking (see Chapter 2) and produced the European green Deal, which has set a target of achieving climate neutrality by 2050. The Eu has committed to achieving the SDGs through by coordinating individual policies and giving each Commissioner responsibility for achieving the Goals relating to their particular area of responsibility.

Against this backdrop, on a multilevel basis, national strategies, which are in addition to those drawn up at European level or implement them in each country, have taken on a central role in defining the shared strategic guidelines and objectives. These have been associated with specific indicators to enable progress to be monitored and have been implemented through participatory processes and support and collaboration designed to adapt and implement them at local level. To provide an overview of the initiatives undertaken in recent years, the key characteristics of existing national strategies are described below. The National Sustainable Development Strategy, approved in September 2023, is described in detail in Chapter 4.

NATIONAL PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (PNACC)

With regard to strategic planning for climate change adaptation, the first steps at national level were taken in 2015, when the National Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation (SNACC) was adopted. This analysed the state of scientific knowledge on climate change and presented a series of proposals and action criteria for reducing the impacts.

In 2021, the European Commission presented the new European Strategy for Climate Change Adaptation as part of the European Green Deal. This aims to create systems that are resilient to climate change through the adoption of measures of an appropriate, integrated nature. The European climate law (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 dated 30 June 2021), integrating the Paris Agreement and the UN's 2030 Agenda into EU legislation, requires member states to adopt and implement national adaptation strategies and plans, based on the European Strategy.

Based on the contents of the SNACC, Italy proceeded to draw up a draft National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PNACC)15, a national planning tool to help national and local institutions to identify the most effective adaptation initiatives depending on the level of government. The Plan promotes the integration of adaptation criteria into planning processes and tools. The draft Plan was published on the website of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security at the end of 2022, following a process that began in 2017 and was divided into several phases. From 2018, following discussion of the draft Plan with regional authorities, the Ministry decided to submit the Plan to a strategic environmental assessment (SEA). The need to subject the Plan to such an assessment was evaluated in 2020, whilst the scoping process was carried in 2021. This was completed with a communication from the relevant authority, which published the opinion of the Environmental Impact Assessment Committee.

Based on the numerous observations received, it was necessary to make substantial changes to the version of the PNACC published in 2018. Following the changes, the revised version was then published in December 2022. This is divided into sec-

tions, as follows: the legal framework; the national climate framework; the impact of climate change in Italy and sectoral vulnerabilities; adaptation measures and initiatives; how to govern adaptation.

On 15 January 2023, the Ministry submitted the documentation to a public consultation, on the occasion of which ASviS published a Policy Brief, "Ten proposals on the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation¹⁶". This contained ten recommendations: ensure the general policy coherence with regard to climate, biodiversity and the ecological and digital transitions, as well as in relation to social policies; rapidly implement the revised form of the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) and, in synergy with the PNACC, proceed with approval of Italian climate legislation; complete the assessment of risks and vulnerabilities for the whole country (a highly topical issue); urgently implement the PNACC given that the impact of the climate crisis is already being felt in various areas of the country; have the Government and Parliament agree on a prioritisation of the adaptation measures and actions to be implemented based on the specific nature of the various territories and the resources available. In addition, ASviS has highlighted the need to give priority to nature-based solutions (above all the regeneration of urban areas), define the rules, roles and responsibilities involved in governance of the Plan (at national, regional and local level), correct and reduce the inequalities caused (or heightened) by climate change, encourage the participation of civil society and provide training for middle managers and technical staff.

In August 2023, the Minister of the Environment and Energy Security and the Minister of Culture signed off on the strategic environmental assessment of the Plan. The ministerial decree communicated the opinions of the Technical Committee responsible for assessing the environmental impact and of the Ministry of Culture's General Directorate for Archaeology, the Arts and the Landscape, containing recommendations and observations, which added to those received during the public consultation. The final Plan should be adopted in the near future with a decree to be issued by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security.

NATIONAL INTEGRATED ENERGY AND CLI-MATE PLAN (PNIEC)

The National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC)¹⁷ is to play a key role in defining the energy and environmental policies aimed at achieving the country's decarbonisation. The Plan regards a number of aspects, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transport, adaptation to climate change, and technological innovation and energy governance. It is the tool to be used by EU member states to identify the policies and measures needed to achieve agreed energy and climate-related goals by 2030. The Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security submitted the proposed update of the PNIEC of 2020 to the European Commission on 19 July 2023. This was preceded, on 30 June, by the submission of an executive summary.

In view of finalisation of the Plan, on 20 June ASviS published a Policy Brief setting out "Ten recommendations for drawing up the new National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan"18. The first of the ten recommendations put forward by ASviS regards the deadlines set in the PNIEC, which to be effective and provide strategic direction for the private sector must be defined and made operational in accordance with the timings established at European level. The new PNIEC must also be consistent with the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (PNACC) and the National Sustainable Development Strategy, documents that should form the basis for the drawing up of climate legislation, similar to the laws approved by other European countries. The aim of the PNIEC should be to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the various institutions that take part in the decision-making process, identifying obstacles to the development of renewables and seeking ways to overcome the current difficulties. This will involve making the most of the role played by energy communities and the self-consumption of renewable sources. Further details are set out in Chapter 4.

ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION PLAN

The Ecological Transition Plan¹⁹ was published in June 2022 and approved by the Interministerial Committee for the Ecological Transition (CITE) in resolution 1 dated 8 March 2022. The PTE, which was the subject of a public consultation in the au-

tumn of 2021, offers an overview of Italy's approach to the ecological transition, including definition of a conceptual framework for the initiatives provided for in the NRRP. This is a new national planning tool devised by the Draghi Government, alongside the creation of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition (which then became the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security) and the CITE (Law Decree 22 of 1 March 2021, converted with amendments into Law 55 of 22 April 2021).

In its preamble, the Plan points to the intention to follow a systematic approach to decarbonisation, based on a holistic, integrated vision that includes the conservation of biodiversity, the preservation of ecosystem services, health protection, economic growth, quality of life and social equity. The Plan, intended to be an initial version to be expanded on in a second document containing quantitative data and specific timings, takes us through to 2050, the year by which Italy is meant to achieve the clear and ambitious goal of operating with "zero net emissions". This will involve breaking with the existing linearity of the relationship between the creation of wealth and wellbeing and the consumption of new resources and/or increased emissions.

The Plan has the task of guiding policies relating to cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable mobility, combating hydrogeological instability and soil consumption, water resources and the related infrastructure, air quality, and the circular economy. The Plan refers to the European Green Deal and its various macro its various macro-objectives, as well as the 2030 Agenda. It is in fact no coincidence that Chapter 2 of the Plan, entitled "The future we want", evokes the title of the Rio+20 Declaration of 2012, which formed the basis for the process that led to the definition of the 2030 Agenda itself.

NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

The National Biodiversity Strategy²⁰ is the instrument by which Italy aims to contribute to the global goal of ensuring that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected. In 2021, the then Ministry for the Ecological Transition (now the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security) began the process of drawing up the Strategy through to 2030. This document, in line with the European Biodi-

versity Strategy for 2030, was intended to set out a vision of the future and development that would take into account the need to reverse, at global level, the current path towards biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse.

To ensure the widest possible participation of experts and civil society, the Ministry, with support from ISPRA, prepared an initial version of the Strategy, which was submitted for consultation by administration, entities and stakehold-

THE NRRP AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Since its adoption, the Alliance has analysed the NRRP to monitor progress in its implementation and to assess the potential impact on achievement of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Clearly, it is capable of driving significant progress along Italy's pathway to delivering on the various SDGs, as noted in the part examining the individual Goals. On the other hand, the NRRP was conceived as a plan designed to stimulate an economic recovery and boost the socioeconomic system's resilience to future shocks, and certainly not to ensure, on its own, the transition to sustainable development. For this reason, ASviS believes that the Government must adopt an integrated, coherent approach across all the policies designed to achieve the SDGs. This will ensure the consistency of the actions promoted by various sources of financing, including European and Italian cohesion funds.

The version of the Plan adopted in 2021 had positive and negative elements: the six Missions (digitalisation, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism; the green revolution and the ecological transition; infrastructure for sustainable mobility; education and research; inclusion and cohesion; health) were well defined, with a clear effort made to focus on three cross-cutting themes: women, southern Italy and the young. On the other hand, the absence of clear, overall quantitative and qualitative targets, above all for social and environmental aspects, has made it difficult, if not impossible, to assess the adequacy of the planned investments. In addition, the Plan does not focus sufficient attention on current future environmental challenges, or on the links between these and the prospects for economic prosperity, wellbeing and social security, with specific regard to the interests of future generations.

In the last year, there have been two significant developments with regard to implementation of the Plan. The first regards a revised form of governance of the Plan itself, linked to the design and implementation of cohesion policies, requiring greater involvement on the part of civil society (whilst the decision to disband the "Permanent working group on economic, social and local partnerships" has further reduced the scope for such interaction). The second regards the update of the Plan itself, submitted to the European Commission at the beginning of August. The Government explained the need for this update on the basis that there were difficulties in concluding certain projects by the agreed deadlines, that there had been delays and that commodity and energy costs had risen following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The changes to the Plan regard:

- revised targets and milestones (the timings for implementation, initial objectives, etc.);
- proposals designed to make more efficient use of the resources provided, reallocating them among measures in the same sector and falling under the responsibility of the same authority;
- the removal of projects and the transfer of the related funding to other sources of financing.

Overall, the measure removed amount to \le 15.9 billion (less than 10% of the total) and regard different areas of Missions 2 (the green revolution and the ecological transition) and 5 (inclusion and cohesion). These funds are to be reallocated among other existing measures and new ones. On the other hand, the update of the Plan will supplement EU funding (\le 2.7 billion) for REPowerEU, increasing total investment in this project to \le 19 billion.

The European Commission has yet to express an opinion on the proposals made, with confirmation required from the European Council before the amendments to the Plan can take effect. From ASviS's point of view, the proposals do not radically alter the overall nature of the Plan, but in certain cases (for example, urban regeneration and combating hydrogeological instability) redirect the focus away from issues that, on the contrary, require greater attention.

ers at the end of 2021 and for public consultation from 22 April 2022. In August 2023, the Minister of the Environment and Energy Security signed the decree officially adopting the document.

The National Strategy identifies a series of specific goals designed to reflect European priorities and international commitments at national level. The goals are set out within the context of several areas of intervention, such as protected areas, agriculture, forestry, inland waters and the sea. Each goal is accompanied by specific actions and indicators chosen to assess the progress made.

The National Strategy will be the subject of an indepth review in 2026 to assess the validity of its approach and make any necessary adjustments. A management committee has been set up by the Ministry to discuss and assess initiatives, actions, measures and technical and scientific documents to be agreed on by the central and local government bodies responsible for implementing and updating the Strategy.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR INNER AREAS

The National Strategy for Inner Areas²¹ is a territorially based policy aimed at improving the quality of public services and economic opportunities in inner areas of the country and at the risk marginalisation. The Strategy was first included in the National Reform Plan of 2014 and then given shape in the Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020. The process of selecting the areas began in 2013 and the primary criteria applied in their identification is based on the inner area's "distance" from essential services. The 2020 Budget Law and Law Decree 104/2020 strengthened and broadened the Strategy by providing additional funding of €310 million over the three-year period 2021-2023. The "Decreto Sud" ("Southern Italy Decree"), approved on 7 September 2023, has set up a steering committee within the Cabinet Office to oversee the development of inner areas, with the aim of ensuring the Strategy's effectiveness and sustainability.

In 2022, the Goal 11 ASviS Working Group published a position paper entitled "Sustainable development in inner and mountain areas"²², proposing the establishment of a new pact between mountain and lowland areas to be ap-

proved by Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development (CIPESS). The pact would be a fully-fledged "Agenda for the sustainable development of inner and mountain areas", designed to address the disparities and inequalities between the different areas.

NATIONAL CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRAT-EGY

Following widespread consultation, in 2017 the document entitled "Towards a circular economy model for Italy. Overview and strategic framework"23 was published. The document aims to provide an overview of the circular economy and define a strategic framework for Italy. On 30 September 2021, the Ministry for the Ecological Transition launched a public consultation on the document, "National Circular Economy Strategy. Policy review guidelines". This had five main sections: the framework of reference for the National Circular Economy Strategy; the national context; the Italian strategy; measurement and monitoring of circularity; strategic guidelines, areas for intervention and instruments. The consultation came to an end on 30 November 2021 with over a hundred contributions regarding the various sections having been received. The Strategy was then officially approved by Ministerial Decree 259 dated 24 June 2022.

The National Circular Economy Strategy²⁴ is a policy document setting out the actions, objectives and measures to be included in policies designed to ensure an effective transition to a circular economy. The Strategy aims to define new administrative and fiscal tools to boost the secondary commodity market, making it more competitive in terms of the availability and quality of the goods sold and the related costs compared with the market for primary commodities. To this end, the Strategy aims to influence the commodity supply chain (minimum environmental criteria for green procurement in the public administration), end-of-waste criteria, the extension of producers' responsibilities and of the role of consumers, and the dissemination of forms of sharing and "product-as-a-service" models. The Strategy also constitutes a key tool for achieving climate neutrality goals and defines a roadmap, with actions and measurable targets for 2035.

NATIONAL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION PLAN

The "National Action Plan. Global Citizenship Education"²⁵, in which ASviS had a hand as a member of the Multi-Actor Roundtable promoted by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation²⁶, was published in June 2023. The Plan, which regards citizenship education for a fair, inclusive and sustainable world, consists of activities to be conducted in Italian schools and universities, together with municipal and local authorities, including education in the values contained in the 2030 Agenda.

The aim of the Plan is to contribute to spreading a culture of shared responsibility among individuals and organisations, from the point of view of global citizenship, able to involve all the actors and stakeholders in the educational system. The Plan promotes a system for assessing the quality of teaching and education and calls for integrated, multi-level assessment processes. To ensure that the assessment process is shared and effective, the Plan proposes the establishment of a body involving all the actors in the sector to support the work of national and local entities in defining the related actions and developing policies and initiatives, as well as in assessing the related outcomes.

The National Action Plan has a three-year duration and receives funding at national, regional and local level from foundations and third sector entities, with the aim of financing the proposed initiatives at national and local level.

NATIONAL GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

The National Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026²⁷, which is based on the EU's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, sets out the values and policy guidelines to be followed in relation to gender equality. A number of the initiatives provided for in the Strategy have been included, as one of the cross-cutting priorities, in the NRRP and in the design of the Family Act (the delegated law introduced to support and promote the family, finally approved by the Senate in April 2022.

The Strategy is the result of a wide-ranging, participatory process involving administrations, social partners and leading associations. With the aim of rising five positions in the Gender equality Index produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality, the document ad-

dresses the following: work, money, knowledge, time and power, with detailed, measurable goals and targets to be achieved by 2026. The Strategy sets out the actions to be taken and the related indicators to assess achievement of the goals. It also includes cross-cutting measures, designed to enable delivery of the Strategy as a whole, that sit alongside the measures relating to the five strategic priorities. These regard: the promotion of gender mainstreaming and the gender balance; the introduction of assessment of the impact on gender equality of every legislative initiative; support for vulnerable people; the promotion of gender responsive public procurement principles and instruments; greater availability of official statistics and increased production of indicators broken down by gender; the promotion of language designed to enable dialogue and combat the use of sexist terms or sexist behaviour; the establishment of a "Cultural Pact" between public institutions and civil society to ensure a collective effort to promote gender equality; increased promotion of role models with the aim of overcoming gender stereotypes; the promotion of gender medicine; assessment of the obstacles to implementation of the Strategy and identification of the related solutions.

NATIONAL DIGITAL SKILLS STRATEGY

The Strategy²⁸, drawn up in 2020, is the result of a collaborative approach involving ministries, regional, provincial and municipal authorities, universities, research institutes, businesses, professionals, RAI, associations and various public sector organisations, in addition to organisations belonging to the National Coalition (over 120). The Strategy is overseen by the "Steering Committee for the Digital Republic", coordinated by the Department for the Digital Transformation.

The Plan focuses on four key areas: the development of digital skills in schools; the creation of an active workforce and guarantee adequate digital skills in both the private and public sectors; expansion of the country's ability to develop skills for new markets and new job opportunities, mainly linked to emerging technologies and possession of the skills needed for the future jobs market; development of the digital skills necessary to exercise citizenship rights and informed participation in democratic life.

ITALIAN ULTRA-FAST BROADBAND STRATEGY

The Italian Ultra-fast Broadband Strategy - "Towards the Gigabit Society"²⁹, approved by the Interministerial Committee for the Digital Transition (CITD) on 25 May 2021, defines the actions necessary to achieve the digital transformation objectives set by the European Commission in 2016 and 2021 (respectively with the Communication on Connectivity for a Single European Digital Market (the so-called "Gigabit Society") and the Communication on the Digital Decade (the so-called "Digital compass").

As also set out in the NRRP, the Strategy aims to boost connectivity to 1 gigabit per second throughout Italy by 2026, ahead of the European deadline of 2030. The Strategy is based around seven initiatives, two of which are already underway and were provided for in the Strategy of 2015 (the White Areas Plan and the Vouchers Plan) and five Plans approved by the Cabinet on 29 April 2021 as part of the NRRP: the "Italia a 1 Giga" Plan; the "Italia 5G" Plan; the "Connected Schools" Plan; the "Connected Healthcare" Plan; and the "Smaller Islands" Plan.

Implementation of each action plan included in the Strategy requires collaboration and coordination, within the CITD, between various central and local government entities and the involvement of organisations tasked with various aspects of implementation of the Plans.

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY STRATEGY

In May 2022, the Interministerial Cybersecurity Committee approved the National Cybersecurity Strategy³⁰ (2022-2026) and the annexed Implementation Plan, both drawn up by the National Cybersecurity Agency. To best respond to the challenges facing the country, the Strategy sets three key objectives: the protection of strategic national assets through an approach based on risk management and mitigation; the response to threats, incidents and national cyber emergencies, using systems for monitoring, detection and analysis and activating processes involving the entire national cybersecurity ecosystem; the development of digital technologies to respond to market needs, using tools and initiatives designed to support centres of excellence, research and businesses.

NATIONAL ARTIFICAL INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY

In November 2021, Italy adopted the Strategic Artificial Intelligence Programme 2022-2024³¹. In line with the European strategy, the document sets out twenty-four policies to be implemented in the next three years, with the aim of boosting AI in Italy through the development and enhancement of skills, research, development programmes and AI applications. These policies have the objective of making Italy a globally competitive centre for AI, strengthening research and incentivising technology transfer.

To respond to these challenges, European and national sources of investment have been identified for each policy. As part of the initiatives designed to develop new talents and skills, plans have been drawn up to increase the number of PhD graduates and attract the best researchers to Italy, in both basic and applied research. At the same time, the Programme includes policies to promote courses and careers in STEM subjects and to strengthen digital and Al skills.

The Strategy also indicates the policies needed to strengthen AI research ecosystem in Italy, promoting partnerships between the academic world and researchers, industry, public bodies and society. Finally, the document also includes policies aimed at broadening the application of AI in industry and in the public administration: the measures designed to benefit businesses aim to support the transition to 4.0, encourage the creation and expansion of innovative AI companies and support them through the process of testing and certifying AI products.

3.5 The situation of Italy with regard to the individual Goals seven years on from the signature of the 2030 Agenda

GOAL 1 - NO POVERTY

GOAL 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Despite the growing attention to sustainable development issues within Italian society, extremely disappointing results have been achieved with regard to the fight against poverty and inequalities. The efforts made by numerous public entities and civil society in this field were counteracted by serious delays in public policies, with temporary progress and setbacks which make Italy still incapable of making a clear commitment to building a future without poverty and inequalities.

Between 2015 and 2021, the percentage of households in condition of absolute poverty rose from 6.1% to 7.5%, with 1.96 million poor families, including 1.4 million children. The percentage of households in absolute poverty varied from 5.6% in the central Italy to 10% in the south. The percentage of households in relative poverty has also increased, rising from 10.4% in 2015 to 11.1% in 2021 (2.89 million households), with the regions of Puglia (27.5%), Campania (22.8%) and Calabria (20.3%) recording the highest figures. Relative poverty primarily affects larger households (four or more members), those with minors and with foreign residents.

The crises that took place in the last fifteen years have led to increased poverty, above all in certain fragile areas of Italy, from the suburbs to more inland areas, exacerbating inequalities: the ratio between the total equivalent income received by 20% of the population with the highest incomes and that received by 20% of the population with the lowest incomes has increased between 2008 and 2022, rising from 5.3 to 6.2. Insufficient employment income and the precarious nature of labour are a significant factor in the increase in inequalities: in fact, according to Eurostat data, in 2022 the percentage of people regularly employed at risk of poverty was 11.5%, against a European average of 8.5%.

As a result, wealth inequality has also increased, with a large portion of the population not possessing readily convertible financial assets to rely on in the event of unforeseen emergencies: according to the latest survey conducted by the Bank of Italy, in 2022, 50% of poorer households owned just 8% of total net equity and 38% of indebted households were classed as "liquidity-poor". This condition also explains why Italy is amongst the list of countries with a high level of intergenerational persistence with regard to education and income and wealth: almost a third of people between the ages of 25 and 49 at risk of poverty lived in poor households at the age of 14.

Inequality in the level of opportunity and access to key services affects young people, women, disabled people and the weakest, and translates into a worsening of the wellbeing of many households: in 2022, 4.9 million of people between the ages of 18 and 34 showed at least some sign of deprivation, almost one out of two.

Despite the above critical data, the policies pursued from 2015 onwards, the year of approval of the 2030 Agenda, have been insufficient and uneven. Law Decree 147 of 15 September 2017 introduced the 'Reddito di Inclusione (REI)', Inclusion Income. For the first time, Italy had equipped itself with a structural measure to combat absolute poverty, subject to an assessment of a person's financial status. This form of income was based on: financial support, varying based on the size of the household and the assets owned, and a personalised plan for participation in social and/or work inclusion programmes, designed to overcome poverty.

The 2018 Budget Law increased the number of beneficiaries of the payments, which replaced the 'Active Inclusion Support' (Sostegno per l'Inclusione Attiva, SIA), and absorbed Unemployment Benefit (Assegno di Disoccupazione, ASDI). In May 2018, the final version of the 2018-2020 National Plan for initiatives and social services to combat poverty was approved, a planning tool for use of the "services" to be financed by the Poverty Fund³².

With Law Decree 4 of 2019, the Citizens' Basic Income (*Reddito di Cittadinanza*, *RdC*)³³ replaced the REI, providing a government subsidy to supplement household income, accompanied by a work placement and/or social inclusion programme. Eligibility for the programme was sub-

ject to meeting all the specific requirements related to residency, income and financial situation of the household³⁴, in addition to a declaration, by all adult members of the household, of their immediate availability for work³⁵ and the signing of a work or social inclusion agreement.

The Citizens' Basic Income and the Citizens' Pension (Pensione di Cittadinanza, PdC) have played a key role in the fight against poverty, benefiting over 1.1 million households in 2019, with 2.7 million people collecting at least one monthly payment. However, in May 2020, due to the serious financial crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was deemed necessary to introduce³⁶ Emergency Income (Reddito di Emergenza, REM), as proposed by ASviS and the Inequality and Diversity Forum. The REM provided temporary extraordinary aid for households in a critical financial condition that had been left out of other support measures provided for under the anti-crisis measures. Thanks to the REM, 430 thousand households received support in 2020 (with an average monthly subsidy of €550), a figure significantly below original estimates, also due to poor awareness campaigns and the extreme complexity of the procedures to be completed in order to obtain access³⁷.

Existing and extraordinary measures introduced during 2020 helped mitigate the impact of the crisis on poverty and inequalities: according to ISTAT³⁸, approximately 10.6 million households (almost 41% of the total) received at least one subsidy throughout the year. 84% of beneficiary households only received work-related help (allowances for self-employed and atypical workers, furlough scheme payments, the domestic help voucher and the baby-sitting vouchers), whilst almost 13% only benefitted from measures designed to combat poverty (RdC, REM) and 3% both types of instrument.

Between 2021 and 2022, the Fifth National Plan for Children and Adolescents and the Plan for the National Implementation of the "Child Guarantee" were prepared and adopted. These plans include specific measures to combat child poverty. The "Child Guarantee" plan aims to ensure that children and teenagers in vulnerable situations have access to early childcare, education and school activities, a healthy meal each school day and health assistance, with particular attention to the gender dimension and specific forms of deprivation.

At the same time, the 2021 Budget Law strengthened the social services system and the measures in place to combat poverty, with a view to achieving an Essential Level of Social Services. Also crucial for the prevention and fight against child poverty was the introduction of the Unified, Universal Allowance, effective from March 2022. This allowance is a measure designed to support households, aiming to rationalise and simplify the measures previously provided for households with children (allowances for households with children, vouchers for future mothers, baby vouchers, etc.).

In October 2021, the Scientific Committee monitoring the Citizens' Basic Income put forward ten proposals for revising the instrument, including: restructuring of the access criteria and of the subsidy for households with minors, large households and those with foreign residents; greater flexibility in considering wealth; partial accumulation of employment income with the subsidy to boost the numbers of people seeking work³⁹. At the same time, civil society highlighted the need to accompany these financial measures with support measures aimed at reintegrating people into society, a preliminary step in returning to play a role in the labour market.

Instead of reforming the Citizens' Basic Income, addressing the clear limitations highlighted by the above Commission, the Meloni Government decided to abolish it from 1 January 2024, replacing it with two new measures: the Inclusion Allowance (Assegno di Inclusione) to combat poverty, and Support for Training and Work (the latter in force from 1 September 2023)⁴⁰. In this way, the previous approach based on a universal instrument to combat poverty has been reversed, returning to a "category-based" mindset that characterised policymaking before amendment of the REI⁴¹. The new system introduces new forms of inequality among the beneficiaries of the two measures, leaving a large portion of the population in conditions of serious poverty. Specifically, the right to receive continuous protection from the State is only granted to households that meet certain criteria (the presence of minors, the over-60s, disabled people and those who meet the necessary income and asset requirements). This has resulted in the exclusion of the majority of the absolute poor, meaning single people or couples without children, with low levels of education, many of which residing in the south, who are awarded a temporary monthly allowance of €350 for up to a year, provided that they are committed to completing retraining programmes or projects that are socially useful.

Contrary to what is stated in Target 3 of Goal 1, dedicated to the fight against poverty ("Apply adequate systems and social protection measure for all on a national basis, including minimum levels, and reaching substantial protection of the poor and vulnerable by 2030"), the new system has abolished the right of every struggling citizen, who meets specific income, asset and residency requirements, to regularly access, and until required, financial support that enables them to live a decent life. This new system, as shown by previous estimates of the reform's potential redistributive effects, could significantly increase poverty and inequality in Italy⁴².

Finally, it should be noted that the recent Delegated Law reforming tax legislation (Law 111 of 9 August 2023) is not based on an organic view designed to provide clear tax justice and, therefore, social justice, in the medium term and on the choice of a more efficient tax system model to achieve them. For example, the text, based on which the Government will have to draft the legislative decrees, analyses specific issues related to individual taxes, overlooking the interaction between the various components of the entire tax system and the potential impact on equity and the overall composition of the tax take. The measures described in the law are deemed not fit for the purpose of rebalancing the weighting between direct and indirect taxes and completing the required redistribution of tax expenses from employment income to other tax bases.

In addition, the principle that guides the reform of the income tax system for natural persons is the gradual reduction and review of *IRPEF* (Personal Income Tax) "with a view to transitioning the system towards a single tax rate", the so-called flat tax, a reference model which, when fully applied, will weaken the already insufficiently progressive nature of the tax system, potentially jeopardising the funding of current levels of public spending on the welfare system.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), approved in 2021, identified the reduction of territorial, gender and intergenerational

inequalities as cross-cutting priorities. This will be achieved through reforms and investment aimed at tackling inequalities and making essential services more accessible. Among these, the reform of the support for the elderly with care needs marks an important step in the direction of a unified and integrated welfare system. According to ISTAT, there are currently 3.8 million elderly people with physical and/or psychological disabilities, with the figure expected to rise in the coming years. The reform, if properly devised with the necessary legislative decrees and a related increase in public funding, will not only improve the quality of life for the elderly, but will also provide increased freedom for millions of women who are primarily responsible for taking care of their families.

The purposes of the territorial rebalancing in the NRRP are specifically defined in the contribution that the Plan can offer in reducing internal territorial inequalities, through the commitment made by the relevant central Government bodies to distribute at least 40% of the resources to be allocated locally across the southern regions (the "40% clause" in Law Decree 77/2021, as amended by art.2, paragraph 6-bis of Law 108/2021). Therefore, the review of the NRRP currently being discussed with the Commission will need to take into account the territorial impact and, specifically, the consequences that the amendment/postponement of crucial public investment in the south and more marginalised areas will have on reducing internal inequalities.

GOAL 2 - ZERO HUNGER

Progress towards the achievement of Goal 2, seven years on from adoption of the 2030 Agenda, shows great asymmetries. In terms of households, the persistence of low incomes and of inflation above the European average have led to a reduction in the consumption of healthy, high quality and eco-sustainable foods, due to the readjustments made to the ratio between spending on food and disposable personal income. On the other hand, with regard to agricultural production, there have been numerous positive signals, with an increase in production, eco-efficiency and surface area used for organic farming. However, social sustainability is still deemed inadequate with respect to the 2030 Agenda.

The ISTAT data also highlights progressive growth in sedentary lifestyles, above all following the pandemic, which in turn has led to an increase of one percentage point in obese or overweight adults. This negative trend also regards dietary habits: between 2015 and 2018, there was a rise in the percentage of people with an adequate diet, however, in the 2020-2022 three-year period, it fell from 18.7% to 16.8%, as has the figure for the period between 2015 and 2022, which fell by two percentage points. Due to the high level of inflation affecting food products, the number of households in conditions of food insecurity has also risen, above all in the southern regions.

In response to these issues, various measures have been put in place, including the increase in the National Fund for the distribution of food supplies to those in need, provided for under the 2020 Budget Law, and the establishment, in the 2023 Budget Law, of a new Fund to supply food packages, consisting of unsold products, to those in conditions of absolute poverty.

The Covid-19 health emergency highlighted several key issues of Goal 2, as the lockdown and subsequent restrictions resulted in a reduction in disposable income for many households, in addition to the standstill in production. In such a scenario, Law Decrees 34/2020, 18/2020 and 23/2020 provided significant measures, such as: an increase of €250 million in funding for the distribution of food supplies to those in need; the establishment of a Fund for integrated promotion, designed to create an extraordinary campaign to support Italian exports in the agricultural sector; the reform of the State Guarantee System on insurance contracts undertaken by SACE (Italian Export Credit Agency); the concession of a non-repayable grant for the development of innovative production processes; the emergence of illegal farm workers.

Despite the reduction in investment for the agricultural sector recorded in the 2020-2021 two-year period, the land used for organic farming has increased (in 2021, it equal to 17.4% of the total), with particularly high figures in the south. An increase of 4% during the same two-year period was also recorded in the number of workers in the organic agricultural sector, which kept up with the growth in agricultural eco-efficiency, meaning the ability of disengaging the economic growth factors from

the increase in the pressure factors. Since 2010, this ability has increased, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and the new European Common Agricultural Policy (2023-2027), resulting in a reduction in the intensive nature of Italian agriculture.

Throughout the years, there have been numerous measures aimed at increasing the profitability of agriculture (Target 2.3), with significant tax reductions and subsidies designed particularly to support small and medium-sized businesses and those located in fragile areas. For example, the 2023 Budget Law provided funds to support the Made in Italy concept, primarily benefiting smaller producers. In addition, the same law provided significant investment in generational turnover in agriculture, in order to increase the involvement of young people.

With regard to the environmental impact, the rate of use of phytosanitary products, such as pesticides and herbicides, fell from 2010 to 2017, to then stabilise until 2021. Between 2014 and 2021, there was an increase of 27% in the use of fertilisers in the non-organic agricultural sector.

A further factor of environmental stress related to the Italian agricultural system is represented by ammonia emissions, which fell by 4.4% between 2010 and 2019, in accordance with Directive 2001/81/EC. Greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural activities, which in 2020 accounted for 8.6% of total emissions, are also down.

From a social point of view, the situation is still very disappointing: Italian agriculture is characterised by an **extremely high rate of irregular employment** (24.4% in 2020), concentrated primarily in the southern regions. This results in an unacceptable exploitation of labour and poses risks for consumer safety and protection of the environment.

The measures contained in public policies have been primarily designed to increase production in the agricultural sector (Target 2.3) and the environmental sustainability of such production (Target 2.4), also with a view to obtain European funding for the preservation of ecosystems. For example, the 2020 Budget Law included measures to increase the environmental sustainability of the primary sector and to limit negative external factors for the environment, even though no in-

strument dedicated to the **protection of biodiversity** was provided (Target 2.5). The 2023 Budget Law established a Fund amounting to just €500 thousand to preserve agricultural and food biodiversity, including for so-called "custodian farmers", directly involved in preserving local biodiversity.

With regard to the future of the sector, the projects provided for under the NRRP, amounting to €4.88 billion, are of the utmost importance. Among the five measures included in the Plan, which include initiatives directly and indirectly related to the agricultural sector, the most significant are those regarding sustainable agriculture and the circular economy, the protection of land and water resources, and the transfer of research results to businesses. The Plan pays particular attention to issues related to the protection and development of the land and local peculiarities, engaging in various forms of partnership for Research and Development, and providing strategic investment for the sector, such as those related to farm-based energy (agrivoltaics and biomethane produced through anaerobic digestion) and the resilience of irrigation systems.

GOAL 3 - GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The seven years following the signature of the 2030 Agenda were marked by two primary factors: the efforts made to actually achieve the health and wellbeing goals for all ages, in a country equipped with a universal National Health Service and a well-developed welfare system, but limited by a series of deficiencies and inefficiencies; and the impact of a devastating pandemic, which brought great challenges and resulted in serious consequences at various levels

As highlighted by the trend of the composite indicator measured by ASviS, for Goal 3, Italy recorded a positive trend until 2019, thanks to a reduction in harmful behaviour (such as alcohol consumption and smoking), an increase in life expectancy, the reduction in death from non-transmittable illnesses, which was slow but constant (cancerous tumours, diabetes, cardiovascular illnesses and chronic respiratory illnesses), and stability in the number of overweight people.

However, the above improvements were deemed not adequate for achievement of the targets set for 2030⁴³, above all due to the lack of resources allocated to the health system, both for hospitals and for prevention and rehabilitation, and social and territorial inequalities. During the assessment of equity, efficiency and adequacy, monitoring of the provision of basic standards of care, conducted by the Health Ministry, shows that a large part of Italy has fallen behind across the whole period. In addition, Italy recorded a low vaccination rate for the elderly, a reduction in hospital beds, the insufficient integration of social and health care and the weakness in community medicine and local health services.

In relation to this situation, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic was a huge shock for health systems throughout the world, but for some was also an accelerator of their transformation. Italy, the first country to be hit in Europe, recorded (until February 2022) over 25 million cases and 187,859 deaths, with a vaccine campaign that delivered 144 million doses, covering over 86% of the population, thus avoiding almost 80 thousand deaths and over 2 million additional cases. This resulted in a slight reduction in life expectancy (82.4 years in 2020), which subsequently recovered in 2022 (86.6 years), a reduction of over 20% in non-Covid admissions, an increase in the number of unmet medical needs44 and an increase of 20-25% in psychiatric and psychological disorders.

From a regulatory point of view, 2019 saw the approval of the Plan for the application and promotion of Gender Medicine⁴⁵, which, for the first time, suggests that medicine should be designed on the basis of gender in all its functions. In 2020, the New Guarantee System was established and, in 2022, the National System for Health Prevention was introduced to pursuit primary prevention and the control of health risks directly and indirectly related to environmental and climate factors, also deriving from socio-economic changes. A further significant event was the amendment to articles 9 and 41 of the Italian Constitution in February 2022. This introduced protection for the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, also for the benefit of future generations, among the tasks of the Italian Republic, and the restrictions placed on any economic activity that could damage health and the environment.

With regard to the changes brought about by the pandemic, there is greater awareness of the fragility of the Italian health system, which has definitely evolved from a scientific point of view, albeit still weak in terms of the resources deployed and considering the risks arising from the climate and environmental crises and the loss of biodiversity (consistent with what ASviS had reported since its establishment, with regard to the interconnections between health, wellbeing, the environment and the economy). For example, the Sustainable Health Handbook (2018)⁴⁶ highlighted the importance of promoting "Health in all policies" and the One Health approach. To enable the creation of a governance model in line with the integrated approach proposed by ASviS, in June 2023, the Italian Parliament established the "One Health" parliamentary intergroup, to be supported by a Technical-Scientific Committee comprising experts from various fields⁴⁷.

In terms of ordinary investment, public health expenditure remains significantly low compared with other European countries⁴⁸. However, in 2023, spending on the National Health System increased by €2 billion⁴⁹, whilst the costs directly incurred by citizens also rose (approximately €40 billion). In addition, several National Plans designed to address the issues related to prevention, pandemics, oncological illnesses and chronic illnesses, were refinanced. These plans follow an approach that takes into account inequalities, interconnections with other sectors and the need to protect people's health in all contexts.

In 2021, the NRRP introduced important initiatives for the development of a community dimension for health, continuing care and the integration of social and health care, with a view to creating new local health services and reorganising the network of Research Hospitals (Istituti di Ricovero e Cura a Carattere Scientifico or IRCCS), with total investment of €15.6 billion. At the same time, the National Complementary Plan, dedicated to health, the environment, biodiversity and the climate, provided funding of €500 million to implement the programmes based on an approach that integrates health, the environment and the climate.

However, the efforts made to increasingly align Italy with European standards did not take into account certain factors that represent serious critical issues for the sustainability of the National Health System: the advanced age of medical staff; voluntary resignations to take up jobs in the private sector, where salaries are higher; the migration of young graduates to other European countries (1,167 in 2019); the lack of appeal of certain master's degrees. With regard to the demand for staff in the health and social care sectors, during the pandemic crisis, beginning in 2020, there was an increase of 7.1% in health personnel, albeit with one third on fixed-term contracts. In response to the serious lack of health personnel, further medical scholarships were financed for the period 2021-2024 (for the 2023-2024 academic year the number of places has been increased to 18,248). Master's degree scholarships also increased by 13,507 places for the 2020-2023 three-year period, in order to improve medical training and address the lack of personnel.

With regard to nursing, the situation is even worse: in terms of the number of nurses (6.16 every thousand citizens and 1.4 nurses for each doctor), Italy ranks at the bottom of the table for OECD countries. Training provided increased to 19,375 for the 2022-2023 academical year, although various critical issues remain, such as the high average age of nurses currently employed, migration to other European countries and the drop in enrolments to training programmes, resulting in further difficulties for the new local health system provided for in the NRRP.

GOAL 4 - QUALITY EDUCATION

The overall structure of the 2030 Agenda gives Goal 4, related to quality education, a key role, given its direct and indirect connections with all the other sustainability goals. An adequate level of education is normally associated with a reduced risk of poverty, a healthier diet, greater life expectancy, greater focus on gender issues, more sensibility towards environmental matters and so on. Therefore, great attention is given to the quality of education. Years of study and degrees attained are not just results to strive for, but rather tools that lead to more substantial achievements: effective learning, skills that improve job prospects and enable participation in civil society, knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development.

Data for Italy currently shows significant underperformance from various points of view. Italy is still a long way from reaching European targets for early childhood services: the available places covered 28% of children up to the age of three, even though the investments provided for under the NRRP should enable the country to reach the European target of 33% by 2026. 11.5% of youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 left the education and training system without any qualifications, compared with the European average of 9.6%, a situation that primarily affects young men (13.6%) rather than women (9.1%). During recent years, Italy recorded a reduction in the percentage of early leavers, but there are still significant territorial disparities: the southern regions have a leaver rate of 15.1%, compared with 8.2% in central regions and 9.9% in northern areas. Among Italian citizens, 11.3% left their studies prematurely, whilst for those with foreign citizenship the figure rises to **36.5%**⁵⁰.

Alongside "explicit truancy", now deemed significant, we have the concept of "implicit truancy", meaning the inadequate nature of the knowledge and skills gained by students at the end of their studies. The PISA international surveys of the OECD, related to fifteen-year-olds, show how in Italy there are consistent gaps in reading, maths and scientific skills with respect to other advanced countries. This was also confirmed by the "INVALSI tests", which regard all students in the second and fifth years of primary school, the third year of junior high school, and in the second and fourth years of second-grade high school. In addition, the situation was exacerbated due to the impact of the pandemic, with extremely high percentages of students who after 13 years of study fail to achieve a decent level. The inadequate quality of Italian average learning is particularly prominent in certain levels of the school system, such as junior high school and professional training, in the southern regions, and among those who live in vulnerable households or areas, including in the north of Italy. This leads to an increase in educational and, in the longterm, social inequality.

There are still critical issues related to the full and effective development of new and tailored educational methods, and also delays in reorganising school areas into safe and welcoming learning spaces. The pandemic heightened many critical issues in schools: quality and progression of learning were impacted, with losses that could only be restored with greater efforts than those already made. Serious concerns were raised with regard to the psychological distress sustained by young males and females, with risks to their social and emotional growth. This can be seen in every Italian school. However, it unfortunately primarily affects those who are more fragile and that live in more disadvantaged household, social and territorial situations, reflecting the lack of equality in our educational system.

Despite the fact that the poor levels of learning have been a constant topic of public debate in the last fifteen years, none of the legislative initiatives that followed approval of the 2030 Agenda have tackled this issue organically. This is partly due to the extreme complexity of the governance system for educational institutions, which, since 1999, are independent from a constitutional point of view, but have limited decision-making powers regarding, for example, the selection of teachers. However, on the other hand, the Ministry of Education, Regional and Provincial Authorities and Municipalities are all responsible for the operation of schools, making the system particularly difficult to manage.

To achieve the targets included in the 2030 Agenda Goal 4, the Italian school system must return to an inclusive basis in line with the principles that inspired it following approval of the innovative legislation of 1975. It must be able to deal with the whole spectrum of Special Educational Needs, those voiced by disables students, those who are affected by specific learning difficulties and those with social or cultural disadvantages, such as foreign students. As shown by international experiences, improvements in education require complex and expensive initiatives, which are unpopular in terms of electoral votes, regarding teacher training and selection and infrastructure. For example, teachers' opposition to these initiatives, such as their refusal to back the "Buona Scuola" ("Good School") law proposed by the Renzi Government in 2016, have so far made it impossible to bring about a radical reform designed to improve the educational system.

To help with the situation, the NRRP has allocated €1.5 billion with the aim of taking four million high school students above the average educational level in Europe over the next four years and, by 2026, reach the 10.2% target set for "explicit truancy". At the same time, this will help tackle the more critical issue regarding educational poverty, being the lack of opportunities for many children and teenagers to develop their abilities and ambitions to the full.

The promotion of learning opportunities throughout life is also a weak point in the Italian educational system: as of today, the training provided to adults and workers has been inconsistent. This has affected those more vulnerable, who are almost always excluded from training opportunities that benefit those who are able to identify their professional needs and still manage to inform and re-educate themselves. In 2022, continuous training involved 9.6% of the Italian population, a slight increase compared with pre-pandemic levels: but quality is open to question. In fact, less than half of those of ages between 16 and 74 have at least a basic level of digital skills. The 'Gol' programme, for which the NRRP has allocated €4.4 billion, was established with the aim of boosting active labour policies. Specifically, the programme includes the provision of integrated services aimed at workers who make use of social safety nets or other income support schemes, vulnerable workers (young people, women with particular disadvantages, disabled people, the over 55s), the working poor and unemployed people with no income support.

Lastly, it should be noted that Italy has made significant progress in the education for sus-

tainable development and global citizenship education⁵¹. In terms of curricula, the subjects and academic fields in which the topics are taught primarily regard civic education (Law 92/2019), but also geography, geographical history and other subjects in high school. With regard to teacher training, the guidelines on national training priorities (starting with the 2015 reform) only integrate issues related to cultural diversity and tolerance, environmental sustainability, sustainable consumption and production. Not included, at least not explicitly, are the issues related to gender equality, human rights, peace and non-violence, climate change, survival and human wellbeing.

Finally, it should be noted that the EU Recommendation related to the education for sustainable development⁵², adopted on 16 June 2022, in keeping with the Dublin Declaration (Global Education European Declaration on Global Education 2050)⁵³, provides a clear path towards promoting education for the green transition and sustainable development. The Recommendation urges states to support and improve teaching and education for the green transition and sustainable development by providing infrastructure, digital tools and resources, primarily relying on the European sustainability competence framework (GreenComp)⁵⁴. Therefore, this Recommendation will also need to have an influence on Italy's policies on this matter, by implementing the National Plan of Action for Global Citizenship Education, putting education for sustainability at the heart of the new Strategy for Sustainable Development, enhancing civic education guidelines, in line with the related EU Parliament recommendations⁵⁵.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

After years of insufficient institutional attention, the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship (Target 4.7) is today widely recognised, as shown by the publication of national guidelines and recommendations, the deployment of multi-factor committees on the matter, and the in-depth studies and awareness initiatives carried out in schools. Partly thanks to the work of ASviS, education for sustainability, albeit far too often primarily focused on environmental aspects, has become shared heritage for the national educational community.

Following the preparation of the "Guidelines on environmental education for sustainable development" in 2015, the States General for Environmental Education produced a shared document in 2016 that urged everyone to play their part in promoting a culture of the environment and sus-

tainability, in the short, medium and long term. The goal of achieving the progressive integration of education for sustainable development in curricula at all levels and degrees is highlighted in 2016 in the "Three-year Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research and ASviS", which was renewed in 2019 and 2023. The Memorandum is designed to "promote the adoption of the culture of sustainability for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals", claiming that the school system must strive to provide "education focused on sustainable development and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a peaceful and non-violent culture, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural divides".

This outlook was also originally included in the **National Sustainable Development Strategy**, adopted by the CIPE (now CIPESS) in 2017, and in the "Plan for Education for Sustainability" from the same year (divided into 20 initiatives across four main areas: teacher training and education; universities and research; information and communication; school infrastructure). Subsequently, this approach was confirmed in 2018 by the document "**National guidelines and new scenarios**", drawn up by the Committee for Implementation of the National Guidelines set by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (now the Ministry of Education and Merit). With regard to the initiatives launched in accordance with the above Memorandum, the "Scuola2030" portal was completed in 2019. The Portal, developed by INDIRE (the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research) at the request of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research and in collaboration with ASviS, provides self-training material, content and resources for all Italian teachers, in order to bring lessons inspired by the values and vision of the 2030 Agenda, including the e-learning course developed by ASviS.

The 2030 Agenda was explicitly included in school curricula in August 2019, with the approval of Law 92 regarding the "Introduction of civic education into school curricula", in which environmental sustainability represents one of three key aspects. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, environmental education, eco-sustainable development, environmental protection, voluntary work and active citizenship are some of the key issues included in the guidelines, which are currently being revised following their three-year trial period. The revision will need to take into account the amendments to articles 9 and 41 of the Constitution, which introduced the principles of intergenerational justice and protection of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems. The matters related to sustainable development have progressively made an appearance in schools, also thanks to improvements made to bibliographical information: as of today, there is a wide range of options in terms of school textbooks and digital content, providing useful tools for including 2030 Agenda topics in courses.

In 2020, Italy also introduced a **Global Citizenship Education Strategy**, approved by the Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation. The strategy supplements Law 92 and goes beyond schools, laying the foundations for the long-term Plan of Action approved in 2023. The Plan, which was also developed by ASviS, specifies the initiatives to carry out in the formal and informal educational sector, and those related to a series of information and awareness campaigns. On the other hand, it should be noted that, in June 2021, the "School Re-Generation Plan" was launched. The Plan, which focuses closely on the 2030 Agenda, has not yet been implemented due to the change of government.

With regard to higher education, the decision taken in 2016 by the Conference of Chancellors of Italian Universities to build a Network of Universities for Sustainable Development (RUS) was an important achievement. The Network aims to "promote the sustainability culture and best practices", both within and outside universities, thus contributing to achievement of the SDGs. The Network's taskforce on the education for sustainable development, to which ASviS directly contributes, represents the first attempt by Italian universities (85, as of today) to take a coordinated and shared approach to the development of courses on sustainability and social responsibility.

GOAL 5 - GENDER EQUALITY

In the past seven years, the progress made towards the achievement of Goal 5 has been limited and not in line with the targets set for 2030, especially considering the halt caused by the pandemic, which exacerbated all the inequalities, including those related to gender, as highlighted by the World Economic Forum⁵⁶. Italy not only ranks in 79th place out of 146 countries, but has also fallen by 16 positions compared with 2022. At the current rate of progress, the EU will reach gender equality in 67 years, whilst for Italy it is expected to require much longer.

It should also be noted that the gender equality index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), developed on the basis of the various dimensions through which equality is measured (employment, time management, financial resources, knowledge, health and power), ranks Italy in 14th place amongst the other 27 EU countries. In addition, the EIGE highlighted the role of the pandemic in exacerbating issues which, for some time, have affected women's employment situation, the inadequacy of the social welfare system and the persistent gender stereotypes that still impact the sharing of care duties within households. According to two new composite indicators published in July 2023 by UNDP and UN Women, Italy ranks amongst the countries with a medium-high performance, still some way from the "top of the class", with space for improvement with regard to both power and freedom of choice for women in the five dimensions (education, health, inclusion, decision-making processes and gender violence), and for gender inequality in the key dimensions of human development, including health, education, inclusion and decisionmaking processes⁵⁷.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, as of today, Italy has made progress in this regard, as highlighted by the composite indicator developed by ASviS. Specifically, in recent years there has been greater attention to female presence in various jobs and senior positions, including among boards of directors, in the access to training for STEM subjects, the removal of obstacles and difficulties in securing loans, and the increase in life expectancy. Despite these positive signs, we must not forget about the serious issues concerning our country. There are deficiencies in the welfare system, with regard to the provision of services; the complicated employment situation

is, therefore, also an income-related issue for women and the limited support in care duties compromises the overall wellbeing and the right to independence and maternity, highlighted by the constant fall in the birth rate. In addition, gender violence still takes place within households, and in work, health and financial contexts.

As highlighted in previous ASviS Reports, since 2015, various regulations have been adopted, which have all had significant impact: Law 15 of 16 February introduced, among the basic principles according to which regional authorities with ordinary status must govern the electoral system by law, the adoption of specific measures to promote equal opportunities for males and females in accessing electoral positions; the declaration by the Constitutional Court of the constitutional illegitimacy of the law explicitly enforcing the sole use of the paternal surname; Law 71/2017 related to the prevention and fight against cyberbullying; Law 165/2017 for gender rotation among candidates in the proportional part, and the guarantee of having at least 40% female leaders and candidates in single-member constituencies; Law 3/2018, which provides gender medicine in all its functions; the 2018 Budget Law, which extended the mandatory parental leave to four days, paid in full, plus an optional day replacing a mandatory absence for the mother (a measure subsequently extended to 10 days and 20 for multiple births, with effect from 2022).

The same Law also introduced legislation to protect women who have been victims of sexual harassment in the workplace, whilst Law 69/2019, the so-called "Red Code", is designed to improve protection for victims of domestic and gender violence, thereby amending the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure. The topic of violence against women was also involved in Law 4/2021, which approved the OIL Convention no. 190, aimed at eliminating workplace violence and harassment. On the other hand, Law 53/2022, regarding the statistics for gender violence, represents an important achievement in the process of collecting information, and a key tool in monitoring episodes of violence and preventing and tackling the issue.

From a social point of view, significant events were: the 2020 Budget Law, which established the "Universal credit and services for families", designed to reorganise and categorise the policies providing support for families with children, and

THE 2020-2025 GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

As with the environmental and social matters, the European regulatory framework offers lawmakers and national civil society a solid foundation and provides targets to define and refine in accordance with the specific applicable context. Specifically, the European strategy, adopted in March 2020, was focused on three key areas: stopping violence against women; equal opportunities in reaching leadership positions at both work and in politics; adoption of the gender perspective in all policies.

To tackle violence against women, back in 2016, the Commission already proposed the EU's enrolment in the Istanbul Convention, approved in June 2023 following lengthy negotiations. The approval paves the way for the establishment of a legal framework to protect women against any type of violence, including domestic.

With regard to wage discrepancies and the labour market in general, the Commission launched a public consultation on income transparency and, in March 2021, approved a proposed Directive aimed at increasing the application of the principle of equal pay between men and women for equal work, through salary transparency and specific operating mechanisms.

To allow women to prosper in the labour market, the EU is committed to doubling its efforts for the full application of the laws regarding work-life balance, in order to make work a real-life choice. With regard to the issue related to leadership positions taken by women, the Commission approved the proposal made in 2012 for balancing gender among companies' boards of directors, and will promote the involvement of women in politics, also with a view to the next European Parliamentary elections, which will take place in June 2024.

Lastly, the EU is committed to applying a gender perspective in all European policies, electing for the first time a woman equality commissioner, with an independent portfolio, and establishing a taskforce comprising representatives from all its services, which must guarantee the integration of the equality dimensions, including gender equality, both on an operational and technical basis.

which provides measures to facilitate the access to loans for women-owned agricultural businesses; the 2021 Budget Law, which established the "Women in Business Committee" at the Ministry for Economic Development; Law 162/2021, which introduced the Equal Pay Fund and gender certification; the 2022 Budget Law, which increased the share of the Common Solidarity Fund used to increase the number of available spaces in nurseries and in early childhood educational services, setting a guaranteed minimum level (33% on a local basis by 2027).

In addition to these measures, we also have "Golfo-Mosca" Law (120/2011) regarding the minimum presence of women in the management bodies of listed companies and those publicly owned, and Law 160/2019, which extends its period in force and scope of application. Despite its limited application (listed companies) and a reduced period in force (six mandates), this regulatory framework has proved not only effective in improving the gender balance within boards of directors, but also in raising the level of expertise

available to boards and achieving improvements in performance.

It should also be noted that there was a tendency to multiply the measures providing direct funding for gender policies, through the establishment of new funds managed by various administrations. The more significant funds were those related to the 2021-2023 period: the Fund supporting women-owned businesses, to promote and support the launch and strengthening of female entrepreneurship; the Fund to tackle discrimination and gender related violence; the Fund for training provided prior to the receipt of the gender certification; the Fund for personal training provided to stay-at-home wives or husbands. This fragmented approach is detrimental to the goal of organically promoting gender equality, and it cannot support maternity, which has been significantly falling for some time now.

Approval of the NRRP in 2021 was crucial for policies aimed at overcoming gender inequality, as it recognised the importance of the issue and

provided both specific legislation and investment. The Plan identifies gender equality, together with reducing intergenerational and territorial disparities, as one of the three cross-cutting priorities pursued in all the missions that make up the Plan, which must also be assessed from a gender mainstream point of view. In this context, the Plan provides clear support for female employment and entrepreneurship, including the introduction of the national gender certificate (Law 162/2021). This certificate, using bonus mechanisms, introduces significant changes to the way businesses handle gender equality, whilst the new Contracts Code forces contracting authorities to recognise possession of the certificate when assessing bidders for public tenders.

With regard to investment, various enabling initiatives will be implemented, starting with the increase in available spaces at nurseries and of adequate policies to guarantee a fair share of care responsibilities between men and women, thereby providing an effective work-life balance. At the same time, to combat the multiple dimensions of discrimination against women, the NRRP has adopted a National Strategy designed to increase the position in the Gender Equality Index table, developed by the EIGE, by five points by 2026. The "2021-2026 National Gender Equality Strategy", adopted in August 2021, sets out the guidelines and measures aimed at establishing the Government's approach to equality issues over the next five years (see page 109). To ensure implementation of the Plan, an interinstitutional steering committee (chaired by the Prime Minister, with the role of linking the various administrative bodies involved) was set up, in addition to a National Observatory for the integration of gender equality policies (at the Department for Equal Opportunities), which is also responsible for monitoring.

GOAL 6 - CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

GOAL 14 - LIFE UNDERWATER

GOAL 15 - LIFE ON LAND

Since 2015, with regard to Goals 6, 14 and 15, there has been a serious lack of progress, and on various aspects we can see negative trends, going in the opposite direction to that desired.

This is not only based on the available data, which highlight a significant gap in awareness, but to the policies approved in recent years, which have been adopted in a disjointed and uncoordinated manner, not in line with the strategic framework adopted and, therefore, structurally inadequate to ensure achievement of the 2030 Goals. In addition, various biodiversity targets already expired in 2020, in line with the Aich Biodiversity Target framework established by COP10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in 2010. It should also be noted that several European regulations (regarding the pollution of air, water and protected areas) have been breached. At the same time, the 2020 National Biodiversity Strategy was not fully implemented, as seen with the majority of the strategies for marine ecosystems.

The available data shows that, with regard to surface waters, 78% of rivers and 69% of lakes are in a good chemical state⁵⁸, whilst the ecological status of internal surface water (rivers and lakes) is "good" or "high" only for 43% of water bodies (there is still no data for 10% of these bodies). On the other hand, with regard to underground water, 70% are in a good chemical state and 79% in a good quantitative state (in this area, unmonitored zones represent 15% and 25%, respectively).

Inefficiencies in integrated water systems have a significant impact on marine ecosystems: in Italy, water network leakages amount to 42%, significantly worse than 2008 (down 10 percentage points), 89% of residents are connected to the sewage system, with 94.4% of the wastewater produced treated in secondary or advanced plants. Approximately 29% of citizens are not comfortable with drinking water from the tap, and around one third of water withdrawn has to be treated through a water purification system⁵⁹. In addition, climate change is leading to droughts and putting stress on water resources, resulting in growing risks of flooding and a negative impact on hydrogeological instability.

Protected land, including the "Nature 2000" network, makes up 21.7% of the national territory, whilst protected water surfaces only 11.2%. The increase set for 2030, provided for under the new European Biodiversity Strategy and the COP15 of the CBD, requires protection to be increased to 30% of both land and marine areas.

The national territory is at risk due to various factors: forest fires pose a threat to 18% of Italy's natural coverage, whilst 35% is classed as an area "almost" threatened, and these figures will further increase due to climate change. Ispra60 believes that soil degradation affects 17% of the available total, varying between 3% and 28% among regions, whilst soil consumption regards **7.1% of the territory**. As a result of climate change and the absence of measures to stop the consumption and sealing of soil (which negatively affects the possibility for adaptation), to protect and restore ecosystems, based on current policies, Italy will not be able to achieve the target of neutralising soil degradation, resulting in serious negative impacts for agricultural and food production⁶¹.

Overfishing remains high: based on the new data provided by ISTAT, the figure for 2021 was 80.4%, an 11.2% increase from 2014. On the other hand, sea pollution, above all plastic, is a cause for great concern: it is a phenomenon on the rise and there is no reassurance that the measures put in place so far are adequate to the task of tackling the issue. For example, beach pollution in 2021 comprised of 273 different objects (reusable plastic, fishing and fish farming related waste, plastic bags and smoke related waste) every 100 metres of beach⁶².

National public policies have so far failed to develop solutions in response to what Italy has committed to achieving at European and international level, focusing on the structural human causes that result in the loss of biodiversity. For example, Law 221/2015 introduced various instruments to develop environmental policies based on a systematic view, recognising the role of protecting and enhancing natural capital for social and economic prosperity⁶³. However, publication of the various natural capital reports⁶⁴ and of the Catalogue of Environmental Subsidies⁶⁵ has had no concrete influence on national policies. In addition, even the preparation of the NRRP, designed to provide a significant push towards reforms and investment for the green transition, did not take into account any of the key recommendations in the above documents.

The main key development for the sector is the approval of the Constitutional Law 1 of 11 February 2022, which amended articles 9 and 41 of the Constitution, introducing protection for the environment, biodiversity and ecosys-

tems, also for the benefit of future generations. Animal protection included in article 9 also integrates the One Health scientific concept, which recognises how human, animal, plant and environmental health are inextricably interconnected. The first paragraph of article 41 states that private economic initiatives, in addition to not being able to take place in conflict with social utility, cannot be conducted "to the damage of health and the environment". This submission applies the principle of "Do No Significant Harm to the Environment" (DNSH) included in the European Green Deal, which Italy is already required to apply to NRRP related investment and other projects financed under the 2021-2027 European budget.

An innovative boost to policies related to the 2030 Agenda was given by the European political framework, starting in 2019 with the presidency of Ursula von der Leyen and the measures included in the Green Deal. In particular, the European Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, with related strategies for forests and soil protection, brought forward the innovative proposal of a European Ecosystem Restoration Law. The strategy was integrated with the Strategy for agrifood production, known as the Farm to Fork Strategy, which provides measures to reduce the use of pesticides and cut the loss of nutrients. The targets set by the European Biodiversity Strategy implement the CBD's COP 15 international agreements concluded in Montreal at the end of 2022, aiming to achieve an increase of 30% in protected land and marine areas by 2030, and to effectively restore 30% of degraded land, water, marine and coastal ecosystems.

However, the European Nature Restoration Law sets a target of at least 20%, rather than 30%, as indicated in the COP 15. As of yet, there are no proposed policies that demonstrate how the EU intends to close this gap (for example, with a restoration target and political and financial measures that guarantee the EU's commitment as a whole in pursuing restoration beyond the EU and their respective national areas). In this regard, it should be noted that the National Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, adopted in 2021⁶⁶, does not include an ecosystem restoration target.

Policies regarding the economic recovery from the pandemic crisis, included in the Next Generation EU framework and the NRRP, provide for major investment in implementing the European Green Deal, as part of the Plan for the Ecological Transition adopted in 2022. In particular, investment for the renaturation of the river Po began the process of restoring ecosystems, which should be extended to cover the rest of the country, starting with areas at a higher risk of flooding⁶⁷.

The investment and reforms provided for in the NRRP also aim to make water distribution networks forming part of the Integrated Water Service and Collective Irrigation Service more efficient and improve water treatment. These investments are in addition to the Investment Programmes already provided from 2017, above all in the National Plan for Initiatives for the Water Sector, in Budget Laws and various funding provided with the use of national and European funds.

With regard to water pricing policies, certain regional authorities are implementing mechanisms that adopt the "who pollutes/uses pays" principle, both in setting the procurement fee and the rates paid by end users, which is also based on the volumes consumed. In terms of the water sector, over the years, this process has been implemented by promoting the measurement and recording of water volumes in a shared database among all institutions (SIGRIAN), and through the adoption of regulations and reward mechanisms that encouraged its adoption. As of today, 13 regional authorities have issued determinations for the application of a fee that includes a portion based on the consumption of water resources, or reward/penalty mechanisms, meaning reductions or increases applied to concession fees and/or irrigation grants linked to the level of efficiency.

GOAL 7 - CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

The prospect of success in fighting climate change (Goal 13) is strictly related to the transformation of energy production and consumption methods (Goal 7). Ecological transition and energy transition are interdependent, to the point that general attention is above all on the latter, in order to "leave the fossils underground", as stated by the secretary-general of the United Nations, Guterres.

On a global scale, greenhouse gas emissions⁶⁸ increased between 1990 and 2022, rising from 37.86 to 55.9 Gt, at an average yearly rate of 1.8%, whilst the temperature difference⁶⁹ compared with pre-industrial levels reached highs of over 1°C. The Italian figures show a reduction in emissions, falling from 519 Mt in 1990 to 422.6 Mt in 2022 (down 18.6%), with an average yearly decline of 0.6%: if this trend was to continue in the future, Italy would achieve decarbonisation within approximately two decades. At the same time, the average surface temperature rise is almost double the global average: 2022 was the hottest year ever recorded since 1880, with a temperature increase⁷⁰ of 0.87°C compared with the thirty-year average between 1990 and 2020, exposing Italy to extreme weather events, heat waves, fires and floods, earlier than the rest of the world.

If Italy has had no issues in accessing energy, even after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, unlike 10% of the world's population, our country suffers from significant energy poverty, meaning the condition of those who have no energy for heating or cooking or those who cannot afford it. In Italy, this issue affected 9% of the population in 2022 (with the highest figure of 16.7% recorded in Calabria). This is a significant increase from the 7.6% recorded in 2015 and an increase of 0.5% from 2019, due to an increase in electricity and gas bills, despite the electricity and gas vouchers, which increased from €200 million to €5 billion in less than three years, and were provided to almost one fifth of Italian households.

In terms of the use of renewable energy sources in 2022, Final Renewable Consumption⁷¹ amounted to 23 Mtoe (adopting the Eurostat method), 19.2% of the total. Despite the fact that the target set for 2020 (17%) was already achieved in 2014, the modest growth recorded in recent years shows that Italy will struggle to achieve the Target set for 2030: in fact, since 2015, the figure has only risen by 1.4 percentage points, and if this rate is continued until 2030, the figure would reach 20.9%, less than half of the European target (42.5%). In 2022, renewable electricity consumption⁷² amounted to 318.9 **TWh and 37% of the total** (33.5% in 2015): even in this context, if no major changes are introduced, in 2030 the figure would reach just above 40%, compared with the agreed doubling within Europe.

Finally, with regard to the 2030 Agenda target of a net improvement in primary energy intensity per unit of GDP, equal to 4.096 MJ/€PPS in Italy (a higher figure compared with the global 21.6%), assuming that the country's GDP's growth will be in line with growth at European level, our country should be able to reach the figure set for 2030, also in line with the figure provided for by REPowerEU⁷³ (3.3 MJ/€).

The Targets set in Paris for global warming state that the climate will change regardless, and in turn society and individual behaviour will need to adapt to new phenomena, of greater concern than those (already concerning) that hit Italy and the rest of the world in 2023. This adaptation is, therefore, a fundamental target in SDG13. However, without any mitigation, this target is not a solution to the problem, as it is extremely expensive and fraught with difficulties, as highlighted in the Paris Agreement, due to its dependency on the territory and the population's culture and capabilities.

In the last seven years, the measures designed to combat climate change were included in public policies in a far too hesitant and contradictory manner. Alongside the aforementioned amendment to the Constitution, the transformation of the CIPE into CIPESS⁷⁴ and the establishment of the CITE⁷⁵, which is responsible for coordinating policies related to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, both established within the Cabinet Office, the decisions made and resources used in this regard are not in line with international and European requirements and the commitments given by Italy. Scientific Institutions need to play a key role, independently guiding public policy. Despite the widespread awareness of the concept of sustainability within civil society and in schools and a progressive and responsible commitment made by the industrial sector for the ecological transition and circular economy, there are still delays and doubts. At the same time, climate deniers are increasing being given space in the media.

Italy is adopting a National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change (PNACC). The draft published at the end of 2022 appears cautious, is short of funding and lacks efficient governance, setting out a series of tasks but without describing how to complete these tasks. ASviS has highlighted how to improve the Plan and how get it up and running in a

timely manner⁷⁶. This is deemed necessary as the cost of inaction is higher than that of prevention, and the absence of a clear and responsible message aimed at citizens and businesses is stopping them from participating and putting their knowledge of the territory at the disposal of the national community, aside from the extraordinary commitment to "shovel mud" during the flooding that affected Romagna.

With regard to the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC), ASviS presented ten proposals⁷⁷ before the adoption of the new plan in June. Given the subject's complex and extensive nature, more information is provided in Chapter 4.

Finally, Italy is not delivering on its commitments for the Green Climate Fund, provided in Target 13a. The financial contribution made for climate action amounted to US\$1.4 billion a year for five years, starting from 2022. The figure is significantly below⁷⁸ what Italy ought to be contributing to the Fund, estimated at approximately US\$4 billion.

GOAL 8 - DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

With regard to employment, until 2019 Italy was affected by serious delays accrued during the years of the crises beginning in 2008, above all in relation to Europe, resulting in a worsening of territorial inequalities that have historically characterised our country. Following the drop in 2020 due to the pandemic, overall employment was on an upwards trend, especially thanks to the increase in employees aged 50 or over, also reflecting the country's demographic trends (which saw an overall ageing of the population) and the increase in age-related requirements to access pensions. On the other hand, the younger generation were affected by extremely low economic growth, and still have one of the highest unemployment rates across the EU, despite it falling from the levels seen in 2014-2015. In 2022, the number of NEETs (young people aged between 15 and 29 who are not engaged in education or employment) was 1.67 million, accounting for 19% of the total of those aged between 15 and 29.

If the above issue is added to the significant number of young people who are in a condition of limited continuous work, their future pension is also a cause for concern (both in terms of years and amount). In 2020, the outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis revealed the overall fragility of Italy's system and labour market. The asymmetrical impact of the crisis, both from a territorial point of view (affecting already under-developed regions) and generational (affecting young people), resulted in a significant set-back in the achievement of the targets included in Goal 8. The positive results achieved in the 2021-2022 two-year period in terms of employment growth (at the end of 2022 the rate of employment was 60.8%79, an increase of two percentage points from July 2008) and reducing unemployment (the rate of unemployment dropped to 7.8% from 12.9% recorded in 2014), still do not align Italy's labour market with that of other large European countries. In addition, in 2022, approximately 1.8 million full-time contracts were provided, compared with 8.5 million fixed-term contracts: furthermore, among fixed-term contracts, over 4 million of these have a duration of less than 30 days and are not renewed at the end of this term, whilst only 750 thousand are automatically converted to full-time contracts.

As a result, Italy's situation remains concerning, above all in terms of youth and female employment, precarity and the huge territorial inequalities affecting the southern regions. In particular, our country remains one of the lowestranked advanced economies with regard to youth unemployment (23.7% at the end of 2022, down 5.9 percentage points from 2021): the target of 9% by 2030 set across Europe is a long way away, and the impact of widespread unemployment is concerning for an entire generation who will be responsible for the future world. In addition, with regard to the quality of employment, despite numerous efforts and excellent results in the private and public sectors, Italy's overall situation is still complicated. The apparent low gender wage gap hides a much more serious problem, related to the low level of female employment, whilst many sectors (above all the public sector) have no inclusion criteria to accommodate disabled people.

During the years following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, various measures were adopted to overcome both the economic and structural issues affecting the Italian labour market. For example, in order to "increase work experience"

in the second cycle of education", and to boost the employability of young people in the process of finishing their studies, the 2017 Budget Law introduced measures to support the employment of those taking part in work experience schemes or apprenticeships. In addition, the Budget Law established a no tax area (a complete exemption from paying the annual contribution to cover university fees) for students belonging to poorer households that are enrolled on degree courses at a state university. It also introduced a three-year contributions holiday for direct farmers and professional agricultural entrepreneurs aged below 40 who were enrolled in the Agricultural Welfare System in 2017.

At the end of 2017, in view of the expiry of the terms for the recruitment linked to the "Employment Voucher" provided under the *Garanzia Giovani* (Youth Guarantee) scheme, the National Agency for Active Work Policies (ANPAL) established the new "Youth Employment Incentive" to promote the recruitment of NEETs between the ages of 16 and 29 who had joined the program. This initiative achieved greater results than those related to the previous Employment Voucher, above all thanks to the greater use of fixed-term contracts.

The creation of new job opportunities is inevitably related to the economic system's ability in being innovative and competitive. Among the measures designed to stimulate productivity, in addition to the "Industry 4.0" National Plan of 2016, aimed at promoting modernisation of the productive system and guarantee significant increases in the levels of productivity and competitiveness, the 2018 **Budget Law** introduced incentives and tax relief for the purchase of capital goods and for the technological and digital transformation processes of businesses. These included extension of the super depreciation and Hyper depreciation schemes, the "New Sabatini" law, the Fund for intangible capital and the establishment of highly specialised centres. In this regard, it should be noted that a tax credit was introduced for training expenses regarding the implementation of the "Industry 4.0" plan. In addition, there was an upgrade of the Higher Technical Institutes (ITS), which were reformed by Law 99/2022 and took on the name of ITS Academies, whilst the approval process began for the trial of the technical-professional reform required by Mission 4 of the NRRP.

With regard to "decent work", the European Commission published a Directive for an adequate minimum wage within the EU, which was adopted on 28 October 2020. This measure, in line with the "European Social Rights Pillar", requires member states to establish national adequacy criteria for minimum wages and their revision, including an assessment on purchasing power, the general level of average salaries and their distribution, and growth in average salaries.

Two important measures adopted in 2019, with a direct impact on the labour market, were the introduction of the Citizens' Basic Income (RdC, Reddito di Cittadinanza) and the reform of the pension system (so-called "Quota 100"). These measures should have facilitated the generational turnover in the labour market for the benefit of young people, offer financial support to workers with lower wages and boost job centres. However, the Citizens' Basic Income failed to provide adequate support to those most in need, discouraging people from seeking work. With regard to the reform of the pension system, the expected turnover between elderly workers leaving and young people joining did not take place.

The Government adopted several measures to tackle the 2020 crisis, including extension of the extraordinary measures related to social safety nets to protect employment, such as: the furlough scheme, paid leave, compensation to various professional categories, incentives for agile forms of working, measures to support liquidity through the banking system, increase in the Guarantee Fund for SMEs, financial support for businesses. In addition, an Income Support Fund of last resort was established to support workers affected by Covid-19, and further measures were adopted, such as measures to support the liquidity of businesses and initiatives for the SME Guarantee Fund, which did not have the desired direct impact on the real economy.

With regard to jobs in the tourism sector⁸⁰, the Strategic Plan for Tourism was approved in February 2017. This sets out the development of the sector in the following six years to relaunch Italian leadership on the global tourism market. On 17 July 2023, the Cabinet Office approved the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan for Tourism, based on five pillars designed to promote the sector's competitiveness: governance; innovation; quality and in-

clusion; training and professional careers in tourism; sustainability.

Still on the same topic, the European Parliament's resolution on 25 March 2021 established a European Strategy for Sustainable Tourism, based on which the Council of the European Union adopted the conclusions on tourism in Europe for the coming decade (sustainable, resilient, digital, global and social), which also invites member states and the Commission to present a European tourism agenda for the 2030-2050 period. Mission 1 of the NRRP involves numerous initiatives to support the development of sustainable tourism, such as, for example, the funds destined for the competitiveness of hospitality businesses, the National Suburbs Plan and the digital tourism platform.

The NRRP is a chance to recover the historical delays that have always penalised the country and that regard disabled people, youth, women and the south. For this reason, the NRRP's reforms and investments share the same cross-cutting priorities, related to equal generational, gender and territorial opportunities. The projects are assessed on the basis of the impact they have in improving the potential of young people, women and territories, and in the opportunities they provide for everyone, without discrimination.

NRRP Mission 5, "Inclusion and Cohesion", aims to improve current labour market policies and job centres, in order to enhance the labour market and professional training, contribute to increasing employment rates, facilitating job transition and providing adequate training. For this purpose, two reforms are required: one for the current labour market and training policies, and the other (at no cost) to combat illegal work.

In addition to the reforms, five different investment initiatives are provided for: the upgrade of job centres; incentives to promote female entrepreneurship; the development of a gender equality certificate; the upgrade of the dual system; the upgrade of universal civil service.

GOAL 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In the period between 2015 and 2023, the infrastructural situation of our country highlighted a series of shortcomings and elements that urgently require action. Despite undeniable improvements in various sectors and resources provided by the NRRP (unfortunately, recently defunded specifically on important projects for the territorial structure and the reduction of hydrogeological risks), the state of Italy's infrastructure is not up to scratch when it comes to meeting the challenges of sustainability. Overall, compared with Europe, Italy shows signs of weakness, above all in transport and water infrastructure, and in the urban and housing contexts.

In terms of transport, Italy has always given priority to road transport over rail, which results in high social and environmental costs. In 2021, transport accounted for approximately 25% of total emissions (figure close to the European average), with a growing role in this context in recent years, related to an overall reduction in total emissions (down 19.9% in 2021 compared with figures recorded in 1990). In the transport sector, road transport is the main source of emissions, accounting for 93% of the total.

With regard to the transport of people, despite the indicator measuring the proportion of railways and buses in passenger means of transport showing a relatively positive situation compared with other EU countries, the situation is still critical. In terms of transport of freight, there is also a total imbalance between the means of transport, with rail transport losing out. In 2021, only 12.6% of freight internally transported was moved by rail, compared with an EU average of 17.0%.

The NRRP will play a key role in this sector, as it provides for significant investment in the upgrade railways lines (currently not as extensive as in other European countries). This will see the construction of an additional 541 kilometres of high-speed railway line, equal to approximately 74% of what was built up until 2019; the European railway traffic monitoring system will be updated for 3,400 kilometres of railway line; 680 kilometres of regional lines will be upgraded; 38 railway stations in the south will be redeveloped; 1,280 kilometres of lines built on metropolitan railway hubs and key national connections will be improved.

The NRRP also intervenes on port infrastructure: the plan envisages investment of €9.2 billion on various fronts, with the aim of improving

the resilience of port infrastructure against climate change, increase port capacity through dredging activities and building new piers and platforms, electrifying docks and developing hinterland areas.

Another significantly critical aspect regards road safety. The tragic collapse of the Morandi bridge in Genoa in August 2018 highlighted serious surveillance and maintenance shortcomings across the whole motorway network. Studies conducted in various countries concluded that concrete bridges have lifespans limited to between 50 and 70 years, as a result of deterioration of the materials used (carbonation). This reflects the tougher demands being placed on bridges with respect to those they were designed to meet, due to the enormous increase in traffic and weight transported, which in turn speeds up the deterioration process. With regard to motorway infrastructure, a particularly interesting indicator is that of road deaths as a proportion of the population, which also reflects the poorer quality of roads and greater congestion, due to supply not being able to meet demand. In 2022, 3,159 people died in motorway accidents, a similar figure to that seen in 2019, following a reduction caused by the pandemic. The Italian road death rate is significantly worse than the European average, amounting to 5.4 and 4.6 deaths per 100 thousand people, respectively.

With regard to **energy infrastructure**, the complex geopolitical situation, generated by the invasion of Ukraine, has led to a significant increase in the use of gas from alternative sources to those from Russia. We must not forget the European targets for the energy transition, which will require a much greater use of renewable energy sources. The net installed renewable power generating capacity amounted to 56.5 GW in 2020, a yearly increase of approximately 1 GW since 2015, still not enough to meet European targets and achieve a capacity of 130 GW by 2030.

If European targets are met, energy produced from renewable sources will need to cover at least 65% of final consumption in the electricity sector. The investment envisaged for the electricity infrastructure network are therefore key to ensuring greater integration of renewable sources and, at the same time, the efficiency and safety of the service: the Hypergrid

service, which uses direct current transmission technology, will provide significant improvements in terms of delivering additional transmission capacity between market areas, and increasing the flexibility and resilience of the grid.

The persistent and general drought seen in recent years, and the rising temperatures, have brought the lack of water availability, due to climate change and the inadequacy of the national water system, to everyone's attention. In 2020, certain measures were adopted for the rationing of water in 11 provincial capitals, which rose to 15 in 2021. In 2022, for 10 regions across central and northern Italy a national state of emergency was declared due to the situation of water deficit, subsequently extended until the end of 2023. Italy, in fact, does not store enough rainwater, despite rainfall, which is in decline, being higher than other EU countries. The ISTAT GMA 2023 Report (regarding the five-year period 2018-2022) identifies, for potable water grids, an average water losses of 42.2% across the 500thousand-kilometre distribution network, which is rather obsolete: over 60% is over 40 years old, and 25% is over 50 years old. The national rate of renewal (3.8 metres of pipes per each kilometre of network) would require over 250 years to replace the entire network, a clearly unsustainable plan.

The NRRP intervenes in the water sector, providing investment of over €4.3 billion through four large scale measures, albeit still insufficient: €2 billion for new primary water infrastructure (for example new reservoirs) across the whole territory; €900 million for the repair, digitalisation and integrated monitoring of water networks to essentially diminish water leakages; over €800 million for the upgrade and modernisation of the water system in the agricultural sector; €600 million for waste water treatment, with the water to be reused for agricultural and manufacturing purposes.

With regard to **innovation**, a European quantitative target that countries must meet has been set: by 2030, allocate 3% of GDP to Research and Development. Italy is still far behind in achieving this target, having only reached 1.5% in 2021 (the EU average is 2.3%). In the last 15 years, the indicator has grown at a far too limited pace and, if the trend was to continue, the target will not be met.

The policies included in the NRRP could have a positive impact, given that various investments are provided for in research: in addition to investment in the creation of "national research and development champions" in key technological areas, 15 thousand new PhD scholarships were awarded for 2024, which would lead to an increase of approximately 47% of the total people enrolled on PhD courses. This result could give a positive boost to a sector currently in crisis, given that between 2007 and 2021 the number of people enrolled on PhD courses dropped by approximately 20%.

The indicators related to business innovation show a situation that is still in the process of evolving, even though there are structural delays compared with the average EU country. The percentage of businesses that introduced innovative products and/or processes in the last 3 years rose by 19 percentage points between 2014 and 2020 to stand at 50.9%. This highlights a certain dynamism in the industrial sector. The number of patents proposed per million residents also increased, rising from 65.6 to 82.4 between 2015 and 2022, figures still significantly below the EU average, which in 2022 amounted to 148.8 patents per million people. The gap compared with the rest of Europe is also due to the particular composition of Italian industry, characterised by a large number of small businesses, a portion of which appear to be particularly struggling to integrate innovations in their production processes.

The solutions related to the Information and Communications Technology sector are ever more frequently used by businesses. There is a growing demand for specialised workers, which businesses cannot always cover. This imbalance between demand and supply is also due to the fact that women are often excluded from this sector: in 2022, 84% of workers specialising in ICT were male (in line with average European figures). In addition, there is also an issue related to the ICT expertise of workers: the percentage of employees with at least a basic digital level in Italy totalled 58.6% in 2021 (70.4% in France). This figure will struggle to improve given that only 19.3% of businesses in Italy provided training to develop/update their employees' ICT expertise in 2022, compared with an EU average of 22.4%.

Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellations, such as Copernicus's Sentinel satellites, each specialising in specific services, provide practical opportunities that were unthinkable a few years ago. This does not make the Space Econ**omy** more limited to scientific aspects more or less disconnected from "market" needs, rather an increasingly significant element in the value chain of solutions and innovative applications for the digital transformation. In addition, it provides interconnection for access to broadband in areas excluded from landline coverage and territorial control from space, which is of great strategic geopolitical and military importance. Italy ranks in 22nd place among the 50 countries assessed by level of maturity and propensity to develop and evolve the Geospatial ecosystem⁸¹, highlighting a serious lack of preparation compared with the potential offered by this sector in terms of the economy, environmental protection and social development.

GOAL 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Italy's position with regard to the sustainable development of cities and communities is extremely disappointing, as also shown by the composite indicator. In terms of the issues related to land governance and urban regeneration, ASviS, since 2018, has proposed the preparation of the National Urban Agenda for Sustainable Development, through the re-establishment of the Interministerial Committee for Urban Policies (CIPU). At the end of the latest legislature, in 2022, the Ministry for Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility approved its "Urban Agenda", integrated in its planning cycle and focused on achieving the SDG quantitative targets. This initiative showed how ASviS's approach is feasible and should be applied across Government. The CIPU was also redesigned with the Cabinet Office Decree of 23 November 2021, setting out its tasks that included the preparation of a proposed Urban Agenda: however, unfortunately, the Committee never met.

One of the major issues is land consumption, which continues to increase at a pace of 70 square kilometres of new artificial land cover in 2021 (Ispra, 2022 Report). This phenomenon reflects the absence of effective regulation in this regard

and, above all, of a national law containing principles for land governance, which has now been missing for decades. This results in regional fragmentation and significant obstacles to the implementation of an effective policy to combat hydrogeological instability, which is destined to grow due to ongoing climate change. The Chamber of Deputies has recently re-established a committee of inquiry for suburbs, as seen in the 2013-2018 legislature. This initiative aims to reassess the situation and give further policy feedback, in accordance with ASviS's proposal in July 2023⁸².

Funding for urban regeneration programmes provided for by the NRRP and Complementary National Plan was very significant (€10.6 billion). However, the Meloni Government recently asked the EU Commission to defund €5.8 million of projects related to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to be covered with other resources. An increasingly negative aspect is the complete absence of a unitary steering committee for the programmes awarded to the various Ministries. In addition, the previous legislature did not approve the draft legislation "Measures for urban regeneration" (A.S. 29), which was needed for a long time and is crucial for the introduction of a serious, related multi-year investment plan.

The absence of a national housing policy has led to a lack of investment planning and promoted a sporadic and emergency approach to the problem, which has never been based on an analysis of actual demand and the distribution of local needs (which vary a lot). Housing demand has significantly varied due to demographic changes, with new mobility needs for work and study related issues, above all for young people, who are heavily affected by short-term lets, not regulated especially in big cities. Only recently, with the "Safe, green and social" programme envisaged by the Complementary National Plan, totalling €2 billion, measures were taken for the benefit of public residential housing and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility has established the National Observatory for Housing Conditions, provided for by Law 431 in 1998, which had not yet been implemented.

With regard to non-urbanised areas, the **National Strategy for Inner Areas** was an important innovation in the programming period for the 2014-2020 European structural funds, as it increased the attention on more fragile areas, which need

revitalising from a sustainability point of view. The areas included in the works were 72, now up to 114, and the municipalities included are now more than 1,500. The current critical issues of the Strategy are: the absence of an evaluation of the results of the trial in the period 2014-2020; the slow pace of implementation of the master plan; the competitive tenders and ministerial decrees on the allocation of resources, which de-structured the place-based method initially adopted for the selection of investments; the broad regionalisation of the Strategy. The municipalities classed as inner areas are provided with substantial resources under the NRRP, for the upgrade of social services and rural pharmacies, and under the Complementary National Plan for the road network. However, there is a risk that resources may be distributed aimlessly for sector plans carried out in small municipalities, those in the mountains and villages, in addition to marginal municipalities and tourism.

In the previous legislature, there were signs of increased interest in mountain areas, which make up a significant portion of the inner area, leading to an increase in the funds allocated for the development of Italian mountain areas in 2022 (€130 million), also rising from 2023 (€210 million). The Government also approved a draft Law Decree for mountain areas.

The NRRP financed the green communities with €135 million provided for in article 72 of Law 221/2015. Prior to identifying the three pilot areas, the Department for Regional Affairs and Local Authorities within the Cabinet Office published the call for tenders for the selection of 30 Green Communities on 1 July 2022. Despite the tight schedule, the call received a large number of applications, with approximately 190 that involved another one third of the maximum theoretical number of participants, and subsequently resulted in the financing of 35 programmes.

The latest available official data for **public green** spaces, updated as of 2021, shows that:

- the surface of green public space in municipalities of provincial capitals is largely stable, as opposed to the targets set in European and national strategies and policies;
- the amount of usable urban green space per capita in the same provincial capitals has increased by approximately 17 hectares in the 2011-2021 decade, albeit in an extremely vari-

- able manner across the territory, remaining stable in certain cases or even dropping in others, above all in the south;
- 11 green plans were adopted within the 109 provincial capitals, and only 8 were approved.
 On the plus side, the more recent green plans, such as those for Turin and Padua, were developed with a strategic view that integrates concerns related to ecosystem services and climate change adaptation.

In terms of policies and plans designed to boost urban green space, ten years on from the approval of Law 10/2013, there is greater knowledge and awareness by administrators, focusing on new green governance tools (tree surveys, tree monitoring, initiatives to involve citizens, etc.). In addition, the trial finance programmes for metropolitan cities and municipalities with over 60 thousand residents for the creation of urban forests and to increase the resilience of settlements to climate change have launched important projects. In this regard, an important step was the investment for the "protection and enhancement of urban and suburban green space", amounting to €330 million, provided for under the NRRP. The project aims to plant at least 6.6 million trees across metropolitan cities by 31 December 2024 (1.65 million have already been planted as of 31 December 2022).

Air pollution remains extremely high in Italy, above all in large cities and specifically in the Po Valley which, due to its geographical position and weather conditions, is the area of Europe with the highest health risk from air pollution. In 2022, premature deaths in Italy attributable to air pollution were approximately 60 thousand, most of which due to exposure to dust particles (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). For this reason, despite various improvements recorded in recent years, Italy has been censured for exceeding PM10 concentration limits and is subject to two infringement procedures for exceeding nitrogen oxide (NO2) and PM2.5 limits. In this regard, it should be noted that the proposed new Directive on the quality of air brought by the European Commission on 26 October 2022, on which the Italian Government and northern regions have recently raised their concerns, aims to significantly reduce the concentration limits for pollutants, aligning them with the more restrictive limits published by the WHO in 2021, which provide greater protection for human health.

Mobility within cities continues to be increasingly unbalanced towards private vehicles, as highlighted by the Eurobarometer survey conducted across 80 European cities. In 2019, only 18% of the Italian population stated collective mobility as their first option, the lowest figure among the main EU countries, whilst the figure for private vehicles (57%) was five percentage points above the EU average⁸³.

ISTAT also reports significant dissatisfaction among public transport users: in 2022, 30.7% of Italian households said that they had difficulty in connecting with public transport in their residential area, with higher figures in the southern regions (39.2% on average; 52.7% in Campania). The percentage of people who usually commute by private vehicle remains high (76% across the country, 78.1% in the North-East), whilst the percentage of students who only use public transport to get to their place of study is still low (25.1% on average; 17.7% in Sicily compared with 43.6% in the self-governing province of Trento).

This situation has a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector, of which 92.3% in 2021 were produced by road transport. The key factors affecting this phenomenon are:

- in terms of demand, the sustainable mobility rate (percentage of travel by public transport, walking or bicycle or with micro-mobility) was 31.3% in 2022, consistent with the figure recorded in 2016 (31.1%), after having risen to 38.2% in 2020. The Institute for Transport-related Training and Research⁸⁴ states that the combination of the downturn in active mobility, the full recovery of cars and a difficult recovery in public transport helped overcome the Covid-19 emergency, albeit with a worse situation compared with prepandemic levels.
- in term of supply, the provisions under the NRRP show important signs for the future, above all in relation to high-speed rail, to the transitioning of freight transport from road to rail and the renewal of local public transport vehicles. However, there are still critical issues with regard to underground and tram networks, the outdated bus system, insufficient investment in cycling and the construction of an efficient charging network for electric vehicles.

GOAL 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Italy has made significant progress in the circular economy field, as shown by ASviS's composite indicator. This achievement is the result of public policies and independent decisions taken by Italian businesses, which have developed internationally recognised expertise in this sector.

Firstly, it should be noted that the environmental and social criteria applied to purchases, both for public administrations and private companies, have now come into force, albeit with significant restrictions. For example, with regard to public administrations, Green/Social Public Procurement is not yet established practice, despite the fact that the Green Public Procurement (GPP) and the adoption of the Minimum Environmental Criteria (MEC) in public tenders are obligatory for the supply of all goods and services of any amount⁸⁵. In addition, the new public tenders code (Legislative Decree 36/23) reiterates the obligation to comply with GPP and social criteria (gender equality, employment and inclusion).

The Sixth Report of the Green Tenders Observatory⁸⁶, which reviews the application of the GPP and MEC criteria within Italian municipalities through a survey conducted across 66 municipalities in provincial capitals, 325 non-capital municipalities and 157 contracting authorities (of which 44 local health authorities, 99 managing authorities for protected areas and 14 regional contracting centres), shows established awareness of the GPP, even though the application of its criteria is still complex. In addition, the report highlights the ever-growing presence of businesses complying with MEC requirements, showing how the private sector is resilient before the challenges brought by the ecological transition, and is able to offer solutions in line with national and European green policies. On the other hand, with regard to critical issues, preparation of calls for tenders, the lack of training for employees and the excessive complexity of calls and procedures are not helping with adoption of the MEC criteria in calls for tenders.

The "Sustainability Monitor Report", an annual report on environmental and social sustainability within supply chains of major Italian businesses, confirms the market's growing tendency to adopting solutions in line with the ecological transition. The report shows that, between 2021

and 2023, companies that took part in both surveys have made significant improvements in this field, having revisited internal policies on purchases of sustainable products, on internal training and reporting systems. In addition, they are assessing the possibility of expanding the range of product categories to which they apply the environmental and social criteria. The adoption of sustainable procurement indicators is the aspect that showed greatest improvement.

Generally, businesses are showing increased awareness of the need to promote integrated sustainability, as set out in the 2030 Agenda. Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) principles have been at the centre of the EU's regulatory process, whilst the guidelines provided by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)⁸⁷ and the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG)⁸⁸ have been included in the disclosure requirements for the purposes of calculating credit ratings.

An important acceleration in this work was made possible thanks to the Corporate Sustainability

Reporting Directive (CSRD), which has expanded the category of businesses that are required to prepare a non-financial report. The application will particularly regard large unlisted companies (from 2025) and small and medium-sized listed companies (from 2026), and will aim to improve sustainability disclosure through the assurance requirement, a unified reporting standard, the digitalisation of the disclosure itself and, finally, by including it in the report on operations.

The social and environmental tax system for assets and investments, in common with the other nine initiatives included in the Action Plan for Financing Sustainable Growth that originated from the above taxonomies, are based on two key principles: Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) and Substantial Contribution (SC). The DNSH principle states that a company that does no significant harm to the environment or the surrounding community, complying with minimum requirements, can be classed as sustainable. On the other hand, the SC principle establishes that a company can also be classed as sustainable if it provides significant con-

THE INTEREST OF ITALIAN INVESTORS IN ESG FUNDS

As written in the "Resilience and renewal in Europe 2022/2023" EIB report, "investors and policy makers are increasingly aware, and concerned, of the financial and social impact of climate change on livelihoods and economic activity". In recent years, this awareness has been transformed into a growing interest from investors in sustainable investment products.

The CONSOB report on the investment choices made by Italian households shows that, during an uncertain economic period, there is still a high percentage of Italians willing to invest in ESG financial products that provide higher or equal returns compared with non-ESG related investments (48%), and of those who would invest in ESG financial products at the cost of accepting lower returns than those offered by other forms of investment (15%). Generally, 57% of those interviewed said that they are willing to change their investment choices over the next two years.

Due to the regulatory push provided by EU Regulation 2019/2088 (Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation, SFDR), there was an increased responsiveness by the waste management industry in developing new products and adapting existing products to classify them as sustainable, in accordance with the above European Regulation. More specifically, there are two categories of funds introduced by the SFDR and whose disclosure is regulated: funds that promote "environmental or social characteristics" (article 8) and funds that aim for "sustainable investment" (article 9).

In the first quarter of 2023, investments in open-end sustainability-related funds amounted to approximately €467 million, equal to 43% of the total amount invested in open-end funds. Sustainability related open-end funds total 2,200, 93% of which classed as article 8 funds and the remaining 7% as article 9 funds. This commitment was confirmed, above all by key players, by agreeing to participate in international initiatives targeting decarbonisation and the achievement of climate neutrality, with the primary examples being the "Net Zero Asset Managers initiative" and "Climate Action 100+".

tribution within one of the social and environmental sustainability dimensions in which the EU Taxonomy Regulation⁸⁹ is divided: climate change mitigation and adaptation; sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources; transitioning towards a circular economy; preventing and reducing pollution; protecting and recovering biodiversity and ecosystems.

Whilst the "green taxonomy" was established, after long and complex discussions, the "social taxonomy" drafts, currently being discussed by the European Commission (with three targets: promoting decent work, adequate standards of living and inclusive communities), are still of minimal impact and not very innovative, being merely based on existing documents (the EU Sustainable Finance Taxonomy; the CSRD; the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation). In this regard, the current regulatory efforts within the EU in terms of due diligence⁹⁰ are worthy of note, with this issue currently at the centre of Regulation 2023/1115 on raw materials and products associated with deforestation⁹¹, the proposed Directive regarding corporate due diligence relating to sustainability (COM (2022) 71 of 23 April 2022⁹²) and the proposal regarding a Regulation that bans the use of products obtained through forced labour in the internal market (COM (2022) 453 of 14 September 2022⁹³). The three proposals are related as they require companies to carry out an assessment of their work's impact, including the value chain, on human rights and the environment. However, there are certain aspects that received criticism, starting with the exclusion of SMEs from due diligence obligations. Equally critical is the decision to allocate the costs related to the implementation of the adjustment processes to often extremely fragile businesses at the end of their supply chains, in addition to the exemption from liability for damages for companies that have completed formal risk management procedures (article 22.2 of the proposal). Furthermore, like the Council's, the Commission's proposal does not include any information regarding environmental impact reporting. These are usually related to social impacts, above all in the supply chains originating in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are subject to significant issues, such as deforestation and land grabbing.

In addition, providing content on the ESG's social dimension is crucial, as it generates attention and

encourages businesses to make commitments. As a result, it is important to work with business, labour, consumer and civil society organisations to integrate advanced content that is in line with the current climate within the Substantial Contribution standard, in order to implement the transition towards increasingly efficient business responsibility, which also focuses on developing the territory, and is based on the principle of shared and collaborative deliberation.

With regard to the financial sector following the approval of the "Directive on sustainability-related disclosures in the financial services sector" (EU REG/2019/2088) in 2019, various issues arose due to the excessive fragmentation of the systems designed to measure the investors' shareholdings, and the significant reporting mismatches between businesses, banks, investors and consumers. The disclosure obligation was subsequently extended to the entire banking system with the final implementation of the "Basel III" framework rules (EU REG/2019/876 - CRR2), which introduced ESG risks among the disclosure requirements, albeit in a gradual manner based on the size of the entity.

The greater attention paid to sustainability by businesses and consumers has generated significant changes in business decisions, in addition to a **growing sensation of greenwashing**, meaning the tendency of goods and service providers to emphasise their "sustainable" behaviour through marketing and advertising, when this is actually far from reality. For example, surveys conducted across European countries show that 53% of "environmental claims" made by businesses on the environmental characteristic of the products they sell are in fact vague, misleading or unfounded. In addition, 40% of these claims are not proven, and consumers have difficulty in understanding their content.

The proposal of a European Green Claims Directive, presented by the European Commission on 22 March 2023, albeit solely regarding environmental aspects (unlike the simultaneous proposal of a Directive regarding the Right to Repair, which also has a clear social impact), if approved, would require producers to conduct stricter checks on product-related disclosures. In addition, it would provide for extended controls of supply chains and greater sanctions. Over time, this will induce businesses to effect a cultural change and end greenwashing.

GOAL 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Over the last decade, Italy has seen a sharp fall in crimes such as voluntary manslaughter and predatory crimes. However, certain types of crime have increased, such as sexual violence (up 12.5%) and extorsion (up 55.2%), which, according to Censis, represents an indication of how the pressure of organised crime increases during periods of economic crisis⁹⁴. Cybercrime is also significantly increasing, with scams and fraud up 152.3% compared with 2012⁹⁵.

There are serious concerns regarding the exponential rise in hate and discriminatory crime related to race, ethnicity and sex (of which approximately 70% takes place online) and the constant increase in crimes against minors (up 89% since 2004%). In the past five years, violent acts involving minors as the victim have significantly increased, with clear spikes during the pandemic: up 94% for sextortion cases, 33% for online grooming and 13% for cyberbullying.

Several initiatives have contributed to modifying the rule of law scenario in recent years. The overall reforms of the civil and criminal justice systems (specifically regarding the so-called "Cartabia Reform")⁹⁷, designed to improve the efficiency of procedures and reduce the time it takes to come to trial, were effectively adopted with the issue of the related implementing decrees. Digitalisation of the justice system has significantly improved, above all in the civil justice sector, and further progress should be made through the implementation of the NRRP.

With regard to the protection of the rule of law, progress has been made in terms of "restorative justice", a parallel or alternative process to the ordinary criminal procedure. In line with other European legal systems, the targets regarding the social reintegration of offenders and the reduction of overcrowding in prisons require a socially effective justice system. However, as recorded by the Council of the EU in March 2023 (and confirmed by the "Antigone" report), after dropping in the 2010-2019 decade, overcrowding in prisons began to rise again in the last two years, putting further pressure on an already overstretched penitentiary system⁹⁸. Following a long and complex parliamentary process, Law 110 of 2017 introduced the crimes related to torture and incitement to torture into Italian law, in order to bridge the gap formed following the approval of the New York Convention in 1984 and eventually ratified by Italy in November 1988.

In terms of **civil rights**, across all EU member states, with the exception of Italy and Germany, same-sex marriage is recognised without any distinctions between heterosexual couples and homosexual couples. In addition, the recognition of gay couples' kids, which is fundamental to ensure protection of the rights provided in the Constitution, still needs to be passed into legislation in Italy.

In recent years, a lot has been done to combat corruption, following the establishment of the National Anticorruption Authority (ANAC) in 2013. In the 2022 corruption perception index published by Transparency International, Italy received a score of 56 out of 100, ranking in 16th place in the EU and 41st place in the world, showing progressive improvement in the last five years⁹⁹. ANAC played a key role in the process of assigning and using the NRRP funds, and during the preparation of the new public tenders code. ANAC manages the national database of public tenders, which is required to play a key role in collecting and regularly updating the information regarding tenders and economic operators. In addition, the NRRP provides significant investment for the digitalisation and interconnection of registers managed by the various public entities, to facilitate the access of investigating authorities to take more timely action to intercept suspect financial transactions and investigate illegal enrichment¹⁰⁰.

The new Public Tenders Code for 2023 provided for the complete digitalisation of procedures, in addition to simplifications designed to increase the transparency of consent processes and prevent any possibility of organised crime infiltrating the legal economy. On the other hand, the Code has increased the threshold under which contracting authorities can not only directly award contracts, but also cascade sub-contracts and integrate contracts, a decision that could have serious repercussions on the abuse of public funds¹⁰¹.

With regard to illegal financial flows, the Italian law on money laundering was developed in line with international standards and European directives¹⁰². On the other hand, in terms of fighting against organised crime and returning confis-

cated goods to communities, a key aspect was the adoption of Law 132/2018. Specifically, the Law provides for measures to rationalise administrative procedures and the distribution of goods, and to strengthen the organisational structure of the National Agency for Administration and Distribution of goods seized and confiscated from Organised Crime (ANBSC). Thanks to this new Law, the management of goods entrusted to various entities of the third sector active on the territory, and the recovery of goods also on a market basis, have been significantly developed¹⁰³. However, the periods of time between the seizure of goods and their social use are still too long, and there is a lack of transparency regarding the mapping and crucial information on the goods, above all by local authorities 104. Other negative aspects are related to the sale of goods - which cannot be distributed - to private entities through an auction, with the goods awarded to the highest bidder.

In the last five years, also due to the pandemic, Italy has seen an unprecedented increase in the use of the digital identity. The SPID (the public digital identity system), introduced in 2016, as in use by 35.5 million users in July 2023, and is essential to access digital services offered by the Public Administration. At the same time, various laws have been adopted to increase the transparency, accessibility and effectiveness of the public administration's recruitment process, through the INPA portal, which from 1 June 2023 became mandatory for the publication of all calls and competitions launched by public administrations and local authorities.

In terms of democratic participation, above all regarding the younger generations, in recent years there has been a significant and increasing drop in political and electoral participation, also due to the failure to implement adequate digital systems for the purposes of voting and signing referenda. On the other hand, a positive aspect was the strengthening of the Institute for Universal Civil Service, established with Legislative Decree 40 of 6 March 2017, implementing Law 106/2016, bringing together social participation and active citizenship. In January 2023, the related "2023-2025 three-year Plan" was published, drawn up through a shared process, involving the National Council for Civil Service. The Plan implements many of the contents included in the Position Paper "The universal civil service: youth, citizenship and peace", published by ASviS in October 2022. Another crucial element was the rise of the National Youth Council, established with the 2019 Budget Law, an organisation recognised at institutional level to guarantee and promote youth representation.

In recent years, the use of public consultations as part of the legislative process and public debate on major works and infrastructure projects has increased. This has led to the creation of a single online access point¹⁰⁵, enabling economic operators and local communities to take part both on and offline. Unfortunately, problems linked to their far from systematic use and the inconsistent approaches taken by the various governments that have come and gone over time have prevented such tools from becoming well-established throughout Italian society¹⁰⁶.

With regard to the freedom of the press and the protection of pluralism, Italy, through constitutional laws and its legislative framework, provides an excellent regulatory system, chaired by the Communications Authority (AGCOM), which is the independent regulatory authority for the communication industries. The right of access to information is guaranteed by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), introduced in Italy with Legislative Decree 97 of 2016. The monitoring data for 2020 shows that, out of a total 1,776 requests, access was completely or partially granted in 62% of cases, whilst there has been an increase in the number of applications for reassessment related to alleged arbitrary refusals or failures to reply¹⁰⁷.

In terms of human rights protections, Italy, which is a member to all main international and European conventions, has not yet established a national institution for human rights, although the Government, on 9 November 2022, published a bill on the matter. In the meantime, the Interministerial Committee for Human Rights (CIDU) is the national coordinating institution that interacts with civil society, the academic world and all stakeholders to guarantee the receipt and follow-up of human rights issues¹⁰⁸.

Over the years, Italy has adopted controversial laws and policies regarding immigration, strongly criticised by independent organisations in this field. In March 2023, the Government approved Law Decree 20/2023 (the so-called "Cutro Decree"), converted into Law in May, which reprises the majority of the content of the so-

ADOPTION OF THE 2030 AGENDA IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

The cultural sector is explicitly mentioned among the 2030 Agenda targets (11.4) and requires greater efforts to protect its value. In reality, it is strongly related to targets 4.7 (education in sustainable development and global citizenship) and 8.9 (policies for sustainable tourism that creates jobs, promotes culture and local produce) and in 2020, UNESCO showed just how it impacts Goals 14 and 17. In addition, in 2018, the European Council established a plan of action based on five pillars, with clear reference to sustainability issues.

In line with this vision, in recent years, the Italian cultural organisations, individually and through their national and international representatives, have produced various documents and launched numerous initiatives designed to integrate the 2030 Agenda in their mission, work or specific projects related to particular audiences, linking them to specific SDGs. It was not just a matter of communication, but also a process of implementing the sustainable development principles in their strategies and showcasing them through the work carried out and results achieved. Particular attention was paid to cultural and climate change issues, to the social impact of cultural organisations, the role of these in building a digital public space, and the relationship between organisations and the knowledge society.

A number of museums and cultural institutions and various cultural production companies and event organisers have subsequently adopted sustainable practices and developed policies to cut emissions down to zero and guarantee environmental sustainability, also in terms of specific local policies. For example, the green transition of the entire live entertainment sector in ongoing, albeit with various problems. It is now a key element both to raise awareness on the ecological transition targets among an increasingly widespread audience, and to transform the transition in a process able to fully adhere to the various 2030 Agenda Goals. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda is gradually being implemented in the programming of a growing number of traditional foundations supporting cultural organisations, who have integrated the SDGs as "organising principle of their activities", above all with regard to social aspects and a growing attention to the reporting of social impacts obtained thanks to their support.

The evolution of the national political agenda in the cultural sector has formally taken into account the EU recommendations and guidelines. For example, in 2020, Italy signed the 2005 Faro convention on the value of cultural heritage, but the freedom that this leaves for individual countries on how to implement the measures provided was exploited by Italy, given that the contribution of public spending for cultural goods and activities was below the European average and behind the desired 1%. This is not because the sector does not need to grow or develop: in fact, the cultural participation outside one's home involves only 23.1% of the population, reading books and newspapers 35.9%, the use of libraries only 10.2% whilst the municipalities' cultural spending amounts to €17.3 per person. The younger generations are those most alienated from cultural participation.

The pandemic resulted in a complete halt in various lines of production and all cultural activities, however, it led to a growth in digital channels for those purposes, even though there is a lack of products and services able to connect physical and virtual spaces. Whilst during the pandemic period resources were allocated to support a fragile labour market, in which vulnerable people operate, the NRRP funds are aimed at: implementing an ambitious digitalisation project for cultural heritage, which includes a plan to develop a wide range of expertise; supporting activities related to various major attractions, the upgrade of energy systems for various museums and 289 municipalities as part of the cultural regeneration of historic villages and 20 municipalities that risk being abandoned or already have been; supporting contemporary production and creative businesses, and the work carried out by cultural organisations in urban regeneration projects.

A number of positive measures were adopted in recent years, including: a ban on access to the San Marco dock in Venice for large ships (Law Decree 103/21); grants for the redevelopment of private buildings (the superbonus, facades bonus) introduced by the 2020 Budget Law, which enabled (despite the numerous abuses) the recovery or restoration of many buildings located in specific areas, contributing to a widespread improvement in surroundings; the development of cycling and walking net-

works which, thanks to the work of various cultural organisations, contributed to support for a "slow" tourism able to help develop inner areas. Lastly, it should be noted that, among the Italian cities selected by the EU Commission to achieve zero climate impact by 2030 (Bergamo, Bologna, Florence, Milan, Padua, Parma, Prato, Rome and Turin), two are or have been Italian capitals of culture, eight host UNESCO sites and five are UNESCO "creative cities".

called "Security Decrees" of 2018 and 2019. The new law has amended and partly abolished the special protection in the case of family ties, aimed at vulnerable immigrants with health risks, reiterating the abolition of humanitarian protection that allowed those in a vulnerable situation or at risk due to issues related to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, even for those who had not fled their country during war, to seek protection.

With regard to non-discriminatory laws and policies, the main reference is still Law 205/1993 (the so-called "Mancino Law"), which prosecutes any events or acts of discrimination regarding race, ethnicity, nationality and religion, partially implemented in Law 85/2006 and Legislative Decree 21/2018, which added the concept of instigation to commit violent or provocatory acts for discriminating reasons to the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure. However, there is still a controversial view on the amendment of such law: the sanction only applies in the event of certain categories of discriminatory act, including the aforementioned protected personal characteristics (race, ethnicity, nationality, religion), whilst it does not include the many discriminatory acts that affect additional characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender identity, physical and health status and disability¹⁰⁹.

GOAL 17 - PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

On the topic of "Global Partnership for Sustainable Development", Italy only partially applies the principles of Law 125/2014 in decisions regarding foreign policy and international cooperation. The law calls for the commitment to allocate at least 0.70% of gross national income spent on official development assistance by 2030, with a guaranteed gradual annual increase in allocated resources (Chapter VII, article 30), and guarantees the understanding and efficiency of policies and programmes in the strategic sys-

tem approach and international partnerships. In addition, funding for bilateral development plans has been cut in the latest Budget Law, giving priority to a more strictly government related bilateralism in diplomatic relations and those regarding Official Development Assistance. Finally, with regard to development cooperation, the decision-making processes do not consistently involve the various bodies (local authorities, such as municipalities, metropolitan areas and regional authorities, and non-profit organisations in the third sector, universities and research centres and businesses) that operate in this field alongside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. This contrasts with the above Law, which indicated that their involvement is of fundamental, strategic value.

Seven years on from the approval of the 2030 Agenda, Italy is still well behind the 0.70% target (17.2): the data for 2022 shows that Italy has increased its contribution to 0.32%, but the figure appears to be "inflated" by the increase in expenses related to accommodating refugees in the country, the support provided to the Ukrainian Government and the Covid-19 vaccines, whilst "structural" aid is down 13.2% from 2021.

A prime example of how little importance the Italian political system has given to meeting international commitments for development cooperation is that despite being a member of the G7, Italy ranks in 18th place among the donating countries, whilst funding for the defence of our country represents 1.5% of the GDP, a figure that is expected to reach 2% to comply with the percentage agreed in 2014 by NATO¹¹⁰.

The "quantity" of ODA resources is inextricably related to the efficiency of Italy's international cooperation strategies. Unfortunately, a foreign policy that makes the key focus of development cooperation the issues related to containing migrant flows in terms of security, is clearly not interested in addressing the causes that lead to the issue. These are related to a development

model which, without guaranteeing environmental, economic, social and financial sustainability, tends to continuously resurrect regional conflicts and wars, exacerbating poverty and hunger, increasingly reflecting the disasters created by climate change.

Obviously, to make use of resources allocated to ODA within the right timeframe, the Development Coordination Authority and the Italian Development Cooperation Agency must operate through transparent and inclusive procedures to identify projects designed to maximise their impact, ensure the continuity and efficiency of initiatives in the regional areas and environments indicated in the regularly updated Programming Guidelines for Italy's International Cooperation. However, the Italian Development Cooperation Agency's delay in launching the call for proposals from civil society organisations, local authorities and businesses (scheduled on an annual basis in Law 125/2014), makes the programming extremely complicated. In recent years, there have been delays of two to three years in the calls launched by the Agency, thus reducing the efficiency of our development cooperation policy, and also impeding the envisaged synergy between projects and programmes of the various bodies and the establishment of strategic partnerships, underlying Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda.

As previously mentioned, with regard to climate requirements (targets 17.7 and 17.9), the industrial plan for the investments provided for under the Italian Climate Fund is yet to be published. The plan is designed to place Italy amongst the leaders in funding initiatives to help developing countries mitigate and adapt, as required by the outcomes of the climate change COPs. At the same time, Italy's commitment given in Glasgow to not use public resources to finance the extraction of hydrocarbons has not been respected¹¹¹: Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP), which manages the fund, has continued to finance Italian investment overseas related to hydrocarbon extraction, thus reducing Italy's political credibility within the international community. This goes against the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda, as reiterated at the G7 summit hosted by

For a fair assessment of Italy's situation, various positive elements that have recently emerged must be taken into account, starting with the fact that the Interministerial Committee for De-

velopment Cooperation has recently approved the "Nexus Peace, Emergency and Development", which the OECD-DAC proposed in 2019¹¹² to highlight the "interconnections between humanitarian, development and peace initiatives", aiming to "strengthen collaborations, understanding and the complementarity" of various policies. In addition, the Italian Development Cooperation Agency has adopted the "National Global Citizenship Education Plan", the first important achievement following approval of the National Global Citizenship Education Strategy on 11 June 2020. Another positive aspect is the commitment of Italian international cooperation to promote tools to improve policy coherence: with regard to disabled people¹¹³, the most significant were the disability inclusion and the recent (2022) policy regarding MOOC (Massive Online Open Courses), organised on the basis of "inclusive planning" in collaboration with the International Cooperation Group of the National Observatory on disabled people, co-coordinated by ASviS. Promoting an active participation of men, women and minors with disabilities, through a twin track approach that can provide social protection policies and specific emergency measures, is a priority that requires the utmost commitment, so as to "not leave anyone behind", as highlighted by the 2030 Agenda.

Lastly, it should be noted that, during the "Migration and Development" Conference, held in Rome on 23 July 2023 and hosting the leaders of African countries most concerned with the influx and outflux of migrants, the "Rome Process" was launched, establishing a long-term development partnership between the EU and African counties. The Italian Government spoke about the "Mattei Plan for Africa", expected to launch in November, although a draft or even a reference framework regarding this plan is yet to be published. However, during the presentation of the latest international cooperation initiatives approved by the Joint Committee on 19 July 2023, the Government indicated that specific funding had been allocated to cover the related expenditure in the ODA budget.

3.6 The intergenerational question

The years since the signature of the 2030 Agenda have witnessed growing interest in certain issues linked to the concept of "intergenerational justice". This covers assessments of public policies in terms their impact on the future generations, the involvement of young people in public debate and their participation in the democratic life of the country and youth activism in relation to the issues raised by the 2030 Agenda. On the other hand, if there is now greater awareness of the importance of promoting that the young, the institutions and civil society should work together to respond to the challenges of the future, it is also clear that there has been a deterioration in young people's psychological and physical wellbeing: the pandemic, the war and concerns relating to the threats to ecosystems and, therefore, to the future of the Planet, have led to an increase in cases of depression, anxiety and mental distress, above all among the very young.

The available data shows that there are serious issues with regard to the condition of young people in Italy: the young are faced with greater difficulties than both their peers in other European countries and their parents' generation. Young Italians also have fewer educational and employment opportunities and are more likely to be living in absolute poverty.

The demographic indicators published by ISTAT for 2022¹¹⁴ show how the number of births in our country has fallen below the threshold of 400 thousand. With fewer than seven births and over twelve deaths per thousand inhabitants, the balance has never been lower and this constant demographic decline has led to a net reduction in the number of young people. The lack of jobs, guarantees, family and parent support policies have an impact on the options available to the young in Italy, which has the highest percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) in the EU: there are 1.7 million (almost 1 in five) young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in this situation, representing 20.5% of young women and 17.7% of young men.

There has been some attempt to address the inequalities faced by the young in their personal lives, at school, at work and in society. The recent 2023 Budget Law introduced measures aimed at

benefitting young people worth €2 billion (including increases in existing funding and new funding). These include support for youth employment, the extension of contributions relief for people under 36 hired on permanent contracts and funding for education and training¹¹⁵. However, there is no systematic approach to youth employment, as evidenced by the lack of a national plan.

Despite the above limitations, since adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Italy has made some progress in embedding the principle of intergenerational justice in legislation and policymaking. The most significant step took place in February 2022 with the reform of article 9 of the Italian Constitution. As a result, the basic principles now include protection of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, "including for future generations". The change has enshrined this principle in Italy's basic law, providing a general legal basis for public policymaking. This follows on from other initiatives, such as:

- the creation, in 2018, of the National Youth Council, a consultative body set up to represent young people's interests in the process of developing policies aimed at the young;
- the establishment, in March 2021, of the Next Generation Italy parliamentary intergroup, set up to respond to the country's youth emergency through informal, cross-party discussion and coordination in support of policies for the younger generations;
- the recent establishment (March 2023) of the parliamentary intergroup to focus on youth policies with the aim of encouraging young people to play an active role in political decision-making and enable dialogue between the young and lawmakers.

Despite the efforts made to focus greater attention on the impact of policies on the young and future generations and on their involvement in political debate, various opportunities to deal seriously with the issues have been missed. For example, the decision not to dedicate a specific pillar in the NRRP to the issue of responsibility for current and future generations means that the plan does not include a mission specifically relating to young people, although the potential impact of several measures, belonging to different missions, has been taken into account 116.

In recent years, Italy has witnessed a significant increase in young people's interest and activism

THE DIASPORA OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM NORTHERN ITALY: NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

By Silvia Oliva (Fondazione Nord-Est)

Between 2011 and 2021, 452 thousand young Italians between the ages of 18 and 34 emigrated, whilst 134 thousand returned to Italy, representing a net outflow of 317 thousand. No region is exempt from this flight. An analysis of expatriates by age range shows that the percentage aged 18-24 has risen from 14% to 26%, whilst the percentage aged 30-34 has declined, an indication that many of the very young opt to complete their studies overseas. Also, over time the breakdown by level of education has become split almost perfectly three ways: 32% of expatriates do not have a secondary school diploma, 33% do and 36% are university graduates. The proportions of the related populations are 4.8% for those without a secondary school diploma, 5.8% for those with a university degree and 1.5% for those with a secondary school diploma.

What are the reasons for this diaspora? To answer this question, the Fondazione Nord-Est carried out two surveys: the first looked at a sample of 2,000 young Italians (aged 18-34) resident in regions of northern Italy, whilst the second focused on a sample of 1,000 Italian expatriates from the same areas. The comparison between the answers provided by the two groups of interviewees highlights a number of differences, with, for example, expatriates appearing to be more dynamic and optimistic about the future, but also some similarities, above all with regard to employment prospects and expectations (primarily in terms of the importance of pay and work-life balance) and considerations on certain factors capable of attracting people to Italy or of convincing them to leave the country. Indeed, only art and cultural heritage are viewed as examples of Italian excellence by both groups, whilst those who live in Italy also consider health services, the quality of universities and the quality of life to be of an excellent level.

To make people want to live in Italy, the young believe that the country must reform its public policies on the young and families and become more meritocratic, but also adopt a more innovative entrepreneurial system open to new skills, whilst developing a business culture that rewards workers and assigns responsibility and managerial positions to the young. Whilst mentioned, the issue of pay is no longer the only or even the main component, and does not count in isolation but in relation to merit. Career development and employment prospects are now considered more important.

Unfortunately, the interviewees do not see much scope for improvement: among those in Italy, 10% believe that their future lies abroad, with another 25% stating that would be willing to go wherever there are better opportunities; in contrast, among expatriates (who are in any event fewer than those resident in Italy), just 16% think they will return and only for family reasons or because they miss their previous lives.

Focusing on those who have left, a statistical procedure has identified two groups. The first (28% of the sample) includes people with access to fewer social and cultural resources, or people with parents with low-level educational qualifications and who are either labourers or pensioners, with a standard of living perceived to be average, who come from small towns and who themselves left school early or who have at most a secondary school diploma. These people leave out of necessity: the main reason is to seek better employment opportunities (26.2%), followed by an improved quality of life (23.2%).

The second group (23%) is instead made up of people with greater resources and opportunities, whose parents both have higher qualifications, work in management or in office jobs, with a standard of living perceived to be high or very high, who come from the city centres of larger municipalities and who have themselves obtained at least a secondary school diploma, but also a university degree or a PhD. The young in this group have chosen to leave to take advantage of opportunities in keeping with their backgrounds: 29.6% cite study and training opportunities as their reason for leaving, with 21% citing improved employment opportunities.

regarding the topics covered by the 2030 Agenda. Alongside the commitment shown by the younger generations, as shown by the numerous initiatives designed to raise awareness of the global challenges linked to climate change, social inequalities and poverty, there is growing attention to education in sustainability and active citizenship. Interest in environmental issues, which came to the fore in 2018 with the "Future for Fridays" movement and the climate strikes called in reaction to the failure to keep faith with the Paris Agreement, has led to the increased involvement¹¹⁷ of various activist associations, such as for example the "Italian Climate Network", and numerous studies on the issue. For example, the research carried out by the WWF¹¹⁸ reveals that for around six out of ten young interviewees climate change has an impact on their lives (58% a lot or quite a lot), whilst 56% state that they are committed to taking action on a daily basis to combat climate change. Similarly, young people's assemblies such as the Youth Climate Meeting, organised annually by Legambiente¹¹⁹, or the European Youth Event (EYE)¹²⁰, at which since 2014 thousands of young people from all over the EU and beyond meet at the European Parliament in Strasburg to discuss their ideas on the future of Europe, would seem to be well-established, successful initiatives.

There are also a growing number of activities bringing together efforts to raise awareness among the younger generations and civil society with advocacy initiatives designed to support the interest of young people and adolescents in issues relating to climate change and sustainability: for example, the "Cambiamo aria" ("Let's have a change of air") campaign, launched by UNICEF Italia¹²¹ in 2022; the submission to the Government, by scores of youth associations and organisations belonging to the Rete Giovani 2021 network, of the "Piano Giovani 2021" ("Youth Plan 2021")¹²², which drew attention to three pillars (an inclusive society, an innovation culture and environmental sustainability); the "Next Generation You" manifesto produced by Italian Youth Forum for UNESCO¹²³, underlining how the ecological and social transitions and the generational question are proceeding and must proceed hand

In terms of the interest in issues relating to education for sustainable development and global citizenship, and their involvement in the public debate, recent progress in this sense was made with the collaboration between the Italian Development Cooperation Agency and the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security. This aims to promote occasions for debate on issues regarding the participation of the younger generations in the processes supporting the implementation, follow-up and review of the National and Territorial Sustainable Development Strategies.

Government institutions also gave significant space to young people through the "Youth4Climate" initiative promoted by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition. This involved the convocation, on the margins of PreCOP26, of over 300 young people from all over the world who came to Milan in 2022 to discuss the steps needed to combat climate change with their peers and the institutions. A second edition was held in New York in 2022. The initiative led to the preparation of a document 124 setting out the most important recommendations resulting from the intergenerational meeting. The third edition of this event will be held in Rome in 2023.

Despite these major developments, experts in the field have raised doubts about the real impact of youth protests on decision-making and their continuation. This also reflects the fact that ISTAT has reported that, in Italy, "the lack of participation in political issues regards approximately 30% of young people between 18 and 34 years of age and is close to 50% among those aged 14 to 18". The latest report from the Toniolo Institute¹²⁵ also notes increased feelings of resignation and discouragement among young people, as reflected from a sociopolitical viewpoint in growing disinterest in public affairs: 42% of young people aged between 18 and 34 did not vote in the last general election. This is six percentage points higher than the already high national figure for people who did not vote. This is, however, not an issue confined to Italy. As a result, the UN has recently launched a campaign entitled "Be Seen, Be Heard"126 to bridge "the intergenerational gap in power, influence and trust constitutes one of the biggest challenges of our time".

3.7 The contribution of sustainable finance to achieving the 2030 Agenda Goals

Finance for sustainable development is one of a key element in efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda Goals. The 2018 Action Plan on Sustainable Finance, revised in 2021 in the Renewed Strategy for Sustainable Finance, has created the political space for a large number of initiatives, including the European Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities (Regulation 2020/852) and the EU's new Reporting Directive.

After the "premise" of funding of approximately €1,000 billion from the EU budget and from the resources generated as a result of the Green Deal, the European Commission has calculated the investment gap to be made up in order to achieve the targets set in the "Fit For 55" package¹²⁷. If between 2011 and 2020 total investment in delivery of the various European environmental policies amounted to €683.3 billion per year (at 2015 prices), the gap with respect to the base scenario for the period 2021-2030 was estimated at €108 billion a year, rising to €215 billion in the period 2031-2050.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS COMPARED

To mobilise adequate investment, since 2019 the European Union has embarked on a process of amending the regulation of both the financial markets and a series of incentives and obligations for businesses, above all large undertakings, in order to direct their investments towards sustainability goals. Banking and monetary authorities have also helped to drive tis process in recent years with changes to regulation: the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) has produced standard scenarios to aid central banks, supervisory bodies and financial operators in managing risk¹²⁸. In 2022, the European Banking Authority (EBA)129 published reports on both the ESG risks to which investment undertakings¹³⁰ are exposed and the monitoring and supervision of greenwashing¹³¹, an issue that is becoming increasingly important as the market grows.

In 2022 the European Central Bank (ECB) began climate stress testing¹³². This exercise is largely based on the indications provided by the NGFS and seeks to measure transition risk and the physical

to which financial intermediaries are exposed. Long-term risk scenarios take the following alternative forms:

- the "orderly" scenario that assumes that climate policies are introduced early and gradually become more stringent, with risks generally subdued and costs minimised;
- the "disorderly" scenario, which assumes new climate policies are not introduced until 2030, later requiring strong policy actions to halt the emissions that increase the physical risks;
- the "hot house" scenario, in which no climate policies are implemented, raising the physical risks and resulting in very significant costs.

The cost of doing nothing or of delayed action is very high: cutting GDP by at least five percentage points by 2050 and by ten points by 2100. Even the "net zero" scenario would reduce GDP but to a much more limited extent (around one percentage point by 2050 and 2100).

Turning to Italy, a recent study by Cerved on the impact of climate change on SMEs estimates that Italian SMEs need to invest €203 billion between 2023 and 2050 to remain within the orderly scenario. However, the alternative scenarios are no less costly. Assuming some delay under a disorderly scenario, the required investment would be €224.2 billion¹³³, showing that delaying action is just as expensive.

The results of the stress test of major European banks were published in July 2022¹³⁴. They show that the banks "do not yet sufficiently incorporate climate risk into their stress-testing frameworks and internal models". This is partly due to a series of methodological problems and the lack of the databases necessary to assess the impact of changing climate scenarios, an aspect they are working on. The Bank of Italy has also produced a document on Supervisory Expectations, which is in line with the situation described by the EBA and the ECB¹³⁵.

The European Commission recently published the delegated act supplementing the Taxonomy Regulation, containing the technical screening criteria for the four remaining environmental objectives¹³⁶ (the European Parliament and Council have four months to examine and eventually oppose the act) and the proposed Regulation on "the transparency and integrity of environmental, social and governance rating activities"¹³⁷.

With regard to European regulation of sustainable finance as a whole, it is necessary to ensure coherence in terms of the content and timings of the various policy interventions to avoid any overlap, unnecessary requirements and the related costs and inconsistencies. Similarly, it is necessary to ensure that the EU's sustainable finance framework is consistent with other European regulatory frameworks, whilst also working on "external" aspects to ensure that the requirements imposed globally in the various jurisdictions are consistent and coherent.

THE ROLE OF RETAIL FINANCE PROD-UCTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE 2030 AGENDA

According to estimates in the Boston Consulting Group's research paper, "Global Retail Banking 2022", ESG criteria can become a distinctive competitive factor for Italy's retail banking sector. Indeed, in the next three years, Italian customers intend to more than double the sustainable products in their portfolios, choosing, for example, mortgages with interest rates linked to energy efficiency, loans to fund the purchase of electric ve-

THE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING REVOLUTION: TIME TO TAKE STOCK

Major progress was made with regard to reporting in 2022 and early 2023, including publication of the final version of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) on 16 December 2022. In the same year, the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG), a European Commission body set up to advise on the topic, produced European Sustainability Reporting Standards. On 31 July 2023, the first set of standards was adopted by the European Commission in the form of a Delegated Act. The new standards must be applied to sustainability reporting by all EU businesses falling within the scope of application of the CSRD.

Important progress has also been made at international level, including the signature, in March 2022, of the agreement between the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation (IFRS) designed to coordinate work on development of the standards. On 26 June 2023, the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), which operates within the IFRS Foundation, published the first international standards (IFRS S1 and S2) in response to demands from investors for sustainability information.

In the Position Paper of last year, ASviS had already highlighted our country's need to accelerate adoption of the European Sustainability Reporting Directive to prepare the worlds of business and finance to rapidly adapt to the new regulations. Whilst acknowledging the potential difficulties that businesses may encounter during the adoption process, we believe it is necessary to proceed along this path to realise the related benefits for businesses, ensure transparency in the financial markets and meet the needs of the various stakeholders and society as a whole.

In terms of the availability of data to report on, the difficulties met by financial institutions in obtaining appropriate data from the businesses they finance risks an underrepresentation of sustainability in Italy's productive sector. With respect to the first two environmental goals (climate change mitigation and adaptation), the Italian financial world has for some time now indicated, among the actions needed to move forward with the transition, the need for: public ESG data to be made available, including data on alignment with the taxonomy that already exists but that is not currently accessible or has an insufficient degree of granularity; a simplification of the process for assessing alignment with the taxonomy by financial intermediaries, identifying, for example, the activities that, in participating in realisation of the NRRP, support the transition, even if they will never meet the taxonomy's technical screening criteria.

Moreover, it is to be hoped that concrete steps are taken, at European and thus at national level, to enable **the development of transition finance**. The financial sector is ready to support businesses that, even if not in line with taxonomy criteria because the process is overly challenging due to the size of the business or the sector in which it operates, can achieve real improvements in their sustainability performance, presenting transition plans that are recognised and incentivised.



On 23 February 2023, the European Commission published the much-delayed proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which stresses the responsibility of boards of directors and senior management with regard to stakeholders, with specific regard to social aspects and the impact of their business chain of activities, on which the European Parliament published its views last June. In discussing the new legislation at European level, it is essential that the fact that industrial groups have very different structures is taken into account, alongside their specific characteristics and needs and the implications of their inclusion in the Directive.

In October 2022, the Platform on Sustainable Finance for the Social Taxonomy published its final Report on Minimum Safeguards in relation to the Taxonomy Regulation (articles 3 and 18). The Report identifies four core topics for which compliance with minimum safeguards should be defined, being human rights, including workers' rights, corruption, taxation and fair competition. As anticipated in our Position Paper, ASviS believes that there is an **urgent need to adopt impact finance techniques and give impetus to the social taxonomy**. The evaluation of investments must be strictly associated with both financial and social goals as part of an approach to investment based on collective sustainability. The adoption of these techniques is not yet widespread and accelerated implementation of the social taxonomy for sustainable development, which is increasingly urgent, can provide added impetus in this direction.

hicles, and systems for monitoring the environmental impact of their spending. At global level, the acquisition of a 20% market share for the new ESG banking services will, by 2025, translate into a 10% share of the retail banking sector's global turnover, estimated to be worth US\$300 billion.

Given this outlook, various initiatives have been taken to provide an initial taxonomy for retail finance products focusing on ESG: the Ecodesign Directive¹³⁸, a new text for which was put forward in March 2022 and that so far only relates to energy products; the Sustainable Product Initiative¹³⁹ that forms part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, which has also given rise to the Digital Product Passport; and finally, in March 2023, presentation of the previously mentioned proposal for a European Parliament and Council Directive on the substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims ("green claims")¹⁴⁰.

On the other hand, the so-called "Consumers' Agenda 2020-2025" represents progress but has yet to produce reliable guidance. In this context, the most established initiative is the "EU Ecolabel", launched in 1992 and based substantially on calculating the ecological footprint of products and services. In Italy, this initiative covers over 13 thousand products and in Europe more than 88 thousand, figures that are rising quickly, although coverage continues to relate to a limited range of products and services.

The European Association for Sustainability and Financial Services has examined (through the non-

financial statements of the country's leading financial institutions) the areas in which retail sustainable finance could have a major impact. This resulted in a long list of financial products with the potential to play a significant role in helping to achieve the SDGs: instruments to support micro businesses in making advance payments of postemployment benefits to workers in serious financial difficulty; means of providing support for social enterprises and financing for start-ups, above all those founded by women; loans for families looking to purchase homes in a high energy class, to fund the installation of solar panels, to finance the purchase of low-emission vehicles, for the replacement of fittings and for high-efficiency boilers and, more generally, loans for social housing; subsidised loans; and insurance against new forms of risk.

Above all thanks to the commitment from banks, consumer credit to finance green purchases is growing, with the offer of cheaper sustainable solutions for consumers. Eight out of ten banks already offer ad hoc solutions and, according to research on "Consumer ESG Credit" in 2020 the percentage of credit used to finance the purchase of green products, or resulting in the more efficient consumption of resources, rose from 4% to 7%. Financing for sustainable mobility, renewable energy systems, insulation and other initiatives designed to reduce the environmental impact of housing are the main products financed by consumer credit providers.

If until a few years ago green products formed a small part of consumer credit offerings, they are nowadays considered even more important than traditional products by 43% of banks and financial undertakings. This prioritisation of such products is due to grow over the next two to three years at over 57% of credit providers. This is being driven by a series of factors, including the opportunity to improve their reputation and corporate image (29%), improved customer loyalty (15%) and the need to fall into line with the legislation in force (14%)

To make the construction and property sector more sustainable, the EU has launched the Energy Efficient Mortgages Action Plan (EeMAP), with a very specific aim. This is to create the economic and strategic conditions for housing in European nations to become energy efficient. The Energy Efficient Mortgages Initiative (EEMI), launched by the European Mortgage Federation (EMF-ECBC), has brought together a wide range of public and private sector organisations, including credit institutions, lenders, investors, suppliers and public service providers. They have created the EEM Label, a quality label aimed at identifying energy efficient mortgages (EEM) in lending institutions' portfolios, which are intended to finance the purchase/construction and/or renovation of both residential and commercial buildings, with a focus on building energy performance.

The increase in natural disasters due to extreme weather events has given rise to pressing concerns regarding the protection of Italian homes. According to the document "Italian insurance 2022/2023", published by Italy's National Association of Insurance Undertakings (ANIA), the way in which the Italian state has tended to respond to a series of natural disasters has created and fed into the public's perception that the state is responsible for covering the cost of reconstruction following such events. This belief has led to a low take-up of catastrophe insurance cover: 85.2% of non-life policies do not provide cover for flooding or earthquake damage. The remaining 14.8% providing cover against natural disasters is equivalent to little more than 1.7 million policies, providing insurance cover for approximately 1.9 million homes. In relation to the total number of homes in Italy according to ISTAT (35.3 million), this means that only 5.3% are covered by such insurance.

In view of the growing occurrence of extreme natural events driven by the progress of climate change, this lack of insurance protection shows how underinsurance in Italy needs to be addressed through a public-private partnership, with the aim of identifying innovative strategies and products capable of mitigating the increasingly evident and devastating impact of climate risk. At European level, recent studies by the ECB and European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) have revealed how, among other things, there is a need for public-private solutions in this area.

Table 1 - Elementary statistical indicators used to calculate composite indicators for Italy, and their polarity (a "+" sign indicates that an increase in the elementary indicators contributes to the growth and improvement of the composite indicator and a "-" sign indicates a negative contribution to its performance)

	Polarity
GOAL 1 市中市	
Absolute poverty	_
Relative household poverty rate	-
Low employment intensity	-
Serious material deprivation	-
Percentage of people living in housing with structural problems or damp	-
GOAL 2 W	
Overweight or obese adults	
Adequate nutrition	-
Value added per work unit on farms	+
Gross operating margin on small enterprises' work units	
Gross fixed capital formation in agriculture by hectare of agricultural area used	+
Fertilizers distributed in non-organic agriculture	-
Plant protection products distributed in agriculture	_
Share of the utilised agricultural area allocated to organic crops	+
GOAL 3 -√√•	
Infant mortality rate Probability of dying between the ages of 30 and 69 from cancer, diabetes or cardiovascular or respiratory disease	-
Life expectancy at birth	+
Alcohol (standardised rates)	-
Smoking (standardised rates)	-
People with a sedentary lifestyle (standardised rates)	-
Number of doctors, nurses and midwives per 10,000 inhabitants	+
Number of beds in residential social welfare and social healthcare facilities	+
GOAL 4 🔰	
People aged 25-64 who have participated in education and training activities in the previous four weeks	+
Early leaving from education and training	-
Participation rate in educational activities (kindergarten and first year of primary school) of 4-5 year olds	+
Pupils with disabilities in junior secondary school	+
Readership of books and newspapers People with at least a secondary school diploma (ages 25-64)	+
Graduates and people with other tertiary qualifications (ages 30-34)	+
Underachievement in reading, fifth year of secondary school	
Underachievement in mathematical skills, second year of primary school	-
CON E S	
GOAL 5 ♥	
Women and political representation at local level	+
Feminisation rate for life expectancy at birth	
	+
Feminisation rate for STEM graduates during the year	+
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NOTES

- ¹ This part of the Report was compiled by a group of Ipsos researchers, coordinated by Andrea Alemanno, on the basis of surveys carried out over time (proprietary observatories and customer surveys made public by them).
- ² The lockdown highlighted the difficulties of many families in providing their children with a proper diet: according to Save the Children Italy, during that period 160,000 children were left without their only full meal of the day, i.e. the one provided at school, and 13% of Italian parents indicated that one of the main advantages of school food was that it guaranteed at least one full meal a day.
- 3 https://asvis.it/corso-e-learning-azienda-2030-le-opportunita-dello-sviluppo-sostenibile/
- 4 https://asvis.it/corso-e-learning-azienda-2030-transizione-digitale/
- ⁵ https://asvis.it/corso-e-learning-pa-2030/
- 6 https://asvis.it/corso-e-learning-l-agenda-2030-e-gli-obiettivi-di-sviluppo-sostenibile/
- https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/QUADERNO_ASVIS_7_Transizione_Ecologica.pdf
- 8 The list of elementary indicators that make up the composite indices is provided at the end of this chapter.
- ⁹ It should be noted that the analyses for Goal 12 stop at 2021 and those for Goal 14 at 2020.
- ¹⁰ The grey area shows the range (the difference between the highest and the lowest value of the composite) in which the regions and self-governing provinces are positioned. The absence of a grey area for some indicators refers to the fact that calculable regional data are not available for them.
- ¹¹ It should be noted that ISTAT has not yet published poverty data for 2022. Consequently, for that year, the figures for 2021 have been used to calculate the composite indicator.
- ¹² For Goal 13, the analysis was carried out at national level only, without considering regional inequalities.
- 13 It should be noted that from this year a new historical series on overfishing is available (source: ISTAT). The composite figure is therefore not comparable with the one produced for the previous edition of this Report. As with Goal 13, Goal 14 has been analysed on a national level without considering regional inequalities.
- ¹⁴ Italy's Goal 17 composite index was extrapolated from the analysis of the Goal 17 composite index at European level, as the same elementary indicators are considered. For this reason, the figure for Italy in 2010 is not equal to 100.
- 15 https://va.mite.gov.it/it-IT/Oggetti/Documentazione/7726/11206
- https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/PolicyBriefASviSPNACC_FINAL23marzo2023.pdf
- ¹⁷ https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/archivio/pniec_finale_17012020.pdf
- 18 https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/ASviS_PolicyBrief3.pdf
- 19 https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/PTE/PTE-definitivo.pdf
- ²⁰ https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/biodiversita/2_SNB_2030_03-23.pdf
- ²¹ https://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/strategia-nazionale-aree-interne/
- ²² https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/Position_Paper_ASviS_2022_MontagnaAreeInterneGoal11.pdf
- ²³ https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_circular_economy_11_2017_it1.pdf
- ²⁴ https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/PNRR/SEC_21.06.22.pdf
- ²⁵ https://www.aics.gov.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Piano-di-Azione-Nazionale-ECG.pdf
- 26 https://www.aics.gov.it/
- ²⁷ https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2051/strategia_parita-_genere.pdf
- 28 https://assets.innovazione.gov.it/1610029655-dtd-1277-a-all1.pdf
- ²⁹ https://www.mimit.gov.it/images/stories/documenti/1622021525_strategia_bul.pdf
- 30 https://www.acn.gov.it/ACN_Strategia.pdf
- 31 https://assets.innovazione.gov.it/1637937177-programma-strategico-iaweb-2.pdf
- ³² The project was prepared by the municipality's social services, which work in a network with employment services, health services and schools, as well as associations set up to combat poverty.
- ³³ This benefit is called the Citizens' Pension in the case of households consisting exclusively of one or more members aged 67 or over.
- ³⁴ Among other things, being an Italian, European or long-term resident citizen and residing in Italy for at least 10 years, the last two of which continuously, and an Equivalent Economic Status Indicator of less than €9,360 per year.
- 35 Among the obligations was the obligation to accept at least one of three suitable job offers, defined as such on the basis of time, distance and level of pay (later reduced to two).
- ³⁶ Law Decree 34/2020.
- The measure involved a larger share of households with individuals of non-Italian citizenship (24.3%) compared with the citizens' basic income (14.4%). For an assessment of the emergency income scheme see: Ufficio Parlamentare di Bilancio, https://www.upbilancio.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Flash-2_2021-sul-REM.pdf; and Forum Disuguaglianze e Diversità https://www.forumdisuguaglianzediversita.org/come-valutare-il-nuovo-reddito-di-emergenza-il-giudizio-di-chi-lo-ha-proposto/
- 38 See https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/265523

- 39 See Report of the Scientific Committee on an assessment of the Citizens' Basic Income: https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Documents/Introduzione-Relazione-valutazione-RdC.pdf
- ⁴⁰ Law 85 of 3 July 2023 converting with amendments Law Decree 48 of 2023 on "Urgent measures on social inclusion and access to employment".
- In fact, inclusion income was also initially aimed at specific categories of the poor. The 2018 Budget Law broadened the number of beneficiaries, from 1 July 2018 transforming the benefit into a universal measure open to all families in severe poverty.
- ⁴² According to the estimates of the Parliamentary Budget Office, about 400,000 households currently receiving the Citizens' Basic Income (33.6%) will be excluded from the Inclusion Allowance. See also: M. Aprea, G. Gallo, M. Raitano, https://eticaeconomia.it/verso-lassegno-di-inclusione-un-passo-indietro-di-5-anni/; L. M. Maitino, L. Ravagli, N. Sciclone, https://lavoce.info/archives/101172/due-misure-al-posto-di-una-come-cambia-il-sostegno-contro-la-poverta/; Caritas, https://www.caritas.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/05/Audizione_CARITAS_16_5_2023.pdf
- ⁴³ With reference to health, of little relevance to Italy are Targets 3.1 (maternal mortality), 3.2 (under-five mortality and neonatal mortality), 3.3 (ongoing epidemics) and 3.7 (access to family planning tools and adolescent fertility).
- ⁴⁴ OECD EU, Health at a Glance: State of health in the EU cycle, 2022.
- 45 Art. 3 of Law 3/2018
- 46 http://asvis.it/public/asvis/files/Festival_Sviluppo_Sostenibile_2018/Decalogo_ASviS_sulla_salute_2018.pdf
- ⁴⁷ This initiative appears to be in line with the 'One Health Joint Plan of Action 2022-2026' developed by WHO-WOAH-FAO-UNEP. In this regard, it should be mentioned that, globally, the health systems crisis is still ongoing and that this makes the achievement of the 2030 Agenda Goals particularly challenging, to the extent that during the 76th WHO Assembly (May 2023), the Director-General of the WHO stated that "Target '2030' is not within our reach", but also that "Despite the many setbacks we have faced, we also have many achievements to be proud of".
- 48 https://noi-italia.istat.it/pagina.php?id=3&categoria=6&action=show&L=0
- ⁴⁹ €40 million was earmarked for antimicrobial resistance, €150 million for refunds for pharmacies and €650 million for vaccines.
- https://www.conibambini.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Quanto-e-frequente-labbandono-scolastico-tra-gli-alunnistranieri-2-giugno-2020.pdf
- ⁵¹ See the ASVIS paper, "Target 4.7 Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship", which reports on the current state of implementation of Target 4.7 in Italy, in curricula, teacher training and student assessment: https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/QuadernoASviS_EducazioneSviluppoSostenibile_ott2022.pdf
- https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/press/press-releases/2022/06/16/council-adopts-recommendation-to-stimulate-learning-for-the-green-transition/ and its accompanying document https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus- topics/green-education/learning-for-the-green-transition
- 53 GENE- Global Education Network (https://www.gene.eu/)
- ⁵⁴ https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128040
- 55 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0114_IT.pdf
- 56 https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023/
- 57 https://hdr.undp.org/content/paths-equal
- ⁵⁸ ISPRA, 'The environment in Italy. Yearbook 2022'.
- ⁵⁹ ISTAT, 'Water Statistics'. See https://www.istat.it/it/files//2023/03/GMA-21marzo2023.pdf
- 60 "Soil Consumption Report 2022" https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it/attivita/suolo-e-territorio/suolo/il-consumo-di-soil/soil-consumption-data
- The evaluation of agricultural policies with the Farmland Bird Index (FBI) shows that the index decreased by 29% between 2000 and 2020, with a peak in the lowlands (particularly in the Po Valley) of 46%. This is an overall figure for the index, relating to the health of agricultural ecosystems, which is suitable for monitoring large-scale habitats, reflecting the changes also undergone by other species occupying lower trophic levels, such as pollinators. The figure is also significant in the face of an increase in the extent of organically farmed areas, from 6.7% to 16% over the same 20-year period from 2000 to 2020 https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it/attivita/suolo-e-territorio/suolo/il-consumo-di-suolo/i-dati-sul-consumo-di-suolo
- 62 ISPRA, 'Atlas of Environmental Data 2023'. See https://www.isprambiente.gov.it/it/pubblicazioni/pubblicazioni-di-pre-gio/atlas-of-environmental-data
- 63 In particular, the 'National Committee for Natural Capital' was established to draw up an annual report on natural capital with the aim of 'ensuring the achievement of social, economic and environmental goals consistent with annual financial and budgetary planning' and to carry out ex ante and ex post evaluations of the effects of public policies on natural capital and ecosystem services. The same law introduced the obligation to draw up an annual catalogue of environmentally harmful and environmentally favourable subsidies, and provided for the drafting and periodic updating of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.
- 64 https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/il-rapporto-sullo-stato-del-capitale-naturale-italia
- 65 https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/catalogo-dei-sussidi-ambientalmente-dannosi-e-dei-sussidi-ambientalmente-favorevoli
- 66 https://www.mase.gov.it/comunicati/mase-adottata-la-strategia-la-biodiversita-al-2030
- 67 See 'ISPRA Atlas 2023', p.57.



- 68 https://ourworldindata.org/greenhouse-gas-emissions
- 69 https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/global-temperature/
- 70 https://www.isac.cnr.it/climstor/climate_news.html
- 71 https://www.pubblicazioni.enea.it/component/jdownloads/?task=download.send&id=568&catid=4&m=0&Itemid=101
- ⁷² https://www.gse.it/documenti_site/Documenti GSE/Rapporti Statistici/Rapporto StatisticoGSE-FER 2020.pdf
- https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en
- ⁷⁴ https://www.programmazioneeconomica.gov.it/competenze-cipess/
- 75 https://www.programmazioneeconomica.gov.it/il-cite/
- 76 See https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/PolicyBriefASviSPNACC_FINAL23marzo2023.pdf
- https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/ASviS_PolicyBrief3.pdf
- ⁷⁸ https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/italy-hikes-climate-finance-contribution-14-bln-per-year-next-five-yea-2021-10-31/
- 79 Seasonally adjusted monthly employment and unemployment rates: https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/287236#:~:text=A%20 June%2023%
- ⁸⁰ Target 8.9 "Implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- 81 The Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem: From SDI to SoS and on to the Geoverse | Discussion Paper. July 2022. https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/12th-Session/documents/Future_Geospatial_Information_Ecosystem_Discussion_Paper_July2022.pdf
- $^{82} \quad See \ https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/PositionPaper/2023/pp_goal_11_governo_territorio.pdf$
- 83 MIMS, Towards a new model of sustainable local mobility, p. 20, May 2022, https://www.mit.gov.it/nfsmitgov/files/media/no-tizia/2022-05/Report%20%27Towards%20a%20new%20model%20of%20sustainable%27_0.pdf
- 84 ISFORT, 19th Report on the Mobility in Italy, December 2022, https://www.isfort.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RapportoMobilita2022.pdf
- 85 The Ministry of the Economy and Finance has adopted the 'Guidelines for the Application of the DNSH Principle' for NRRP-funded projects, without which it is not possible to take advantage of the resources provided by the NRRP, and which confirm the mandatory adoption of the MEC.
- 86 https://www.appaltiverdi.net/category/monitoraggio/
- The Final Report on Guidelines for Disclosure Requirements Applicable to Credit Rating Agencies is available at the following link: www.esma.europa.eu/sites/default/files/library/esma33-9-320_final_report_guidelines_on_disclosure_requirements_applicable_to_credit_rating_agencies.pdf, accessed on 15 June 2022.
- ⁸⁸ EFRAG publications on the application of environmental and social reporting are available at: https://www.efrag.org/Publications, accessed on 27 July 2023.
- 89 Taxonomy Regulation 852/2020.
- ⁹⁰ The duty of care was first proposed in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and then by the OECD as a tool to verify the level of corporate social responsibility.
- 91 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32023R1115
- 92 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52022PC0071
- 93 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022PC0453
- ⁹⁴ 56th Censis Report on the social situation of the country/2022. Rome, 2 December 2022.
- 95 See the OSCAD Report 2021 and the data compiled by the Criminal Analysis Service of the Central Criminal Police Directorate of the Department of Public Security, and released by the Terre des Hommes Foundation in the Dossier "The condition of girls and young women in the world" 2022.
- ⁹⁶ In this regard, we note the adoption of Law Decree 123 of 15 September 2023, the so-called Caivano Decree.
- 97 Law 134 of 27 September 2021 and Law 206 of 26 November 2021.
- 98 "Report Council of Europe CPT/Inf (2023) 5 to the Italian Government about the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)" and the 19th Antigone Report, April 2023.
- 99 From 52 in 2018, the score increased to 56 in 2022.
- ¹⁰⁰ For further in-depth information, see the EU Rule of Law Report 2023, in the chapter on the situation of the rule of law in Italy; Brussels, 5.7.2023 SWD (2023) 812 final.
- ¹⁰¹ See the written contribution of the Court of Auditors and the speech of 26 January 2023 by the Attorney General of the Supreme Court of Cassation in the General Assembly of the Court on the administration of justice in 2022: both refer to the potential vulnerability of simplified procedures to corrupt practices and infiltration by organised crime groups.
- Legislative Decree 231 of 21 November 2007, which transposed the relevant European directives (2005/60/EC, (EU) 2015/849, (EU) 2018/843) and, in relation to countering the financing of terrorism and the activities of countries that threaten international peace and security, Legislative Decree 109 of 22 June 2007, Legislative Decree 125 of 4 October 2019 and Legislative Decree 195/2021 which, in implementation of Directive (EU) 2018/1673 on combating money laundering by means of criminal law, reformed the offences set out in articles 648, 648-bis, 648-ter and 648-ter.1 of the Criminal Code.

- 103 Semi-annual Report to Parliament on Seized or Confiscated Assets (June 2022) by the Ministry of Justice, Department of
- 104 See the report, "RimanDATI", published by "Libera" in September 2022 on the state of transparency of confiscated properties in local administrations, promoted in cooperation with the Gruppo Abele and the Department of Culture, Politics and Society of the University of Turin.
- 105 The Italian government's public consultation and participation platform is ParteciPa https://partecipa.gov.it./, while the website Consultazione.gov.it https://www.consultazione.gov.it/it/ is the access point for public consultations carried out by public administrations.
- For example, Law 41/2023 containing provisions for the implementation of the NRRP provided for the abolition of the 'Permanent Working Group for Economic, Social and Territorial Partnership', while the new Procurement Code abolished the National Commission for Public Debate.
- ¹⁰⁷ See National Skills Centre (2021), Monitoring the implementation of FOIA in 2020.
- At international level, Italy has had to deal with several crisis situations with authoritarian regimes, as in the cases of the student, Giulio Regeni, who was tortured and killed in an Egyptian prison in 2016, as well as the diplomat Luca Attanasio, who died in the Democratic Republic of Congo following a terrorist attack on 22 February 2021. Recently, a diplomatic solution was agreed by Italy and Egypt, allowing for a positive resolution of the crisis related to the student, Patrick Zaki, who returned to Italy on 20 July 2023 after spending 22 months imprisoned in an Egyptian prison for crimes of opinion.
- See the wide-ranging debate arising from the process of the so-called 'Zan Law' Amendments to articles 604-bis and 604-ter of the Criminal Code, concerning violence or discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (AC 569)- which, after being approved by the Chamber of Deputies in the 18th legislature, was then held up in the Senate.
- ¹¹⁰ Italy is placed 12th in the international ranking based on the purchase and production of armaments, with a real change of 24% in the period 2013-2022.
- 111 https://www.recommon.org/litalia-continuera-a-dare-sussidi-pubblici-al-comparto-fossile/
- ${}^{112} \ \ \text{'Recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus': https://www.oecd.org/dac/the-humanitarian-development-peace-nexus-interim-progress-review-2f620ca5-en.htm}$
- 113 According to the latest WHO report (2022) 'Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities', the number of persons with disabilities worldwide has increased to 1.3 billion, equivalent to one in six people. Eighty per cent of them live in low-middle income countries with limited access to basic health services. Inequalities in health, but also in education, social protection and employment are a constant reminder of the violations of the human rights of persons with disabilities
- https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/283229%23:~:text%3DAumentano%2520gli%2520stranieri.,2021%2520a%2520%252B229mila%2520nel%25202022.&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1692977556718994&usg=AOvVaw0DBlvDGwk8IsQAVNRcLvA6
- 115 https://consiglionazionalegiovani.it/articoli/legge-di-bilancio-ai-giovani-il-5-delle-risorse-sole4ore/
- 116 Report on 'The National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Budget Law and Sustainable Development' https://asvis.it/anal-isi-budget-law/
- 117 https://www.openpolis.it/limpegno-dei-giovani-per-lambiente/
- 118 https://www.wwf.it/area-stampa/clima-6-giovani-su-10-bocciano-il-governo/
- https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.legambiente.it/comunicati-stampa/youth-climate-meeting-di-legam-bi-ente/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1692864188183568&usg=AOvVawOw1N5W2uwAmGVgQOHW517O
- 120 https://european-youth-event.europarl.europa.eu/en/
- https://www.agensir.it/quotidiano/2023/6/5/ambiente-unicef-1-miliardo-di-bambini-e-adolescenti-ad-altissimo-rischio-for-crisis-climate-launched-two-guides-for-youth/
- 122 https://consiglionazionalegiovani.it/piano-nazionale-giovani/
- 123 https://aiguofficial.it/next-generation-you-il-manifesto-dellassociazione-italiana-giovani-per-lunesco/
- 124 https://youth4climate.info/sites/default/files/2022-11/Y4C%20Powering%20Action%20-%20Event%20report_final.pdf
- 125 https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/il-futurodel-paes-62df1ea73a22490c8f078d9db6d7b93e
- 126 https://beseenbeheardcampaign.com/
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=SWD:2020:176:FIN
- ¹²⁸ NGFS Scenarios for central banks and supervisors, September 2022
- 129 In 2021, the EBA published the Implementing Technical Standards on Pillar 3 Disclosure of Environmental, Social and Governance Risks and the Report on Risk Management and Supervision: EBA Report, On Management and Supervision of ESG Risks for Credit Institutions and Investment Firms, EBA/REP/2021/18.
- Report on incorporating ESG risks in the supervision of Investment Firms, Report Complementing EBA/REP/2021/18, EBA/REP/2022/26.
- 131 EBA Progress Report on Greenwashing Monitoring and Supervision, 31 May 2023, EBA/REP/2023/16
- ¹³² ECB climate risk stress test methodology 2022.
- ¹³³ CERVED, 'Le PMI Italiane tra vecchi e nuovi divari e sfide per la transizione', May 2023.
- 134 ECB climate risk stress test report 2022.



- ¹³⁵ Supervisory Expectations Bank of Italy, 2022.
- 136 https://finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/taxonomy-regulation-delegated-act-2022-environmental_en_0.pdf
- 137 Proposal for a Regulation on the transparency and integrity of ESG rating activities, COM/2023/314. On these aspects, see the Position Paper produced by ASVIS's Sustainable Finance Working Group, 2 January 2023, and the update provided by AFME: Sustainable Finance in Europe: Regulatory State of Play, March 2023.
- https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment/standards-tools-and-labels/products-labelling-rules-and-requirements/sustainable-products/ecodesign-sustainable-products-regulation_en
- 139 https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12567-Sustainable-products-initiative_en
- ¹⁴⁰ Environmental Claims Directive Green Claims, 2023.
- ¹⁴¹ Consumer ESG Credit, CRIF-SDA Bocconi-Assofin, 2022



Major transformations to implement the 2030 Agenda: ASviS's proposals



4. Major transformations to implement the 2030 Agenda: ASviS's proposals

4.1 Respecting the commitments undertaken: almost mission impossible?

Over the years, the ASviS Report has set out many proposals for designing general and specific public policies, aimed at implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of them have been adopted and turned into concrete actions, but many others have been ignored by successive governments in Italy since 2015 (Renzi, Gentiloni, Conte 1, Conte 2, Draghi and Meloni), or have been implemented in a partial and uncoordinated way. Generally speaking, the kind of breakthrough in terms of sustainability-oriented public policies and their overall governance (as proposed by the OECD and the European Commission) that has been seen in some European countries (e.g. Spain) and non-European countries hasn't occurred in Italy.

Italian politicians' failure to pay attention to this issue, together with the well-known limitations of our socioeconomic system, have led to the above outcomes, and therefore a country that's still a long way off achieving the goals by the end of this decade. In some cases, the current situation is even worse than it was when Italy signed the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, seven years ahead the deadline, despite a swift and decisive policy Uturn, it will clearly be extremely difficult or impossible to meet most of the 33 quantitative targets identified, taking into account the values set at European and international level by the 2030 Agenda, EU strategies, and commitments made over the years by Italian governments¹.

In order to assess the likelihood of achieving the quantitative targets on the basis of observed trends, the Eurostat methodology was used. This involves assessing the intensity and direction in which the indicator is moving with regard to the pre-set target, using the so-called "arrow" system. Each quantitative target is assigned an arrow and a colour, in accordance with what the data shows²: **significant progress**, meaning that the target is likely to be achieved (a green arrow

pointing upwards); limited progress, meaning that the target is unlikely to be achieved, but things are moving in the right direction (green arrow pointing diagonally upwards); insufficient progress, meaning that the target will not be achieved (red arrow pointing diagonally downwards); moving away from the target, meaning that the wrong direction has been taken (red arrow pointing downwards).

In the graphs regarding Targets that may be achieved or approached, the colour green is used; Targets that will not be achieved are shown in red; Targets with divergence between short - and long-term performance are shown in yellow; and Targets whose performances are impossible to measure are shown in grey.

Regarding the 33 quantitative targets identified:

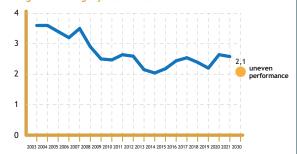
- for eight, reaching or approaching the target is possible (green arrow). The situation is optimal for the five targets related to the risk of poverty or social exclusion (Target 1.2), organic farming (Target 2.4), early leaving from education and training (Target 4.1), available kindergarten places (Target 4.2) and the recycling rate (Target 12.5), insofar as both short - and long-term goals can be achieved. The other three targets report a positive albeit not optimal situation, as only approaching rather than reaching the target is possible, as shown in the performance registered in at least one of the two periods analysed. These targets include the probability of dying from noncommunicable diseases (Target 3.4), the proportion of NEETs (Target 8.6) and internet connectivity (Target 9.c);
- for fourteen, the target will not be achieved, as no significant improvement, and in some cases deterioration, were registered. For seven of these (Target 7.3 energy consumption, Target 8.5 the employment rate, Target 9.5 the percentage of GDP allocated to research and development, Target 11.6 air quality, Target 13.2 greenhouse gas emissions, Target 15.5 terrestrial protected areas, and Target 16.7 -

Target 1.2 - By 2030, reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 16% versus 2020



Target source: European Pillar of Social Rights | Indicator: risk of poverty or social exclusion | Unit of measurement: thousands of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 2.4 - By 2030, reduce the use of distributed fertilizers in non-organic farming by 20% versus 2020



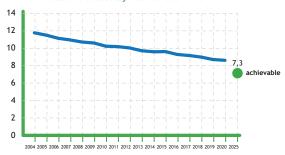
Target source: European Farm to Fork Strategy | Indicator: fertilizers distributed in non-organic farming | Unit of measurement: quintals of fertilizers per hectare of non-organic utilised agricultural area (UAA) indicator source: drawn from ISTAT data

Target 2.4 - By 2030, achieve a 25% share of utilised agricultural areas (UAA) growing organic crops



Target source: European Farm to Fork Strategy | Indicator: share of utilised agricultural areas (UAA) growing organic crops | Unit of measurement: % of organic UAA | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 3.4 - By 2025, reduce the probability of dying from noncommunicable diseases by 25% versus 2013



Target source: WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020 | Indicator: probability of dying from cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases between the ages of 30 and 69 | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 3.6 - By 2030, halve the number of road accident deaths versus 2019



Target source: Sustainable Mobility for Europe: safe, connected and clean | Indicator: road accident deaths | Unit of measurement: number of deaths | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 4.1 - By 2030, reduce the share of early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) to below 9%



Target source: European Education Area \mid Indicator: early leaving from education and training \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 4.1 - By 2030, reduce the share of students failing to achieve a satisfactory level of mathematical skills (at age 15) to below 15%



Target source: European Education Area \mid Indicator: inadequate mathematical skills (15-year-old students) \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 4.2 - By 2027, achieve a share of places in educational services for infants (3-36 months of age) amounting to at least 33%



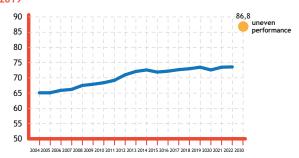
Target source: Budget Law 234 of 2021, art. 1. paragraphs 172-173 | Indicator: number of authorised places in socio-educational services (kindergartens and supplementary pre-school services) per 100 infants aged from 0-2 years | Unit of measurement: \(\) | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 4.3 - By 2030, achieve a 50% share of graduates (aged 30-34) $\,$



Target source: European Education Area \mid Indicator: number of graduates and holders of other further education qualifications (aged 30-34 years) \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 5.5 - By 2030, halve the gender employment gap versus 2019



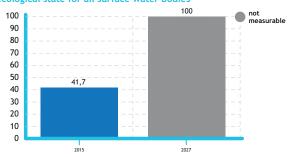
Target source: European Pillar of Social Rights \mid Indicator: feminisation of the employment rate (aged 20-64 years) per 100 persons \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: drawn from ISTAT data

Target 5.5 - By 2030, achieve gender equality in specialised ICT roles



Target source: Digital Compass 2030: European Digital Decade | Indicator: feminisation of specialised ICT roles per 100 persons | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: drawn from EUROSTAT data

Target 6.3 - By 2027, ensure an excellent or good quality ecological state for all surface water bodies



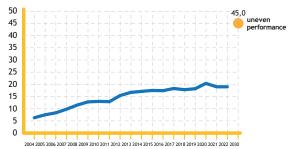
Target source: Water Framework Directive | Indicator: percentage of water bodies achieving the ecological quality target (excellent or good) out of the total number of surface water bodies (rivers and lakes) | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: ISPA:

Target 6.4 - By 2030, achieve 90% efficiency for potable water distribution networks



Target source: ASviS experts' opinion \mid Indicator: efficiency of potable water distribution networks \mid Unit of measurement: $% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 7.2 - By 2030, achieve at least a 45% share of energy from renewable sources



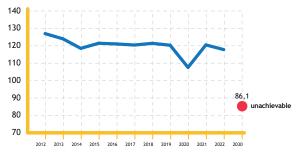
Target source: REPowerEU Plan \mid Indicator: share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 7.2 - By 2030, increase installed renewable energy capacity to at least 130 GW



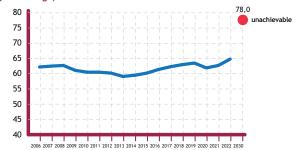
Target source: Ecological Transition Plan | Indicator: net capacity of installed renewable energy generation | Unit of measurement: gigawatt | Indicator source: GSE

Target 7.3 - By 2030, reduce final energy consumption by at least 20% versus 2020



Target source: REPowerEU Plan | Indicator: final energy consumption | Unit of measurement: millions of TOE | Indicator source: GSE and Ministry of the Environment

Target 8.5 - By 2030, achieve an employment rate of 78% (20-64 years of age)



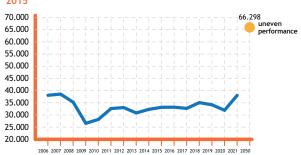
Target source: European Pillar of Social Rights | Indicator: employment rate (20-64 years of age) | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 8.6 - By 2030, reduce the proportion of NEETs to less than 9% (15-29 years of age)



Target source: European Pillar of Social Rights \mid Indicator: youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs) \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 9.1 - By 2050, double rail freight traffic versus



Target source: Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy | Indicator: amount of freight transported by rail in internal transport systems | Unit of measurement: thousands of tonnes | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 9.5 - By 2030, achieve a 3% share of GDP allocated to research and development



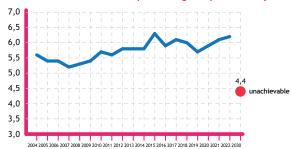
Target source: European Research Area \mid Indicator: research intensity \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 9.c - By 2026, ensure gigabit connectivity in all



Target source: Italia a 1 Giga plan \mid Indicator: very high capacity network (VHCN) coverage \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: DESI

Target 10.4 - By 2030, reduce net wealth inequality (S80/S20) to the levels observed in the best-performing European country



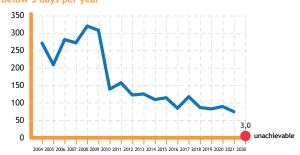
Target source: comparison with best-performing European country (France) | Indicator: net wealth inequality (S80/S20) | Unit of measurement: lowest quintile/top quintile | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 11.2 - By 2030, increase the number of seat-km per inhabitant offered by public transport by 26%



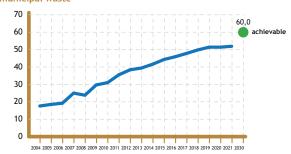
Target source: Eurostat methodology | Indicator: seat-km offered by public transport | Unit of measurement: seat-km/inhabitant | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 11.6 - By 2030, reduce exceedances of PM10 limits to below 3 days per year



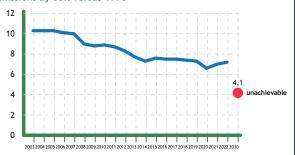
Target source: WHO 2021 Guidelines | Indicator: exceedances of daily PM10 limits laid down by municipalities in provincial capitals and metropolitan cities | Unit of measurement: maximum number of days on which the PM10 limit is exceeded | Indicator source: SIVA

Target 12.5 - By 2030, achieve a 60% share of recycled municipal waste



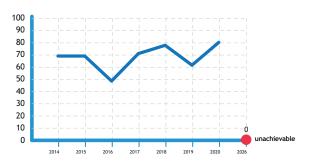
Target source: European Circular Economy Package \mid Indicator: share of recycled municipal waste \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: EUROSTAT

Target 13.2 - By 2030, reduce CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions by 55% versus 1990



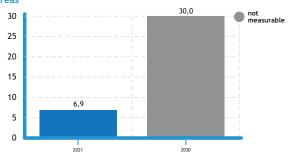
Target source: European Climate Law | Indicator: CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions | Unit of measurement: tonnes of CO2 equivalent per capita | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 14.4 - By 2030, eliminate overfishing



Target source: European Biodiversity Strategy | Indicator: overfished stocks | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 14.5 - By 2030, achieve a 30% share of marine protected areas



Target source: European Biodiversity Strategy \mid Indicator: surface area of marine protected areas \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: EUROSTAT

Target 15.3 - By 2030, eliminate the increase in annual land use



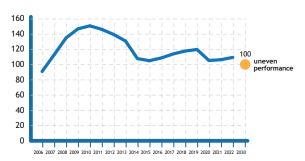
Target source: Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe | Indicator: annual increase in hectares used per 100,000 inhabitants | Unit of measurement: additional hectares used per 100,000 inhabitants | Indicator source: drawn from ISPAR data.

Target 15.5 - By 2030, achieve a 30% share of terrestrial protected areas



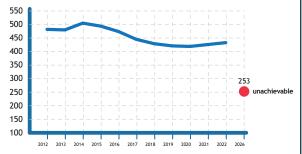
Target source: European Biodiversity Strategy | Indicator: protected areas | Unit of measurement: % | Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 16.3 - By 2030, eliminate overcrowding in prisons

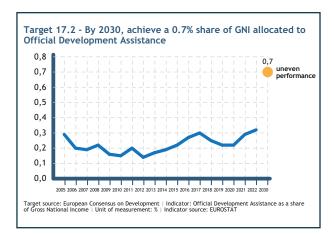


Target source: ASviS experts' opinion \mid Indicator: prison overcrowding \mid Unit of measurement: $\% \mid$ Indicator source: ISTAT

Target 16.7 - By 2026, reduce the average duration of civil proceedings by 40% versus 2019



Target source: National Recovery and Resilience Plan | Indicator: duration of civil proceedings | Unit of measurement: number of days | Indicator source: ISTAT



the duration of civil proceedings) the situation was substantially stable, while for the other seven (Target 4.3 - the share of university graduates, Target 5.5 - gender equality among specialised ICT personnel, Target 6.4 - the efficiency of water networks, Target 10.4 - income inequality, Target 11.2 - the public transport offering, Target 14.4 - overfishing, and Target 15.3 - land consumption) the situation further deteriorated. In both cases, structural interventions that enable a radical change in the performances registered in recent years are needed;

- for nine, a divergence between short and long-term performance was registered, which means that the final outcome will depend on prevailing policy orientation in the coming years. The targets in this situation include the use of fertilisers in agriculture (Target 2.4), road accident deaths (Target 3.6), students' numerical and literacy skills (Target 4.1), the employment rate gender gap (Target 5.5), the consumption of renewables (Target 7.2), renewable energy generation capacity (Target 7.2), rail freight transport (Target 9.1), overcrowding in prisons (Target 16.3), and the percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) allocated to Official Development Assistance (Target 17.2);
- for two, it is impossible to assess performance due to lack of time series data. These targets include the ecological state of surface water bodies (Target 6.3) and marine protected areas (Target 14.5).

Indeed, the available data paint a far from rosy picture, to the extent that 42% of the quantitative targets appear to be beyond Italy's reach. Nevertheless, Italy can and must seize the oppor-

tunity of the time that's left to implement the necessary step change to improve the state of our socioeconomic system, tackle the climate crisis, enhance the quality of the environment, reduce inequalities, offer services that meet citizens' expectations, step up the pace of innovation and competitiveness, improve companies' profitability and working conditions, make our institutions more efficient, and play a more incisive role in the international arena, including by providing support to developing countries.

To achieve this, in line with the commitment undertaken in mid-September at the end of the Summit on the 2030 Agenda, policies must be radically changed by putting sustainability at their centre. As this report seeks to interpret the situation at the halfway point along the road to 2030, we'll now focus on recommendations regarding "transformative" changes in the way that the Italian economy and society work, which are necessary to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda in the seven years that are left, without implying that the many recommendations put forward so far are no longer relevant.

4.2 Confirming the European Union's commitment to sustainable development

As one of the founding countries of the European Union, Italy has always been among the drivers of its evolution. As mentioned in Chapter 2, with the Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, the EU has seen a very important breakthrough in its policies, whereby the commitment to implement the 2030 Agenda has been placed at the centre of its efforts. Highly significant and unprecedented results have been achieved, despite the enormous difficulties arising from the endless crises that have affected Europe. Obviously, a lot of work still needs to be done to implement the provisions of the new legislation described in Chapter 2. Moreover, the next few years will be vital for defining the process of the further integration and strengthening of the European Union's governance, and not just in economic terms, as well as for stepping up progress along the path to its sustainable development. Therefore, Italy must commit to putting the Agenda 2030 at the centre of the Union's policies in the next legislature, by ensuring the coherence of its sustainable development policies.

On 13 September, the president of the Commission gave the last annual State of the Union address of her current term of office before the European Parliament in Strasbourg, in which she presented a review of her activities since 2019

and announced new initiatives to be implemented ahead of the next elections to the European Parliament, to be held on 9 June 2024. Firstly, the president expressed her satisfaction with the EU's ability to carry out an ambitious programme to achieve a "green, digital and geopolitical Europe", whilst responding to the upheavals triggered by a global pandemic and the effects of the Russian invasion in Ukraine. She recalled that "thanks to the Parliament, the Member States and my team of Commissioners, more than 90% of the political guidelines presented in 2019 have become concrete measures" (see box below).

The actions that the president intends to initiate in the coming months to accelerate the ecological transition include the presentation of a European wind energy package, to be defined in close cooperation with industry and the Member States, aimed at simplifying implementation procedures, enhancing skills, financing, and supply chain stability. With regard to competition rules, the president announced the launch of an anti-subsidy investigation related to electric vehicles from China, whilst committing to maintain an open dialogue for cooperation at the forthcoming EU-China summit at the end of the year. She also proposed the launch of a "strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture" to correct and counteract polarisation and conflict regarding the Green Deal proposals, and expressed her belief that agriculture and nature conservation can go hand in hand.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROGRAMME

Ahead of the presentation of the 2023 State of the Union address, the research department of the European Parliament published a document³ in which the achievements of the von der Leyen Commission are explored in depth. Of the more than 600 initiatives initially announced and in progress, over two-thirds (69%) have been presented. Of the 420 legislative initiatives presented, just over half (53%) have already been adopted by the co-legislators or the Commission itself. The vast majority of the remainder are proceeding normally through the legislative process (141, or 71%) or are nearing adoption (26, or 13%). In contrast, 32 initiatives (16%) are proceeding very slowly or are currently stalled.

The European Green Deal, the EU's main priority, ranks first in terms of the number of initiatives planned (154 in total, of which 96 have been presented), while those relating to "A Europe fit for the digital age" (105), "A stronger Europe in the world" (69) and "Protecting our European way of life" (94) account for the highest percentages of the initiatives adopted so far.

In order to meet the challenges of work and employment, the president announced the convening of a new social partner summit in the first half of 2024 under the Belgian presidency, while to make SMEs more competitive, she proposed the establishment of an independent committee to carry out a competitiveness audit for each new legislative act, and the introduction of legislative proposals to reduce corporate reporting obligations by 25%, at European and national level.

To support the European zero-emission industrial policy and to guarantee "European sovereignty" in the current geopolitical climate, von der Leyen announced the introduction of common European funding, and said that she'd asked Mario Draghi to prepare a report on the future of European competitiveness. With a view to assessing the risks and benefits of artificial intelligence for humankind, she then proposed supporting the United Nations proposal to create an international artificial intelligence body that would play an independent scientific role, in the same way as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change does.

To step up collaboration with African countries, the president undertook to work on building a new strategic approach to be promoted at the upcoming EU-African Union summit, in response to political instability in several African states, so as to strengthen cooperation with legitimate governments and regional organisations, while with regard to immigration, she announced the organisation of an international conference on combating human trafficking.

Finally, the president confirmed the strong determination to promote enlargement of the Union, with the inclusion of Ukraine, the candidate countries of the western Balkans, Moldova and Georgia, thus bringing the current Europe of 27 up to 30 and more countries, as well as the Commission's support for the European Parliament's proposals to amend the Treaties and convene a European Convention, if necessary, in order to draw up a new text.

In addition to the announced innovations, the coming months should be dedicated to finalising many of the legislative dossiers that are already before the co-legislators, in order to make utmost progress on the programme agreed in 2019. This applies, first and foremost, to the Green Deal proposals. The necessary adjust-

ments to reach an agreement with the Council and the European Parliament should be identified without abandoning its ambitious objectives, starting with those incorporated in the Fit for 55 package (see box on page 195), in order to give clear indications to operators in the various sectors on the direction to be taken, and also clarify how the available funds should be used to accompany families and businesses in the necessary transformation, without which for many people the transition costs would far outweigh the benefits.

Similar attention should be paid to social policy actions, especially those regarding the fight against inequalities, including gender gaps, as well as the agreement on the new Stability and Growth Pact, which should be designed as an instrument to facilitate the transition of the socioeconomic system towards sustainable development, and not just as a set of rules merely aimed at financial stability. It is necessary to take into account not only the overall value of public expenditure and financial balances, but also the composition of revenue and expenditure, so that they may be allocated to initiatives related to environmental and social sustainability, the transformation of the production system and boosting competitiveness.

The coming months will also see intense discussion on how the recommendations emerging from the Conference on the Future of Europe should be taken into account (see box on page 57). In this regard, it should be noted that the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament has drawn up various proposals to amend the Treaties, to be implemented by convening a Convention, aimed at improving the European Union's capacity for action and strengthening its democratic legitimacy. Among other things, the proposals envisage:

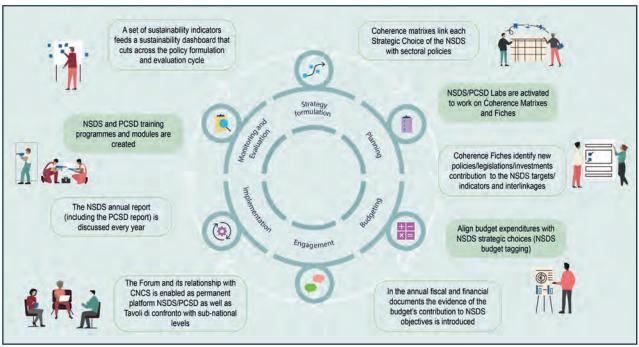
- recognition of the European Parliament's right of legislative initiative, right of enquiry and complete authority over the budget;
- transformation of the Council into a real legislative chamber, in order to achieve a truly bicameral legislative system comprising the European Parliament and Council, with the Commission acting as executive;
- transition from unanimous voting to qualified majority voting in the European Council;
- reform of European electoral law;

- strengthening of cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, including in the pre-legislative phase;
- creation of an EU citizens' charter, clarifying and consolidating the specific rights and freedoms of citizenship, to be extended to thirdcountry nationals who legally and continuously reside in the European Union;
- granting foreign citizens within the Union (i.e.
 Union citizens residing in a Member State of
 which they aren't nationals) the right to vote
 and to stand as candidates in municipal and
 European elections;
- introduction of a standardised age for eligibility and the right to vote in all Member States, with a recommended minimum voting age of 16;
- rapid and coherent implementation of the outcomes of the Conference on the Future of Europe, which relate to 49 proposals and 326 concrete measures;
- institutionalisation of deliberative and representative participatory processes, based on the "European citizens' panel" model used at the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- creation of a structured citizens' participation mechanism to define European strategies, called Agora Europe, which should operate on an annual basis and discuss the EU's priorities for the following year. A youth com-

- ponent of Agora should constitute a European youth assembly;
- introduction of referenda on vital issues at EU level, which trigger paradigm shifts in the Union's actions and policies, including reforms of and new rules for EU treaties;
- introduction of pan-European, online citizens' consultations organised by the European Parliament.

Some of the proposals made can and should be improved, but they're undoubtedly moving towards a "federalist" strengthening of European institutions and an enhancement of European democracy, with more power granted to the Parliament, which is the only institution elected by citizens. Moreover, the transition from unanimity to qualified majority voting on Council decisions (with an amendment to the European Parliament's proposal to prevent the Council from indefinitely postponing decisions that are "disagreeable" for certain governments) would increase the efficiency of the deliberative process, by reducing the power of veto of individual countries, which is a prerequisite for avoiding a situation whereby enlargement of the Union to include new Member States stalls the decisionmaking process.

With regard to all these aspects, we expect Italy to play a proactive role in moving in the direction recommended by the European Parliament. It is also necessary to raise public



awareness in Italy of the issues under discussion, given the potential effect that any decisions might have on the functioning of the Italian institutional system. In line with the need to redouble efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda (see Chapter 4.4), the amendments to the Treaties should enable the Union to respond more rapidly and robustly to climate and environmental challenges, geopolitical, economic and health crises, and migration issues, against a backdrop of more democratically representative European institutions.

4.3 Providing Italy with an effective governance system to ensure the coherence of sustainable development policies

Ahead of the 2022 general elections, the Alliance presented ten proposals to the political parties, who were requested to make an explicit commitment to implement them. So before setting out in detail the "transformative" interventions needed to step up the pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, let's look at whether and how the ten proposals have been applied so far, with particular reference to "cross-cutting" themes:

- coherence of sustainable development policies: the new National Sustainable Development Strategy, which ASviS helped to draw up, has been approved, and the Cabinet Office and the relevant ministries are currently developing an ex-ante assessment methodology for the projects to be approved by the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning and Sustainable Development (CIPESS) in the light of the SDGs, as proposed by ASviS after the Committee changed its name and as stated in a directive issued during the Draghi government. Indeed, no specific changes have been made to the procedures adopted to check coherence between legislative proposals and the new constitutional principles, nor has a system of ex-ante assessment of policies in the light of the principle of intergenerational justice been introduced;
- establishment of a public institute for future studies: an OECD project is underway, which was requested by the Council Presidency and financed by the European Commission, with a view to assessing procedures for establishing such an institute;
- a "sustainable" Parliament: explicit adoption
 of an integrated sustainable development vi sion in the re-composition of the parliamentary
 committees wasn't considered, whereas the
 sustainable development intergroup at the
 Chamber of Deputies was reconstituted;
- multilevel system of strategies and local agendas for sustainable development: this approach has been adopted in the new National Strategy, whereas the Interministerial Committee for Urban Policy (reconstituted in 2022) has never been convened.

The new National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNSvS22), approved by the Interministerial Committee for Ecological Transition (CITE) on 18 September, marks a significant step forward compared to the 2017 version (see box below). Rather than completely undermining the

pre-existing structure, the revision process was aimed at complementing and finalising it, with efforts focused on the definition of objective values (targets) for strategic decisions related to the national strategic objectives.

THE NEW NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022 (SNSVS22)

At national level, the policy coordination tool used to implement the 2030 Agenda is the National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNSvS)⁴, which was approved by the Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE, now CIPESS) via Resolution 108/2017, and published in May 2018. The strategy, to be updated every three years, "defines the national framework for environmental and local planning, programming and assessment processes to implement the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda". Contrary to normal practice, the new strategy was approved by the Interministerial Committee for Ecological Transition (CITE) on 18 September 2023, almost five years after the first strategy, on conclusion of efforts launched in 2020, to which ASviS made a significant contribution, by coordinating, among other things, the working group responsible for "knowledge, education and communication", namely cross-cutting dimensions (vectors) to support sustainability, within the forum established by the Ministry of the Environment to oversee the implementation, monitoring and periodic review of the strategy.

The new strategy follows the same approach as the previous one, and is based on four guiding principles: integration, universality, inclusion and transformation. It is broken down into five areas for action, corresponding to the "5 Ps" of the 2030 Agenda (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership), each containing strategic objectives for Italy related to the 17 SDGs, to which a sixth area has been added, regarding the so-called "sustainability vectors", which are tools to enable full integration of sustainability into public policies within transformative processes. The strategy, which takes into account the outcomes of the policies pursued so far, as described in the latest annual progress report on the implementation of the SNSvS published in July 2023, undertakes to achieve the objectives expressed via specific statistical indicators, and to strengthen governance for the definition and assessment of policies, including local policies, which have seen growing interest from regions, metropolitan cities and municipalities, as described in the ASViS Territorial Report. In particular, the strategy includes indicators linked to other key strategic programme frameworks, such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), the Ecological Transition Plan (PTE) and the partnership agreements regarding the cohesion policies.

As already mentioned, the new strategy focuses on the "enabling dimensions", which form substantial elements of the process, and are to be brought about via three vectors of action: sustainable development policy coherence; sustainability culture; and sustainable development participation. The first vector is aimed at ensuring the integration and coherence of public sustainability policies across various levels of governance and consists of three areas for action: vision, assessment and monitoring. In particular, the area of vision encompasses actions aimed at strengthening the role of the SNSvS and its associated regional, metropolitan and local strategies as strategic reference frameworks for the sustainability and coherence of policies, plans, programmes and actions, in an effort to simplify and strengthen coordination mechanisms and venues.

The second area is dedicated to *ex ante*, *in itinere* and *ex post* assessment of the sustainability of Italy's development and the coherence of policies, plans and programmes, through the preparation of a series of assessment mechanisms and tools to monitor the integration and compatibility of policies in terms of the SNSvS objectives. The last area regards integrated monitoring of the SNSvS and

the action of reporting and returning the results achieved, in order to ensure availability, access and networking of data and information via an integrated monitoring platform for sustainability objectives, which should also contain a set of contextual and performance indicators that can progressively meet information requirements and ensure coherence with, among others, the NRRP and PTE indicators.

The second vector, sustainability culture, is aimed at promoting culture as an enabler of human and sustainable development and is the key enabling factor for sustainable development. This vector's first area for action is called "education and training", and is aimed at defining the education system, developing sustainability skills, promoting lifelong sustainable development learning, and strengthening sustainable development education and training, by focusing on synergies between actors and tools. The second area for action, called "information and communication", focuses on the development of languages, tools and shared venues for providing sustainability information and communication.

The third vector, **sustainable development participation**, promotes collaboration as a working method for implementing the Strategy. It consists of two areas for action: the first provides for the mapping and empowerment of institutional and non-state actors, while the second promotes collaboration and supports the creation of innovative partnerships between public and private actors.

Finally, eight years after the signing of the 2030 Agenda, Italy has a solid foundation for coordinating various policies towards the goal of sustainable development. The strategy incorporates many of the recommendations made by the OECD in a document entitled "Italy Governance Scan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development", which was later transformed into the National Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, included as an annex to the new strategy.

In comparing the nine components (see image on page 156), which according to the OECD enable achievement of real coherence of sustainable development policies with the situation in Italy, the following picture emerges, seven years ahead of the 2030 Agenda deadline:

- a set of sustainable development indicators: available thanks to the efforts of ISTAT and ASviS;
- a coherence matrix between the SDGs and sectoral policies: this proposal hasn't been incorporated in the strategy;
- ex-ante assessment of new legislation and investment regarding the SDGs: under preparation for investment, but not for legislation;
- alignment of public budget items with the SDGs: carried out by the Court of Auditors, but only ex post, which nevertheless demonstrates the feasibility of the exercise;

- inclusion of the SDGs in programmatic economic policy documents: the SDGs are included in the Economic and Financial Document (DEF), but are decoupled from reform proposals and budget allocation in an annex;
- strengthening of the Forum set up at the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and dialogue with the regions and cities: implemented in the new strategy;
- annual report on the implementation of the strategy: prepared intermittently by the MASE and without any impact on public debate, to be enhanced and put on the parliamentary debate agenda;
- training on the strategy and the 2030 Agenda for public sector employees: carried out by the National School of Administration (SNA), ASviS and the university system, to be strengthened and extended to include all public sector employees.

As can be seen, despite lagging well behind the 2030 Agenda timeframe, some progress has been made, although much still needs to be done to significantly change public policy governance, especially with regard to *ex ante* and *ex post* assessment of individual actions. Consequently, all the procedures and actions envisaged in the strategy should be activated in the next few months, especially regarding this issue, by strengthening the role of Parliament and the Cab-

inet Office. Moreover, the "new" Interministerial Committee for Urban Policy (CIPU) should be made operational, partly with a view to ensuring coordination between national policies regarding cities (the Ministerial Decree that reconstitutes the Committee envisages preparation of an Urban Agenda for Sustainable Development, which deploys the national strategy at local level), and the orientation of EU-funded projects and national cohesion funds relating to the period 2021-2027 towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda Goals.

To enable full implementation of the strategy, the Government and Parliament should also bridge the gap between the OECD recommendations and current practice, by:

- providing ex-ante assessment of the expected impact of new legislative acts on the SDGs;
- introducing classification of the state budget in terms of the 2030 Agenda Goals as standard practice;
- highlighting how the proposals contained in the Economic and Finance Document can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, thereby applying the rules already defined by the European Semester.

4.4 Urgently prepare the Acceleration Plan agreed at the United Nations in order to achieve the SDGs that Italy is lagging behind on

Beyond implementation of the strategy, and following on from the commitments undertaken at the end of the UN Summit on the 2030 Agenda held on 18-19 September, Italy must prepare a national plan for accelerated transformative action to achieve the SDGs (see point 38.s, of the Declaration). In particular, the action plan should focus on the actions needed to achieve the Goals whose SDG indicators show sluggish or negative trends, and activate "synergic measures" for the various policies, taking into account the interconnection between the individual Goals. The plan should be based on scientific evidence, in order to identify obstacles to the required transformation, and also take into account "cross-border" negative impacts, with a view to reducing and eliminating their negative effects (for example, Italy will have to consider its impact on global emissions, and also measure emissions generated in third countries that arise from consumption demand in our country).

The plan will be developed via significant engagement of civil society and regional and local players, and identify tools to support an inclusive, bottom-up decision-making process. In turn, regions and local authorities, business and industry associations, and institutional investors should be encouraged and supported in the development of corresponding regional and local acceleration plans and sectoral plans linked to the national action plan.

The national plan should also include international cooperation actions that link the SDGs to implementation of the global commitments provided for under the Paris Climate Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and other international agreements. The plan should then be in line with the recommendations made ahead of the 2024 Summit of the Future convened by the United Nations secretary-general, in keeping with the other commitments undertaken at the SDG Summit.

As well as preparing the national plan with utmost urgency, Italy should also **promote the adoption**

of an equivalent European plan for an accelerated transformative action plan, which could provide a reference framework for the next European legislature 2024-2029. Similarly, as president of the G7, Italy should exert its influence to encourage adoption of coherent proposals and agreements with its partners regarding accelerated transformative actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda Goals.

In drawing up the national plan, the Government should:

- follow the recommendations of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2023⁶, supplemented with the best international scientific literature;
- enhance the preparation of the SNSvS22, through development and practical use of the three sustainability vectors identified (policy, culture and participation coherence);
- use the evidence and proposals contained in this report as a science-based foundation that's representative of Italian civil society.

Given the backlogs outstanding at the halfway point in the implementation of the SDGs, the Government and Parliament should give top national priority to the plan, so that it may be prepared ahead of the upcoming High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2024 and the G7 meetings, as well as the Summit to be held next September.

4.5 Approve a Climate Law and introduce assessment of the impact of the laws on future generations

The European climate targets for 2030 (55% reduction emissions compared to 1990) and for 2050 (carbon neutrality) are challenging but not impossible to reach and, if accompanied by astute industrial and social policies, can be achieved without having a negative impact on employment, welfare or investors' interests (see box on page 133). Increasingly, however, and not only in Italy, some media and political leaders appear to back fake news about the various aspects of the ecological transition, which fosters climate change denial, while youth movements, who only ask for their voice to be heard, are openly mocked.

The climate change mitigation and adaptation plans - the PNIEC and the PNACC - have been drawn up, but, as mentioned below, they need to be strengthened and finalised to guide a wideranging set of economic, social and environmental policies. To consolidate the existing and future regulatory framework and enable it to guide the energy and ecological transition in the coming decades, Italy needs to adopt a Climate Law, as has been done in other major European countries, possibly with an assenting vote from all the political parties, as was the case with the recent constitutional reform. In particular, the Climate Law should:

- enshrine the target of climate neutrality by 2050, as decided at EU level, including intermediate targets, and also set a total carbon budget and sectoral carbon budgets that map out pathways to phase out greenhouse gas emissions for the various business sectors;
- establish effective institutional governance to achieve the targets, and coherently define the roles of the Government, the Parliament and the regions, in the light of the current constitutional arrangements;
- set up a Scientific Climate Board that operates with the technical support of existing agencies (Institute for Environmental Protection and Research ISPRA, Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Development ENEA, etc.), assist decision makers in the preparation of initiatives

aimed at achieving the targets, and also monitor the results obtained and their coherence with the intermediate targets;

- set a timeframe for eliminating subsidies and other public grants, which, by slowing down the phase out of fossil fuels, harm the environment and human health;
- establish procedures for the participation and engagement of economic and social actors in drawing up and implementing climate policies.

Various proposals are currently available that differ widely in terms of content and approach to the issue. Therefore, we believe that the Government should urgently declare its support for a Climate Law, which the Parliament can work on in the coming months, leading to its approval by May 2024, namely before the European and local elections.

If the principle of intergenerational justice enshrined in the amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution - together with initiatives relating to employment, education and other aspects dealt with in the rest of this chapter - is to be fully implemented, the engagement of youth in decisionmaking processes and the drawing up of policies that directly affect them should be specifically promoted. This requires the introduction of impact assessments in the legislative sphere, with apposite methodology defined with the involvement of the National Youth Council and other youth organisations that deal with this issue. A similar example is provided by Youth Check, which was established on the recommendation of the Council of Europe, introduced in Austria in 2013 and in Germany in 2017, and taken on board by the European Youth Forum. Via the Committee for the Evaluation of the Generational Impact of Public Policies (COVIGE)7, Italy drew up Guidelines for the evaluation of the generational impact of public policies⁸, which were published in July 2022.

In order to achieve the planned adoption of a kind of Youth Check, an objective that also appeared im the centre-right's manifesto for last year's elections, three courses of action are needed: trialling of the assessment model; identification of an organisation to carry out the assessments; and amendment of the parliamentary regulations to introduce an obligatory, nonbinding opinion on draft laws submitted to parliamentary committees. The first local expe-

rience to be carried out by the Municipality of Parma⁹ will be useful om identifying proposals in this regard.

Finally, in order to raise awareness among all Italians of the importance of pursuing all aspects of sustainable development and respecting the rights of future generations, we propose the establishment of a National Sustainable Development Day, to be celebrated on 22 February each year, the date on which Constitutional Law 1/2022, which amended Articles 9 and 41 of the Italian Constitution, was published in the Official Gazette.

4.6 Promote a sustainable development culture

Now that the heroic phase of making declarations about sustainable development and raising the awareness of diverse and specific cultural organisations is over, cultural operators are called upon to adopt sustainable behaviours that form an integral part of their strategy, putting them at the heart of the operational phases of all organisational processes and levels. Moreover, these efforts should be publicised and made recognisable to users of cultural services, including via collaboration between various operators (public authorities, companies, the education system, activist groups and associations), in order to uphold the claim that culture is "transformative" and able to turn the eyes of its stakeholders towards the future, by engaging its users in bearing witness to the benefits of cultural participation.

An obstacle to the effectiveness of such a transformation for users of cultural services is the waning "average" interest of Italians in culture. Given the exponential growth of cultural offerings in recent years, it is not so much a concern that "in general" people read less, go to the cinema less often, and visit fewer libraries, but rather that the gap between people who are familiar with culture (who, on average, consume more and more of it) and those who can easily do without it is widening. As culture is an experiential asset, the fewer the number of people exposed to it is, the more difficult it will be to stimulate and engage them. This is particularly true for younger people.

Cultural exclusion results in less access to meaningful opportunities to promote and maintain wellbeing, as well as a reduction in social integration. At the same time, the specific nature of cultural organisations compared to other social organisations enables kindling of awareness first, and then later intellectual curiosity, which are key elements in fostering a thirst for knowledge and the development of active citizenship. From this perspective, it is necessary to rethink traditional collaboration between educational and cultural organisations on the one hand, and health professionals and cultural organisations on the other hand, in order to encourage active participation in artistic and cultural activities as a means for ensuring sustained levels of wellbeing and mental and physical health.

It is necessary to boost the role of culture and cultural heritage as powerful drivers of change, which build active citizenship and strengthen communities' sense of belonging and cohesion. Therefore, professional fiction-makers should participate in the construction of new perspectives and approaches, in order, among other things, to raise collective awareness of the climate emergency, of what may be lost or put at risk, of the urgent need to respond, and of future possibilities.

Approximately half of Italy's territory is witnessing a declining population, although it is still inhabited by around 13 million people. To stem the haemorrhage and help redistribute the population around the country, efforts should be made to improve the conditions that enable fulfilment of the desire to have roots in a specific area, and thereby lead a decent life. These include mobility services, educational and healthcare facilities, food outlets and basic cultural services. Systematic reflection is needed at local level regarding the availability of public and private amenities (bookshops, libraries, theatres, museums), and on how to ensure that people use them, in order to combat the depopulation of many Italian municipalities. This implies, among other things, recovering cultural heritage (physical, but also the heritage of skills and trades that are being lost) which is under-utilised or even neglected and degraded. Dissemination activities should be embedded in local sustainability projects.

Investment in culture also generates important economic spin-offs, and tourism may be one of the the areas that benefits most from a vital cultural sector. Contrary to the indications set out in Target 8.9 of the 2030 Agenda, in many parts of Italy, tourism tends to be highly concentrated in specific local areas and within short time-frames, leading to a dangerous level of consumption of land and monuments. Combating over-tourism and gentrification, onsite and digital experiences, and seasonal adjustment are issues that play a vital role in improving the quality of the visitor experience and activating polite curiosity, whilst also contributes to achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

This requires linkage with culture and tourism planning guidelines, starting with EU structural and investment funds in order to improve the coherence of initiatives. Cross-sectoral strategies and local-level synergies featuring broader geo-

THE NEW RAI SERVICE CONTRACT: AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CULTURE

On 3 October 2023, the Parliamentary Committee for the General Management and Supervision of Radio and Television Broadcasting approved the advice on the service contract¹² between the Ministry for Business and Made in Italy and RAI - Radiotelevisione italiana (state-run radio and television broadcaster) for the period 2023-2028. For the first time, the document includes an article entirely devoted to sustainability, which wasn't present in the previous service contract 2018-2022. In particular, Article 12 reaffirms the public broadcaster's key role in "guiding a cultural shift towards sustainability". The second paragraph also sets out precise obligations for RAI, with reference to the definition of a sustainability plan that represents the corporate strategic vision regarding ESG matters and a sustainability report, which will ensure greater transparency towards all stakeholders. Also important is the clear reference to the need to "raise awareness and increase scientific knowledge by providing prompt and continuous information on the causes, effects and solutions to ongoing climate change and biodiversity loss", which, if well developed, will help to combat climate change denial. Equally important are the references (Article 2) to the commitment to promote "the values related to the above challenges (digital and environmental) in products aimed at the general public (such as drama, entertainment and news programmes), and to "combat genderbased violence and any acts and behaviour that threaten or damage the integrity and dignity of offended persons, and spread knowledge and awareness of measures to support female victims of violence".

In line with the recommendation made by ASviS at its hearing before the Supervisory Commission held on 5 September 2023, another significant element is the explicit citation of the 2030 Agenda. This is mentioned in Article 8, with reference to skills development for the digital and environmental transition, aimed at "helping to raise informed public awareness of environmental crises, thereby ensuring a new ecological consciousness", and also in Article 10, which views gender equality and equal opportunities as a "driver for growth" and as "one of the priorities for Italy's economic system".

Other positive innovations in the new service contract, which obviously reflect a compromise between the various demands of the political parties, include **Article 5**, which is dedicated to the **younger generations**, as well as reaffirmation of the enhancement of **investigative journalism** and **combating different forms of disinformation**.

ASviS believes that the role of RAI, which has been a media partner of the Sustainable Development Festival since the first edition, is vital for the development of a well-informed public debate on sustainability issues and will ensure that the new service contract is effectively applied to public service broadcasting products and corporate processes. From this perspective, the new service contract envisages that RAI should prepare "an annual report on the state of implementation of the current service contract" and, by 30 June of each financial year, "a sustainability report, which also reports on the activities carried out in the sociocultural sphere, with particular regard to respect for informational, social and political pluralism, the safeguarding of minors and the rights of minorities, the representation of women, the family, and people with disabilities, and the promotion of national culture. The sustainability report should also report on the outcomes of quality monitoring of the proposed offering, as perceived by viewers and listeners, and the corporate reputation of the service provider". Finally, within 12 months of the entry into force of the service contract, RAI and the competent Ministry should agree on "verification criteria and indicators of achievement of the objectives contained therein, both in quantitative terms, in order to meet the planning obligations, and in qualitative terms, by assessing audience feedback regarding the objectives set out in the contract". This marks an unprecedented and welcome innovation, and its effectiveness should be carefully evaluated by civil society.

graphical horizons and proactive and collaborative behaviour are called for, such as those deployed by some Destination Management Organisations (DMO), which, by networking itineraries, local areas and various types of cultural experiences, and thereby different types of operators and services, move beyond the model that is merely based on large attractions, which is the main cause of tourism congestion.

The ability to address these critical issues related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with sufficient vigour and visibility is also connected to two organisational and governance aspects: the need for stronger linkage between various types of operators from different sectors, as well as the sectoral work carried out by national and international operators' associations. This includes the growing collaboration between institutions and the patient efforts to bind together various institutions (the Ministry of Culture, the Central Institute for Intangible Cultural Heritage, local authorities, communities, associations, UNESCO, citizens' groups), which have enabled preservation of segments of tangible and also important intangible heritage assets¹⁰; the network of library networks; collaboration between public and private heritage management organisations and between heritage and the performing arts; the commitment to cultural cooperation; and the establishment of the national museum system in 2018, which is aimed at sustainability, governance and common enhancement of heritage¹¹.

The functional link with the various ministerial bodies (from central management to supervisory departments), associations of municipalities and the Conference of Regions, as well as relations between institutions and associations, need to be strengthened. Deeper engagement of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) and the voluntary sector would then enable critical and systematic analysis of new participatory governance models.

4.7 Overcome territorial disparities by making optimum use of European and national cohesion funds

On 4 August 2023, the President of the Republic Sergio Mattarella, together with the heads of state of Croatia, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia and Malta, which are members of the Arraiolos Group (named after the Portuguese town where the first meeting took place), pledged to support joint actions to combat the climate crisis and called on the EU and other Mediterranean countries to move in the same direction. The geopolitical context, climate change and demographic trends will have a major influence on the future of Italy, whose development opportunities will hinge on our ability to reduce disparities within the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In this highly complex context, the division between the north and south of Italy almost represents a fault line between Europe and the Mediterranean, compounded by an additional element of separation that the Apennine mountains heightens by widening the distance between the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Seas. Unfortunately, regarding many aspects of the 2030 Agenda, the indicators set out in Chapter 3 showed an increase in territorial disparities, a trend that must be countered in the coming years by mobilising intellectual, cultural, social and economic efforts, without which southern Italy, which is an integral part of the country, will be unable to contribute to the future of Italy, thus resulting in failure to achieve the SDGs.

On 18 October 2022, ASviS presented a Manifesto for southern Italy, containing 10 proposals regarding sustainable development of the area:

- develop Euro-Mediterranean relations on a permanent basis, including an annual meeting geared towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- 2. draw up an incisive, long-term taxation plan that helps businesses and supports the employment of young people and women in southern Italy;
- invest in research and technology for agriculture, which is the sector most affected by the impacts of ongoing climate change in southern Italy;
- 4. take advantage of southern Italy's great environmental and cultural potential, which has yet to be fully exploited, as a key driver of sustainable development;

- turn southern Italy into a national and Mediterranean hub for renewable energy production, which is also able to supply the rest of the country;
- increase the number of places in crèches, in full-time education, in school canteens and in spaces and facilities that support children's education;
- 7. support and adequately equip southern Italian universities, partly to develop innovation ecosystems and create a Euro-Mediterranean network of universities;
- 8. increase the number of doctors and healthcare workers, by encouraging them to settle in southern Italy, especially in inner areas;
- 9. enhance mobility within southern Italy by investing in sustainable rail and road links that cross the Apennine mountains;
- 10. build an administrative and institutional framework in order to encourage good planning and make best use of the substantial resources that are currently available (NRRP, Cohesion Policy Funds 2021-2027, statutory legislation, etc.), including the creation of a central mission unit

While some of the 10 points have been implemented via recent government measures (see below), many others still need to be realised. It should also be emphasised that, over the next seven years, Italy will benefit from a significant inflow of European and national funds for territorial and social cohesion. This amounts to approximately €143 billion for the period 2021-2027¹³, which may actually be spent over a longer period, in addition to approximately €220 billion from the NRRP. These funds represent an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen measures aimed at evening out the historical and persistent disparities between northern and southern Italy, and between urban and inner areas.

In July 2022, the Government defined the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission regarding the Cohesion Funds for the period 2021-2027, amounting to €75.3 billion, (including the national co-financing share), which are to be allocated to projects aimed at achieving five objectives:

 a more competitive and smarter Europe, by promoting a smart and innovative economic transformation;

- a resilient, greener and low-carbon Europe, by promoting a transition to clean and fair energy, green and blue investments, the circular economy, adaptation to climate change and risk management and prevention;
- a more connected Europe, by boosting mobility and regional connectivity;
- a more social and inclusive Europe, via implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- a Europe that's closer to its citizens, by promoting the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives.

As ASviS suggested at the opening event of the Sustainable Development Festival in May 2023, the Government has stated that the funds will be used "in line with sectoral policies and with the investment and reform policies envisaged in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), in accordance with the principles of complementarity and additionality", as per Decree Law 124 of 19 September 2023. The funds will be allocated to the individual regions via a Cohesion Agreement, by which the development objectives to be pursued through implementation of specific measures will be identified, including with the contribution of several funding sources. The first such agreement was signed on 22 September with the Liguria region, which encompassed initiatives to enhance digital services, combat hydrogeological instability, rehabilitate historic theatres, reorganise transport infrastructure, renovate public housing and complete major works, with a total allocation of €230 million.

Moreover, the same decree established a Special Economic Zone (ZES), comprising the territories of the regions of Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Molise, Apulia, Sicily and Sardinia, which replaces the eight existing ones. Under the three-year Special Economic Zone Strategic Plan, the development policy for the new area will now be defined, including identification - in terms of the varying requirements of its constituent regions - of the sectors to be promoted and the ones to be strengthened, the investment and priority actions to be undertaken for development of the SEZ, and the implementation methods to be adopted.

The single SEZ will be managed by a steering committee and equipped with a digital platform and a mission unit. 2,200 personnel will also be hired

to strengthen the administrative capacity of the regions concerned and the Cabinet Office. Furthermore, the decree establishes a steering committee at the Cabinet Office for the development of inner areas, in order to ensure the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI).

As already mentioned, the decision of the European Union and the Italian government to ensure the coherence of the objectives to be pursued with the NRRP and the cohesion funds marks an important innovation, which should now also be implemented in the light of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, by taking utmost advantage of the creation of the single SEZ. The thematic priorities recommended by ASviS a year ago could be the basis for the three-year plan envisaged for the latter, and should now be turned into programmes and concrete initiatives, also by taking advantage of the vibrancy of the area as shown with the NRRP, and ensuring the continuity of administrative action.

The goals of the 2030 Agenda, the NRRP and the Partnership Agreement should also be duly taken into account when assessing the possible impacts of the draft law on so-called "differentiated regionalism". Southern Italy, the sustainability link between Europe and the Mediterranean, risks being heavily penalised by this approach, leading to widening gaps and inequalities (the opposite of what the European funds for 2021-2027 are aimed at achieving).

Alternatively, the implementation and revision of certain points of Law 42/2009 on fiscal federalism could mark a positive "return to the future", as the latter was based on a number of key aspects, including the definition of basic performance levels aimed at guaranteeing social and civil rights to all citizens and ensuring equalisation funds. This approach had already been emphasised in the above-mentioned Manifesto for Southern Italy and in various ASviS reports published over the years. Therefore, we believe that "differentiated regionalism" runs the risk of failing to eliminate those gaps deemed unacceptable in the 2030 Agenda, and might even widen the fault line between Europe and the Mediterranean, which means that Italy would miss out on the opportunity to build a sustainable development future.

4.8 ASviS's proposals for "transformative" policies

The set of proposals presented here comprise an extensive and complex programme of reforms and initiatives. Some of the proposals would require substantial funds, while others would entail low or zero costs, which could easily be drawn from the current state budget with some reorganisation of expenditure. In some cases, the proposals regard state revenue, and their compatibility with the need to reduce the tax burden should be carefully assessed. More generally, it should be pointed out that Italy's financial sustainability is one of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda (see Target 17.4).

Many of the proposals set out below appear to be perfectly in line with the specific recommendations made to Italy by the European Council at the European Semester 2023 (see box below). Therefore, they should be seen as useful contributions for the Government in the preparation of the next Budget Law and related measures, as well as in drawing up the reforms envisaged by the NRRP. Finally, some of the proposals refer to corrections of recent measures undertaken by the Government and Parliament, in order to bring them closer into line with achievement of the SDGs.

In brief, the proposed initiatives include the following 13 courses of action:

- combat poverty, precariousness and in-work poverty, ensure that dependent elderly people are taken care of, redistribute the tax burden to reduce inequalities, manage migration and promote the integration of immigrants;
- accelerate technological, organisational and social innovation in the agricultural sector, and boost farms' social responsibility;
- optimise the resources and organisation of health services, mitigate the impact of the climate crisis on health, and combat mental illness, addiction and family and social violence;
- improve the quality of learning, combat early school leaving, ensure inclusion, strengthen childcare services, and provide education for sustainable development and global citizenship:
- increase women's employment, ensure care work services and sharing, and prevent and combat all forms of discrimination;

- put the protection and restoration of nature at the centre of policies, respect international agreements, and ensure the safeguarding and sustainable management of ecosystems;
- maximise renewable electricity production and make the PNIEC more ambitious;
- reduce the precariousness of the labour market for women, young people and immigrants, strengthen active policies and improve working conditions;
- invest in sustainable infrastructure, gear the production system towards Industry 5.0, and boost research and innovation;
- improve land governance, and invest in urban regeneration and the ecological transition of cities and other local areas;
- promote environmental and social sustainability in public administration, and step up engagement of consumers in the adoption of virtuous behaviours;

THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ITALY APPROVED AT THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

At the end of the European Semester process concluded in June 2023, the European Council made several recommendations to Italy ahead of the preparation of the Budget Law and other measures, including:

- phase out the current energy-related support measures by the end of 2023, and allocate the
 savings made to reduce the public deficit. If new increases in energy prices require support measures, ensure that they are aimed at protecting vulnerable households and businesses, are fiscally
 sustainable and maintain energy-saving incentives;
- ensure a **prudent budgetary policy**, in particular by limiting the nominal increase in net primary expenditure financed at national level to no more than 1.3% in 2024;
- maintain nationally financed public investments and ensure efficient incorporation of grants from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and other EU funds, in particular to promote the green and digital transitions;
- in the period after 2024, continue to pursue a medium-term budgetary strategy aimed at the gradual and sustainable restoration of the public finances, combined with investments and reforms to improve productivity and increase sustainable growth, in order to achieve a prudent medium-term budgetary position;
- further reduce taxes on labour and increase the efficiency of the tax system by adopting and properly implementing the enabling act on tax reform, whilst maintaining the progressive nature of the tax system and improving fairness, in particular by reorganising and reducing tax expenses, including VAT, and environmentally harmful subsidies, simplifying the tax code, and bringing cadastral values into line with current market values;
- ensure effective governance and strengthen administrative capacity, especially at sub-national level, in order to achieve continuous, rapid and robust implementation of the PNNR; rapidly finalise the REPowerEU item in order to swiftly launch its implementation; rapidly implement cohesion policy programmes in close complementarity and synergy with the NRRP;
- reduce dependency on fossil fuels; streamline concessionary procedures in order to accelerate
 the production of additional renewable energy and develop power grid interconnectors to bring it
 on stream; boost domestic gas transport capacity in order to diversify energy imports and strengthen
 supply security;
- increase energy efficiency in the residential and production sectors, including via more targeted incentives, aimed in particular at the most vulnerable households and the worst-performing buildings;
- promote **sustainable mobility**, partly by eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies and accelerating the installation of charging stations;
- step up political initiatives aimed at providing and acquiring the **necessary skills for the green** transition.

- improve the judicial system, develop a code of conduct for artificial intelligence, and strengthen democratic participation;
- promote peace, and strengthen the coherence of development assistance policies and improve their effectiveness, ensuring the participation of civil society in the decisions made.

For each of these courses of action, concrete proposals are set out below, which, if implemented, could undoubtedly accelerate Italy's progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and make up for lost ground and the delays that have built up in recent years.

Combat poverty, precariousness and in-work poverty, ensure that dependent elderly people are taken care of, redistribute the tax burden to reduce inequalities, manage migration and promote the integration of immigrants

The 2030 Agenda is primarily a strategy to eliminate poverty and drastically reduce inequalities, starting with income and wealth inequalities; not by chance, its motto is "leave no one behind". To achieve this objective and meet the provisions of Article 3 of the Italian Constitution, the actions undertaken by the state and the country as whole should be strengthened in order to have an impact on effective equal access to opportunities and on the formation of wealth and primary incomes. Therefore, in accessing basic services it is vital to consolidate "national" responsibility for achieving the basic performance levels, starting with education and healthcare, regarding which the influence of family situations and local contexts on the ability to access quality services is still strong.

Wide gaps in accessing educational opportunities significantly influence the various aspects of people's lives - from very early childhood, especially with respect to people with disabilities - and require a substantial increase in public investment in education and training. The large numbers of early school leavers, and the many young people not participating in education, training and employment, leads to social marginalisation and missed development opportunities that have a negative impact on the entire country.

COMBAT POVERTY, PRECARIOUSNESS AND IN-WORK POVERTY

Policies to combat poverty require measures to reduce precariousness and in-work poverty¹⁴. In peripheral and vulnerable areas of the country, policies should be drawn up which, through strong participation by citizens and local communities, take into account the structural needs and constraints of each local area, and accompany basic services by promoting digital and ecological transition opportunities. In order to prevent these transitions from increasing inequalities, thereby creating dissatisfaction that might stall the processes needed to bring about

the desired transformation, instruments should be geared towards increasing the environmental sustainability of the socioeconomic system for the benefit of the most vulnerable social groups.

In this regard, fair, long-term energy-saving incentives for households should be defined, taking into account local economic conditions and facilitating the access of households with insufficient means to these instruments. At the same time, given that poverty also stems from inadequate housing conditions, a robust public housing initiative is needed, accompanied by redevelopment processes at community and neighbourhood level, partly in order to improve social cohesion.

The high level of poverty is one of Italy's main problems. In order to overcome the difficulties arising from the abolition of Citizens' Income and the inequality among the beneficiaries of the two new measures created to replace it, the clause in the Inclusion Allowance that excludes households with no family responsibilities should be removed. This would mean that the Inclusion Allowance could become a universal protection measure aimed at all poor households, as is the case in other EU countries. Once basic assistance is guaranteed for all poor people, additional forms of support can be established for particular groups of people who have specific difficulties. In addition, regarding access to Training and Employment Assistance, the demographic age requirement (18-59) should be changed, by applying a criterion that takes greater account of a person's possibility of finding a job (level of education, skills, previous work experience, length of unemployment), and standardises the Equivalent Economic Indicator (ISEE) access thresholds. Finally, when Training and Employment Assistance has ended, if an employable person is still below the poverty line, they should once again receive the Inclusion Allowance.

The issue of abuse of these measures, as well as of other national and local forms of assistance to the needy, should be tackled by stepping up inspections in order to widely and systematically combat undeclared work, which is estimated to cost taxpayers €37 billion per year in terms of tax and social security contribution evasion¹⁵.

In order to counter in-work poverty, precarious employment without safeguards, and the expan-

sion of gender, age and regional disparities, a minimum wage could be useful, but as a sole remedy would be insufficient. As well as seeking to establish a contractually adequate wage, the investigative analysis of the minimum wage entrusted by the Government to the National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL) is also based on all the elements that make up a total salary (extra month's pay, severance pay, holiday pay and various types of leave). In order to ensure decent working conditions, possible measures to rigorously combat undeclared work and limit atypical forms of employment, such as very short fixedterm contracts, which often correspond to vulnerable and precarious situations, should also be assessed.

IMPLEMENT THE REFORM REGARDING THE CARE OF DEPENDENT ELDERLY PEOPLE

The recent approval of the enabling act regarding the reform of care for dependent elderly people (March 2023), envisaged in the NRRP, marks an important step towards a unified and integrated welfare system, which potentially concerns 3.8 million elderly people with physical and/or mental disabilities, a number that is set to grow in the coming years. As well as helping to improve the quality of life of the elderly, the reform could substantially enhance the freedom of millions of women, on whom the burden of care within the family primarily falls.

Therefore, the reform process should be swiftly continued, with the drafting of legislative decrees and a corresponding increase in earmarked state funding. The reform addresses the fragmented nature of the actors involved in the planning and provision of services, by providing systematic multilevel governance and a new multidimensional system to assess the conditions of elderly people, as a basis for providing integrated and appropriate responses¹⁶. In particular, the attendance allowance, a universal benefit for dependent people, will be provided in proportion to elderly people's actual care needs.

Carers for the elderly in their homes should then be provided, including on a long-term basis, and at the same time residential care homes should be strengthened in order to guarantee adequate responses, especially for people affected by more complex conditions (for example, elderly people with severe dementia).

REDISTRUBUTE THE TAX BURDEN

In order to reverse the upturn in inequalities, the tax burden should be redistributed among the various social classes and the progressive nature of the tax system as a whole should be strengthened, as laid down in Article 53 of the Constitution, taking into account the redistributive effects of the current system of exemptions, family deductions, deductions and special regimes, which has been further expanded by the enabling act regarding tax reform approved in August 2023.

More effective identification of hidden wealth is also needed, including via interoperable central and local databases (as the draft law seems to envisage), with avoidance of any kind of tax amnesty, and a gradual reduction of the favourable tax regime for financial income and wealth transfers (inheritances and donations). Finally, the draft law doesn't even address reform of the land register, which is needed to improve the horizontal and vertical equity of the Italian tax system, nor does it offer an innovative approach to environmental taxation, despite Italy's international commitments and the recommendations of the European Council (see box on page 176).

ENCOURAGE LEGAL MIGRATION, INTEGRATE IMMIGRANTS AND SAFEGUARD UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Socioeconomic imbalances, geopolitical conflicts and climate crises, concentrated in certain areas of the world, are the root causes of the mass displacement of people, which is set to accelerate, especially affecting countries like Italy that are close to the African continent. Most of them are involuntary migrants, who are obliged to leave their countries, undertake dangerous journeys, get across borders and face rejections, survive abuse and torture, and finally try to gradually become members of the societies in their host countries, despite the difficulties arising from protracted legal procedures, badly managed reception facilities, a lack of cohesion policies and an inadequate culture of integration.

Given the prevailing demographic trends in Europe and especially in Italy, a medium - to long-term strategy is needed to move beyond an emergency mindset, partly through coordinated action at European level aimed at eliminating, as

far as possible, the main causes of migration and promoting legal channels that enable refugees and anyone else arriving in Europe to avoid putting their lives at risk. As part of the process, companies' labour requirements should also be taken into account, and agreements to select and train future migrants in their countries of origin should be encouraged.

In view of the difficulties related to these policies, and given the presumed future expansion of migration from Africa and countries experiencing conflict, investment must be undertaken to build an effective and decent reception system for migrants in Italy that gives priority to smaller facilities, in order to guarantee effective integration of migrants into the economic and social fabric. With regard to unaccompanied foreign minors, protection and social inclusion measures that guarantee them a new life in safe conditions should be strengthened as a matter of utmost urgency.

Accelerate technological, organisational and social innovation in the agricultural sector, and boost farms' social responsibility

In the current scenario, the vital elements for achieving Goal 2 by 2030 are innovation, cooperation within supply chains and farms' social responsibility, which should be accompanied by greater awareness among producers and households of the role food plays in terms of social wellbeing and environmental impact. The effects of public policies in this field are best realised within a framework of strengthened multilateralism and international cooperation. This should take place without neglecting the key role played by agricultural systems, namely food production, which should go hand in hand with ensuring the availability of food for every member of the world's growing population.

ENCOURAGE TECHNOLOGICAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Technological innovation is important, above all to enable a sharp reduction in the levels of waste that derive from agricultural production, which are currently extremely high. The design and widespread use of effective, low-cost technologies that can offer significant benefits in terms of agricultural productivity and profitability should be aimed at achieving this goal. Moreover, climate change requires continuous innovation and research on varietal selection, reduction of water consumption and enhancement of resilience to water stress.

An important means for improving the national agricultural system is the adoption of an agroe-cological approach, especially on medium to large farms, in order to decrease greenhouse gas emissions linked to agricultural practices, and to combat climate change. Indeed, the soil is a dynamic carbon sink that can store considerable quantities of carbon in organic form, as already mentioned by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Agroecological production can also encourage agrobiodiversity, which is vital for enhancing environmental and economic resilience, thereby ensuring farm profitability and employment. Finally, agroecology is a production system that is designed to combat

illegal recruitment, provide fair compensation to farms and workers and safeguard farmers' health.

While the environmental and, above all, the economic component of sustainability appear to largely guide policies and producers' behaviours, issues regarding the social dimension of production and the food system seem to have been wrongly put on the back burner. This is an error that should be corrected by attaching greater importance to participatory and community aspects and sustainability-based innovation. Indeed, together with technical innovation, which is still excessively based on top-down approaches (such as sustainable intensification - which is still complex in terms of the scientific and technical advances that are needed - for example, for the selection of new more resistant plant varieties), organisational and social innovations are also vital in order to promote the competitiveness of businesses and encourage the development of new local agricultural systems, via participatory bottom-up approaches aimed at rebalancing the distribution of added value and actively engaging a wide range of local actors in the decision-making process, starting with the farmers themselves.

The participatory approach could enable, for example, showing farmers that achieving the ambitious objectives of the Green Deal, which are identified in the Farm-to-Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, is feasible, as well as resolution of conflicts regarding the most controversial issues, such as the new EU regulations on plant protection products and nature restoration. Similarly, experiences should be consolidated and further developed, such as the European Innovation Partnership regarding agricultural productivity and sustainability (EIP-AGRI), which led to the creation of Operational Groups, and the new partnership proposals defined within the framework of Horizon Europe, the main European policy instrument for research and innovation. This should be combined with increased support via the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS), of which partnerships are crucial elements, to encourage knowledge transfer and sharing.

In the area of organisational and social innovation, more attention should also be paid to agricultural working conditions, including safety in the workplace, contractual conditions, and rewarding quality. For example, with regard to the workforce, the precarious and low-skilled component is still very high, which is partly linked to crop seasonality. This should be reduced by activating technological innovation and digitisation processes, as well as by developing new skills primarily related to environmental sustainability (organic farming, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, etc.), and means for interacting with the market (for example, product quality and certification), or cross-cutting initiatives. However, while technological methods for replacing human labour already exist, they're very expensive and risk penalising smaller, often family-run farms, which should rather be supported and protected, including and above all with a view to promoting environmental sustainability.

With this in mind, when investing in the future of the sector it is also important to open it up to new elements, starting with greater female participation. In Italy, women account for a mere 30% of the agricultural workforce and their access to leadership positions in the agricultural sector is still very limited, with only 21% of European agricultural businesses run by women. Also crucial is the participation of young people, who increasingly are among those most aware of climate change and the digital transformation, and therefore more often apply organic farming practices and run more digitised and innovative businesses. Also to be put to advantage are the instruments provided by the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP 2023-2027), which is aimed at supporting the development of 380,000 young people, of whom more than 21% are in in Italy, including by supplementing specific EU funds with national funds. Lastly, the burden of bureaucracy, which impacts farm incomes, should be taken into account.

The agricultural sector also encompasses wood and non-wood forestry products, which, although economically marginal in general terms, give rise to a very important industrial supply chain, including the wood processing and wooden furniture industries. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that Italy is rich in biodiversity, thanks to its forest systems ranging from Alpine to Mediterranean areas. However, national conservation legislation may have negative impacts on the ecological state of forest areas, which are also gradually being affected by aspects of climate change, such as extreme

weather events, droughts and rising temperatures, since it may lead to procurement of forest products from countries with less stringent environmental guarantees.

INCREASE FARMS' SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM A SUPPLY CHAIN PERSPECTIVE

Production and organisational innovations aimed at achieving sustainable supply chains cannot be confined to one phase, but rather should be shared and planned by all the actors involved. For example, if healthy food is to be made affordable, measures that affect the pricing system must be put in place, given that a diet based on such assumptions is currently unaffordable for many people, without penalising farmers, especially small-scale ones, whilst allocating them a greater share of added value. Therefore, government policies should be aimed at the supply side (by increasing the production of "healthy, good-quality and sustainable" food), and also encourage greater cooperation between supply chains that would increase efficiency, bring down production costs and prevent waste.

On the demand side - in addition to the issue of income, food poverty, and specific ways of fighting poverty - investment in the knowledge production system, and its dissemination and adoption by production and marketing chains, as well as widespread food education that encompasses consumption patterns, and the health and environmental impacts of diets, should be envisaged.

Underlying a sustainable agricultural product sourced in accordance with agroecological criteria is a commitment to respect biodiversity and ecosystems, and to mitigate climate change. Other supply chain operators and consumers are often unaware of this commitment and its related costs. Due to their contacts with upstream suppliers and downstream consumers, large-scale retailers can help to raise awareness of agroecology.

Indeed, the application of agroecological principles in the food chain, namely a systematic and unified approach that promotes closed cycles and local knowledge, as well as combatting social inequalities and ensuring employment, should be supported by all economic operators.

Supply chain social responsibility, which is needed to produce "healthy, good-quality and sustainable" food, must entail the correct employment of labour in all phases of the process, in line with the social conditionality inherent in the new Common Agricultural Policy. Corporate responsibility may be implemented through special forms of certification, including via collective or certification to lower the related social and environmental costs, which should be made "visible" to consumers through specific information campaigns.

Optimise the resources and organisation of health services, mitigate the impact of the climate crisis on health, and combat mental illness, addiction and family and social violence

If Italy is to make significant progress towards achievement of Goal 3 of the 2030 Agenda, three areas require "transformative" interventions: strengthening of healthcare services and resources, as well as public-private cooperation, with special attention paid to the private social sector; initiatives to mitigate the impacts of climate change on health and the deterioration of ecosystems, from a "One Health" perspective; and boosting of measures to treat mental illness, with particular attention paid to preventing addiction and combating family and social violence.

STRENGTHEN HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND RE-SOURCES, AND IMPROVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOR-DINATION

The critical issues related to the Italian healthcare system reported above highlight the need to follow up the crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, by carefully reassessing the organisation of the National Health Service. The ageing population, the increase in chronic diseases, insufficient per capita healthcare expenditure, major healthcare staff shortages, marked regional differences in basic healthcare provision, and the growing amount households spend on private healthcare (€570 per capita in Italy compared to the European average of €470, amounting to 24% of total healthcare spending), are all factors that highlight the healthcare system's current - and above all future - difficulties in guaranteeing prompt and universal access to healthcare, as well as the requisite quality¹⁷.

The NRRP and the PNC (Complementary National Plan) offer a unique opportunity to relaunch and develop the healthcare system, despite concerns about the feasibility of the objectives and the amount of funds envisaged, although additional investment in prevention, healthcare technologies and long-term care should be included, which would bring Italy up to par with other advanced countries.

In addition to increasing resources, including human ones, coordination between public and private services needs to be significantly improved. Private services have grown over time, meeting the demand for healthcare that is not covered by the public sector, but this has happened without adequate planning and allocation of responsibilities, in terms of financing services (co-payments, private practice in hospitals, loans, insurance, out-of-pocket expenses), as well as managing services (public, free healthcare, accredited private).

Therefore, a critical analysis of the public-private relationship in healthcare should be urgently undertaken, regarding the tasks and responsibilities of the various functions (coordination and assessment, service production and management, participation and subsidiarity) with a view to achieving non-overlapping horizontal and vertical integration, and, in both the public and the private sectors, moving beyond the current waiting list management procedures based on the costs patients incur for services, to be replaced by an appropriate priority and clinical urgency criterion, as well as enhancement of the private social segment and life communities for the promotion of healthcare, in accordance with the healthy city and community medicine model.

STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS TO MITIGATE ENVIRON-MENTAL IMPACTS ON HEALTH AND PREPARE FOR THE EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH-CARE DISASTERS FROM A "ONE HEALTH" PER-SPECTIVE

The pandemic has dramatically highlighted that, far from merely representing a danger for less developed countries, infectious and communicable diseases also generate critical hygiene and public health conditions for populations with high levels of economic, social, and healthcare development. The close interconnection between the state of health of ecosystems and human and animal health is amply demonstrated by the emergence of new zoonotic diseases namely infectious diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans - whose proliferation is undoubtedly facilitated by deforestation and the destruction of natural habitats, as well as new diseases caused by frozen bacteria and viruses released from melting glaciers and permafrost. According to estimates by the WHO¹⁸, between 2030 and 2050 climate change could cause 250,000 excess deaths every year, with health-related costs of two to four billion dollars per year by 2030¹⁹, and greater exposure for the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, children, the chronically ill, the poor, workers).

In order to adequately address these risks, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive strategy for safeguarding health, the environment and climate that's based on a multi-sectoral approach, with a view to ensuring safe and accessible environments in accordance with the principles of equity and sustainability.

ASviS has stressed the central importance of the principle of "health in all policies"20, whereby, before adopting a policy or intervention, decisionmakers from various sectors jointly assess health, sustainability and equity issues. In light of the now extensive evidence on the health risks associated with environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss, and taking into account the manifest acceleration of the climate crisis, it is deemed vital to concentrate substantial efforts on putting the multisectoral and integrated approach proposed by the One Health paradigm into practice, as well as creating an appropriate governance model to fully implement it. Specifically, a monitoring strategy should be urgently drawn up, which, taking into account international guidelines, measures the risk factors for human health resulting from greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss and the climate crisis.

COMBAT MENTAL ILLNESS, PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES, AND PREVENT ADDICTION AND FAMILY AND SOCIAL VIOLENCE

In the integrated and holistic vision of the 2030 Agenda, Goal 3 sets out a view of health that also includes the more complex concept of "psychophysical wellbeing", as health cannot be separated from its fundamental social and economic determinants, and therefore not take into account people's psychological wellbeing. Unfortunately, the vulnerabilities exacerbated by the pandemic and the related economic and social crisis strongly impacted the psychological and emotional component of health, which was especially evident among young people.

Mental illness and the abuse of psychotropic substances, which are closely interlinked but aren't the main causes of death, have led to a major social emergency and are on the increase. Even before the pandemic, a significant increase (in absolute and percentage terms) had already been seen in deaths caused by psychological and behavioural disorders, which rose from 13,915 in 2008 to 24,252 in 2017. Provisional data for the post-Covid phase show significant increases in risk factors, including: social distancing and increased isolation and loneliness; alcohol consumption; domestic violence; restriction of personal freedoms; fear of contagion; stress and burnout experienced by doctors and healthcare workers; the infodemic; a reduction in services and specialised staff to prevent and treat mental illness and suicide; the economic crisis and the consequent increase in unemployment and precarity²¹. Other clinical indications, which put mental health at great risk, include: early manifestation of eating disorders in prepubertal and pubertal age groups; the onset of psychotic crises, resulting in substance abuse and psychotic delusions; the crisis of the institution of the family, which is exacerbated by the decline in marriage; the worrying downturn in the birth rate; the increase in early school leaving and the rise in attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders at school; and the concern, fear and chronic anxiety about the environmental fate of our planet (eco-anxiety).

All these signs see Italy embroiled in an issue in which mental health, especially regarding young people and adolescents, is at the top of the agenda. And the initiatives undertaken so far to deal with this alarming scenario are insufficient. A significant reinforcement of psychiatric and neuropsychiatric resources and staff is vitally needed, especially in centres for minors and in specialised local hospital facilities. To cope with the substantial increase in demand, counselling centres should also be set up in schools, including psychiatric experts among the staff.

PROMOTE PUBLIC EUROPEAN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VACCINES AND MEDICINES

The report on the lessons learned from the pandemic, approved by the European Parliament in July 2023, invites Member States and the Commission to work on the creation of European public infrastructure for the development of vaccines and medicines, which marks an important step

towards health as a common good. Taking the report into account, European legislation on medicines and relations with pharmaceutical companies should be reviewed, so that in the future, given a possible financial risk related to the production of vaccines that would primarily be borne by taxpayers, as was the case with the Covid-19 pandemic, research should be geared towards the priorities of safeguarding health as a public good²². A common biomedical research infrastructure for the autonomous development of new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and medical technologies would enable use of the excellent capacities available in Europe in universities, non-profit institutes and innovative companies, on the basis of transparent contracts and without patent exclusivity, and also to promote access to the development of new solutions in this field in developing countries.

Improve the quality of learning, combat early school leaving, ensure inclusion, strengthen childcare services, and provide education for sustainable development and global citizenship

To ensure full compliance with the 2030 Agenda commitments undertaken regarding education, efforts must be made to accelerate the actions aimed at overcoming issues related to the education system, which has become even more pressing given the events that have occurred in the last three years. Indeed, although it did not create any new ones, the pandemic has exacerbated many critical issues in schools. The quality and progress of learning have suffered, with substantial losses that must be made up for as soon as possible. To achieve the goal of quality education, efforts should be particularly focused on certain conditions to improve the educational experience for everyone, by combating the current inequalities and educational disparities between the various socioeconomic groups and between regions.

IMPROVE LEARNING, STRENGTHEN THE FIGHT AGAINST EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND BOOST INCLUSION

The EU's goal to bring down the explicit school dropout rate to below 9% can also be achieved in Italy, which must reduce its current level by 2.5 percentage points. Six northern regions are already below the 9% threshold, so efforts should be concentrated on the remaining pockets, which are primarily urban, located in the north and the centre of the country, but especially in southern Italy, where values of 13.8% for the continental regions, and 17.9% for the islands, have been registered. Another element to be taken into account is the fact that foreign pupils drop out of middle and high school three times more frequently than Italians do, with differences noted among second-generation pupils who generally speak Italian fluently²³.

Also to be reduced is the upward trend, which was particularly sharp during and after the pandemic in "implicit" early school leaving, namely the proportion of students who, despite completing their schooling, have failed to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills (INVALSI level 3) for their future life. This phenomenon, which particularly af-

fects the disadvantaged, and is characterised by enormous regional differences, is one of the most serious educational emergencies that Italy is currently facing²⁴.

The shortcomings registered in tests carried out by the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI) echo those regarding the professional skills needed to align the future workforce with labour market requirements. Training is particularly lacking with regard to: digital, digital marketing, IT and programming skills; technical knowledge in the field of artificial intelligence and machine learning; innovation and the introduction of new environmental sustainability technologies; and the ability to use special production equipment and tools²⁵.

Italy allocates only 4.1% of GDP to education, a figure which is far from sufficient. But it is not simply a question of financial resources. The vulnerabilities of the education system and of the younger generations call for a joint commitment and renewed attention from the country as a whole, starting with collective responsibility for the educational process that should make us reflect on commitment and support, including financial support, for the Italian school system and available cultural, economic and technological resources.

It is a matter of priority to make up for delays in learning and improve its level, by significantly increasing the national percentage of students who achieve a sufficient level, especially by decreasing regional disparities and the disadvantage experienced by the most vulnerable. Implementation of the basic principle of the 2030 Agenda "leave no one behind" is not just a means for promoting equity, but also the key driver for the overall improvement of the country.

The strategies, resources and school policy initiatives aimed at moving in this direction should concentrate on: teacher training, educational innovation and new learning environments. The NRRP provides for the reform of teacher training and recruitment in secondary schools. In its original form, Law 79/2022 contains positive elements, such as the central importance of educational preparation - theoretical and practical, via general and disciplinary training experiences - together with teacher training on psycho-pedagogy and special educational needs. However, we deem it important to exer-

cise critical control over how the reform proposals and guidelines will be implemented. As already pointed out in the 2022 ASviS Report, the law is disappointing insofar as it lacks a teaching career path in the public school system that might attract the best young graduates. If the reform were to be "watered down" for reasons of political expediency or resistance from the universities that would be responsible for delivering the training, a vital opportunity would be lost

Good training of new teachers, together with compulsory refresher courses for those already in service, is the way to promote the spread of innovative teaching methods alongside traditional transmissive lessons. Thanks also to a focus on personalisation and inclusion, the new teaching approaches should encourage greater student participation and autonomy as they build their own knowledge and discover their own inclinations. A key factor in this regard is educational guidance, especially in middle and high schools.

Good quality teaching is best achieved in more welcoming, flexible, sustainable, inclusive and **open buildings**. Following on from the first steps taken in 2015 and various subsequent investments, the NRRP provides substantial resources for the construction, modernisation, renovation and securing of schools, including pre-school facilities for infants. In addition to the specific funds earmarked for dining halls and gymnasiums, € 2.1 billion has been allocated to turn classrooms and laboratories into innovative, connected, digital learning environments. We believe that these initiatives should be carried out in accordance with a coherent, nationwide policy, as recommended in the Ministry's 2022 "Guidelines for Learning Environments", which incorporate safety, energy and environmental sustainability, and educational innovation reguirements, so that as well as being educational venues, schools may become centres for social activities and environmental protection.

Issues of inclusion have been referred to several times. Currently, inclusive practices in Italy aren't in good shape, and it is no longer possible to live off the excellence of the principles that have guided them for almost 50 years. The growing number of students with disabilities and, more generally, of those recognised as having special educational needs, can no longer be managed merely by increasing the number of sup-

porting teachers, as the quality of their training is not guaranteed. More than half of the approximately 200,000 serving teachers have no specific training (and are on fixed-term contracts), which is compounded by the difficulties universities have in providing it, combined with a lack of incentives to undertake training, especially where the need is greatest. Moreover, proper inclusive practice that caters to all special educational needs must be the responsibility of all the teachers of a class.

In this context, the preparation and trialling of new intervention models in the various local areas could be extremely useful. Paying attention to the educational needs of the children and young people who attend schools, which must be linked to the needs of families and the local area, calls for new forms of teaching that focus more closely on the specific characteristics of schools and communities. To overcome inequalities and offer pathways and environments that can best support learners' growth and education paths, while facilitating teachers' work and expanding available resources to support teaching, it will be vitally important to implement community agreements and/or school networks, which, with schools as their centre, will be included in longterm programmes that, through planning, boost integration between curricular and extracurricular activities.

ENHANCE CHILDCARE SERVICES

Reducing inequalities, starting with educational ones, means taking early action to counter the factors that generate and aggravate them. This entails guaranteeing access to quality education, from an early age, by investing in pre-school services. To improve the highly unsatisfactory conditions in which they currently operate in Italy, it is first of all necessary to ensure - including with additional resources - that NRRP investment in crèches and pre-school services remains a priority on the Government's agenda, including full implementation of all planned projects, in time to achieve the essential performance level of taking charge of at least 33% of children between 0 and 2 years of age in each municipality by 2026, and then reach 45% coverage by 2030, as envisaged by the Barcelona objectives, thereby overcoming regional service provision disparities.

It is also vital to support local authorities in the management of funds, co-planning and the activation of services, in synergy with the community providing education, whilst ensuring that municipalities receive adequate funds to cover the annual running costs of the services. To this end, a data collection system should also be envisaged for active pre-school services, which monitors access, use, supply and quality of the services for minors and their families.

Last but not least, investment should be made in training the professionals needed to run the new crèches, by allocating resources in each region to increase the capacity of universities to accommodate the growing number of enrolments in degree courses to qualify for the profession of educator for pre-school services, as envisaged by Draft Law 2443 of 2017. This could cover current and future demand for these professionals, which is estimated to be around 40,000 educators, primarily in southern Italy, whilst ensuring a fully coherent educational approach for infants from 0-6 years of age.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Since 2022, the "knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development" envisaged in Target 4.7 have been systematised in the European framework GreenComp, which is a valuable reference for the next steps to be taken, including with regard to education policy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)²⁶. In this field, the two future priorities to be invested in are the whole school approach and teacher training.

As set out in the Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability (2022) from the Council of the European Union, sustainability should be experienced in all aspects of school life, including: teacher training on relations with local communities, student participation in the organisation of learning environments, curriculum preparation and consumption patterns. Therefore, schools should be open to the various actors in the community, and engage them in activities aimed at pursuing objectives related to the "sustainability of educational institutions": combating early school leaving and inequalities while respecting differences; harmonious relations with the local areas and the environment; meaningful

learning to understand today's world; the wellbeing of teachers and students; and citizenship, participation and guidance.

Obviously, if this approach is to be effective teacher training must be oriented in this direction, partly to ensure that teachers have access to the most up-to-date scientific content in the area of formal education. This perspective entails: definition and introduction of in-service teacher training on skills to teach sustainability and global citizenship; introduction of ESD and GCED topics among the priorities recommended by the Advanced Training School for the continuous training of in-service teachers; inclusion of at least six university training credits, to be partly distributed among traineeship activities, regarding ESD and GCED topics within university education to qualify future secondary school teachers.

In the field of university education, the activation of a significant number of degree courses (first and second level) geared towards the various aspects of sustainable development are to be noted. Given the greater number of courses, efforts should be made to understand if and how they're effective, and whether they respond to the requirements of businesses and public authorities. Therefore, it is important for universities and the National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR) to carry out periodic quality analyses of the courses offered and of the professional profiles of the students who have completed training courses, partly to enable adaptation of the latter to any qualitative and quantitative changes in demand.

Increase women's employment, ensure care work services and sharing, and prevent and combat all forms of discrimination

In order to significantly reduce gender inequalities in Italy over the next seven years, we must first address two aspects that may be seen as "enabling conditions" for embarking on a real path towards equality: combating gender stereotypes, starting with language, with the aim of debunking obsolete mechanisms that afflict women and society; and integration of a substantial number of able and excellent women in senior positions in public, private and third sector companies and institutions, namely across all the structures that make up society.

Only a radical cultural change - throughout society, politics and the economy - will enable us to catch up with other European countries in the areas where Italy lags behind. Shedding the stereotypes that still influence our society and the lives of so many women and men in our country calls for the promotion of "new" educational approaches, starting with what's taught in school, in order to help boys to adopt proper attitudes towards girls, and then later towards women, via a host of tools (readings, lectures, etc.) that also educate young people about their future lives as a couple taking care of and bringing up children.

Similarly, the growing number of women in decision-making settings facilitates the spread of a culture of equality, and the adoption of policies and tools that enhance equality. Measures that can be applied to overcome the strong imbalances that prevail in Italy include: increasing women's presence on the boards of directors and boards of statutory auditors of listed companies and public subsidiaries; fully applying the rules laid down in national and local electoral laws in order to ensure as much balance as possible in the selection of candidates for elections; and identifying tools to achieve gender equality in senior positions in institutions where no specific regulations exist (such as in the judiciary and in public administration).

INCREASE WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Only promotion of the increase and qualification of women's work will enable women to make in-

dependent choices and give them the tools to prevent and combat violence, while also helping Italy to achieve its development goals. Consequently, the adoption of an integrated and systemic plan to significantly increase women's employment by 2030 should be considered as a priority for Italy, in line with objectives set at the European Social Summit held in Porto in 2021.

The NRRP envisages initiatives to support women's employment (gender certification, women's entrepreneurship fund), but, to date, almost 70% of the NRRP and PNC (Complementary National Plan) procurements have included a complete waiver of the clause that obliges companies winning tenders to employ at least 30% of young people under 36 and women. Therefore, a change of course is needed to avert the risk that the substantial resources invested widen rather than narrow gender and generational gaps.

Beyond the NRRP, a great deal still needs to be done in order to combat precariousness and involuntary part-time employment of women, to expand women's employment via a robust gender procurement mechanism, to develop women's technical and scientific skills, and also to seize the opportunities offered by digital transition processes. Obviously, given the caring role that women play, it is necessary to: increase the public and private offering of welfare services, starting with social and educational services for children, provide incentives for companies to agree contracts that strengthen neighbourhood welfare provision; concretely promote real equality in care activities, particularly with regard to children, via the introduction of fully paid, meaningful paternity leave that is not just symbolic; and specifically promote effective work-life balance policies in companies.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SERVICES AND ENCOURAGE SHARING OF CARE DUTIES

This issue, which is also relevant for addressing Italy's increasingly significant decline in the birth rate is closely linked to the first. Action is needed regarding both employed and self-employed women, in order to prevent care duties from continuing to be the main obstacle to permanent employment²⁷. This burden is largely due, especially in southern Italy, to a lack of so-

cial welfare facilities, whether public or provided by the private social sector, that are able to ensure adequate welfare services for families, elderly people who are disabled, and infants in nurseries and kindergartens²⁸. Moreover, the issue of caring for sick, disabled or elderly family members in need of assistance will become increasingly widespread with the ageing of the population.

These issues contribute to generating horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, and consequently, wage and pension inequality. While caring for family members can allow more flexibility in accessing pensions, those who opt to do this should not be penalised, and therefore contribution thresholds in line with women's circumstances should be envisaged.

It is also important to promote recognition and redistribution in terms of sharing care roles between male and female workers, as well as quantifying the economic value of care and guaranteeing its dignity. Particular attention should also be paid to female migrant workers, who were dramatically affected during and after the lockdown. They work in the fields picking fruit and vegetables and help out significantly with care work in our families, but often experience difficult conditions, which are sometimes "all-embracing" as well as segregating.

With regard to sharing and work-life balance, the role of collective bargaining (at corporate and local level) should be strengthened. In recent years, this has helped to meet the needs of many workers, especially during the trial phase in 2017, when, thanks to direct public incentives, highly satisfactory results were achieved. This area also includes the issue of boosting compulsory paternity leave and extending it to the public sector, together with an appropriate adjustment of the level ofcompensation for parental leave.

Safeguarding parenting is an issue that is increasingly often brought to the attention of companies, and is also one of the aspects that organisations wishing to obtain **gender equality certification** need to work on. Indeed, from 1 January 2023, under Italian legislation male and female employees may be granted an additional month of optional paid leave remunerated at 80% of their normal salary during the first six years of a child's life.

PREVENT AND COMBAT ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

As well as "physical" violence, which targets the physical health of another human being and consists of aggression towards a person or things with whom the aggressor has an emotional or need-based bond, many other forms of violence exist that are combined and rarely exercised individually.

For example, the term "psychological" violence is used when the act tends to undermine a person's self-esteem and offends their dignity, isolates them from others, including family members, and leads to a constant state of anxiety and fear, whereas the term "social" violence is used when it is driven by various motivations such as war and racial hatred. Sexual acts against a victim's will, obtained by force or blackmail, rape, abuse, sexual harassment and threats, including trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, as well as sexual and other types of exploitation, are defined as "sexual" violence.

Various regulations and initiatives have been adopted regarding all these aspects, which need to be rigorously applied and supported via adequate funding. But there are other forms of violence, which sometimes occur together, that warrant greater attention. These include: economic violence, which encompasses a series of controlling and monitoring behaviours that restrict women's freedom by keeping them under the constant threat of being denied the possibility of having a job, or having a personal financial income, or being able to use it as they so wish; violence in the world of work, in schools, in social media and in sport, which requires greater prevention and repression efforts, including via regulatory changes; and violence against disabled women, which urgently requires implementation of remedial measures, starting with the measurement of its extent via statistics related to such violence, as provided for in Law No. 53/2022.

Put the protection and restoration of nature at the centre of policies, respect international agreements, and ensure the safeguarding and sustainable management of ecosystems

The COP 15 agreement of the Kunming-Montreal Convention on Biological Diversity adopts a framework of targets to be achieved by 2030 as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which recognises that achievement of the SDGs is needed if the targets of the biodiversity agreement are to be successfully met. Indeed, in 2019 the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services from the Intergovermental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services²⁹ explicitly called for a radical systemic change in the technological, economic and social factors that drive development, without which, already by the 2030 deadline, the degradation of biodiversity and ecosystems would jeopardise the achievement of the SDGs, especially the ones related to poverty, hunger, health, water resources and the functioning of cities.

In order to ensure the pursuit of the Paris Agreement climate objectives, the IPCC³⁰ states that 30-50% of the planet's ecosystems must be conserved, and the remaining ecosystems sustainably managed. Also in accordance with the recent constitutional amendments, efforts should be made to ensure that this will be the first generation able "to leave Italy's natural systems and biodiversity in a better state than the one they inherited".

DRAW UP AN INTEGRATED PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF NATURE

Firstly, the number of territorial and marine ecosystems earmarked for intervention should be extended, to be implemented by providing for their restoration or free natural evolution in accordance with an integrated plan for nature restoration and conservation and connection of natural areas, which would increase their resilience to climate change. The plan should take a systemic approach to the issue, which goes beyond the emergency approach that has characterised interventions to date, and should be conceived as a "major public conservation and restoration project", which integrates the minimum protection targets of the European Biodiver-

sity Strategy and the Nature Restoration Plan envisaged in the proposal for a European regulation currently under discussion.

Given the situation in Italy, the terrestrial and marine areas to be restored should include at least 30% of the degraded areas, in line with Target 1 of COP15, thereby going beyond the 20% required by the European Regulation on nature restoration. In identifying and planning interventions, priority should be given to climate change adaptation measures that include nature-based solutions, such as reforestation projects and the renaturation of river courses.

Protection and restoration initiatives should be able to provide a synergetic and coordinated response to a vast array of European directives and strategies including: the Water Framework Directive, 2000/60/EC; the Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks, 2007/60/EC; the EU Soil Strategy; the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030; the Forestry Strategy; the Bioeconomy Strategy; the Regulation on the geological storage of carbon; and strategic measures set out in the European Commission Communication on sustainable carbon cycles, which focus on actions to curb soil degradation and hydrogeological instability, as well as river restoration, taking into account mapping of the areas at highest risk and the dynamics induced by climate change.

The Plan should capitalise on the knowledge that emerged from the Red List of Italian Ecosystems project, in order to identify protection and restoration measures for the ecosystems most at risk, as well as for forest fire protection within the framework of the forestry strategy. In this regard, it should be noted that forest fires, especially large ones, have already become a Europe-wide and national emergency, with many negative repercussions, including emissions into the atmosphere during a fire, the subsequent reduced capacity of fire-ravaged ecosystems to store CO2 in the soil and topsoil, and the inevitable loss of biodiversity. While forest fires appear to be manageable in some areas of the country, in other areas a great deal still needs to be done, especially with regard to social awareness and organisational and preventive aspects.

The Plan for 2030 should also include the decontamination and environmental reclamation of contaminated areas, and elimination of the related risks for ecosystems, water (including groundwater) and human health.

With regard to marine ecosystems, the recommendations of the Natural Capital Committee and the related objectives should be borne in mind, including: restoration of 30% of seagrass beds along the Italian coastline by 2030; restoration of 50% of the white coral colonies damaged by overfishing by 2030; doubling the surface area of algal forests along the Italian coastline by 2030; and imposition of a five-year moratorium on red coral fishing combined with starting up coral farms, in order to make red coral harvesting sustainable and prevent the loss of benefits associated with the regression of coastal ecosystems.

The Plan should also take into account the 2014 European Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning (which Italy has failed to comply with), the implementation of which is vital for ensuring that the expansion of the multifunctionality of the socalled "blue economy" (including the future expansion of offshore renewable energy production) is in line with the goal of conserving and restoring marine resources, whose value as an ecosystem should be recognised as a primary and essential economic resource.

Scientific activities related to this topic should also be boosted, within the framework of the UN Decade of Ocean Science, in order to ensure the availability of research expertise and resources commensurate with the importance of marine ecosystems for Italy. The definition of appropriate monitoring systems to ensure the effectiveness of protection and restoration actions will be crucial.

ENSURE THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ECOSYSTEMS PURSUANT TO THE NEW ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONSTITUTION

In compliance with the principle of not harming the environment introduced by the amendment of Articles 9 and 41 of the Constitution, unprotected areas should in any event be sustainably managed, in line with the European principle of Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) with regard to all public and private economic activities. For example, agricultural production must adhere to the principles of the European Common Agricultural Policy, by focusing on agroecological practices and innovative approaches that preserve ecosystem services in the long term, as set out in Target 10 of COP15, which will require methodical and widespread training of farming sector operators.

In compliance with the amendment to Article 41 of the Constitution, in any urban planning or land use transformation action the land take hierarchy included in the European Soil Strategy should be applied, taking into account the necessary climate change adaptation and nature restoration measures. The reduction of land consumption is already a mandatory requirement in many parts of the country, especially in the most urbanised and industrialised areas, which, with the increases in flooding, are already highly aware of the effects of environmentally unsustainable urban policies that were implemented in the past. Finally, it should be pointed out that land consumption has negative effects on production and the water cycle. While some regions have introduced specific measures in in regional legislative instruments, the lack of national framework legislation is being increasingly felt, as was also highlighted by the Court of Auditors in Resolution 17/2019/G66 of 31 October 2019. Irrigation, industrial and civil use of water should take into account the DNSH principle and be incorporated in the final environmental costs, as required by the Water Framework Directive and in application of Ministerial Decree 39 of 24 February 2015, which includes minimum safeguarding measures to protect the right to water and its affordability. In this regard, the Regulatory Authority for Energy Networks and the Environment (ARERA) has already stipulated that the cost of interventions to restore natural capital and regenerate water resources may be covered by water tariffs, which has led to renewed awareness of the role that water services can play in mitigating the consequences of climate change and in adaptation strategies³¹. Moreover, for all use sectors, the regions should ensure that the "polluter/user pays" principle is applied, and that the environmental costs are internalised when public water user charges are set, in line with the general principles recently approved at national level³². The regional implementation of water pricing policies that incentivise the efficient use of water resources should also be improved, thereby validating the efforts made over the years to improve water accounting in the various use sectors, including irrigation.

The new sustainability reporting regulations and the upcoming European regulations on due diligence for companies will contribute to the definition of the regulatory framework that should integrate the principles of Article 41 of the Constitution with Target15 of COP15, with regard to companies and financial institutions. While DNSH and the European Taxonomy of sustainable activities will serve as references in this field, Italy should assess the need to introduce even more virtuous measures if required to comply with the constitutional provisions, and envisage measures to accompany companies and workers in the transition towards the circular economy and the bioeconomy, and with regard to the protection and regeneration of biodiversity, partly with a view to reducing dependence on overseas sources of strategic raw materials. To this end, working groups should be set up with the banking and financial system, the production system, and the scientific community in order to facilitate the development of strategies and the definition of financial indicators related to the protection of natural capital and biodiversity.

As Target 16 of COP15 points out, if citizens are to be in a position to make sustainable consumption choices, then the relevant information must be made available to them. Useful information in this regard is provided by the European regulatory framework on environmental product declarations, which takes into account Target 12.6 of the 2030 Agenda ("by 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature").

INVEST IN THE PREVENTION OF HYDROGEOLOG-ICAL INSTABILITY

The very serious floods that affected Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany and Marche in May 2023, and those affecting Marche and Ischia in 2022, are examples of disastrous events caused by hydrogeological instability in Italy. Such events are occurring more frequently due to climate change, and experts agree that the Mediterranean region is one of the areas of the world most exposed to this phenomenon.

As is well known, Italy is a high-risk country due to its morphology. The 2021 ISPRA Report pointed out that 93.9% of Italian municipalities (7,423) are at risk from landslides (affecting 1.3 million people), floods (affecting 6.8 million people) and/or coastal erosion. This has been accompanied by erroneous human actions, starting with the intense urbanisation that has often occupied areas prone

to flooding and landslides, without any attention being paid to the potential risk. Italy has spent a great deal on repairing damage and very little on prevention (one tenth of the amount spent on the former). Specifically, in the period 2013-2019, in addition to the victims and the costs incurred by private individuals, approximately €20 billion was spent on emergency interventions and approximately €2 billion on prevention.

The conclusions to be drawn from this are clear: unfortunately catastrophic events are bound to recur in Italy, especially from the perspective of climate change. Postponing interventions and the business-as-usual approach only aggravate the situation. The spending trend must be reversed, by committing more resources to prevention, in order to limit damage and costs in terms of human lives and reconstruction. The resolution of the Court of Auditors in October 2021, which had already highlighted the difficulties entailed by many aspects of the 2019 ProteggItalia (Protect Italy) Plan, was followed by various initiatives, including reform of the procedures for simplifying and accelerating the implementation of the initiatives (coordination by the Interministerial Committee for Ecological Transition - CITE, new funding criteria, etc.) contained in the NRRP.

From the overall review of hydrogeological instability policies that ASviS is conducting, three relevant proposals have emerged, which should be implemented with the utmost urgency:

- Adoption of a "transformative resilience" approach to reconstruction. The model underpinning Next Generation EU, which involves not going back to square one but rather taking advantage of the setback in order to make a leap forward on the path to sustainable development, is the guiding concept to be adopted for "reconstructive" interventions after disasters. Reconstruction should be coordinated via the Flood Risk Management Plans (PGRA) adopted by district river basin authorities in 2021, and with short -, medium - and longterm local planning, as provided for in Article 2 of the Agreement between the Special Commissioner for Reconstruction and the Po River District Basin Authority of 7 July 2023;
- Urgent adaptation of Hydrogeological Assets Plans, which should take precedence over municipal town planning. In order to return land areas to rivers and prevent construction in areas prone to flooding, district basin authori-

ties should be provided with the necessary financial and human resources to enable adaption of the PAIs to the 2021 PGRA within 12 months. An amendment to the 2006 Environment Code should be approved that obliges municipalities to incorporate the provisions of the new PAIs in their urban planning within the following 12 months, with their automatic entry into force in the event of failure to do so;

Prompt finalisation and approval of the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NACCP), including provision of adequate financial resources for its implementation.

ACQUIRE NEW STATISTICS AND KNOWLEDGE TOOLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY

Target 15.9 of the 2030 Agenda calls for integration, by 2020, "of ecosystems and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes and poverty reduction strategies, and accounts". A great deal still needs to be done with regard to these aspects, despite the progress made at international and European level. Indeed, specific monitoring and assessment of public policies from a natural capital perspective needs to be implemented, using data provided by the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA EA), regarding which the international statistical community has recently consolidated the methodological basis³³.

In Italy, funding should be provided to the National Statistical System for necessary investment in environmental accounting that can no longer be postponed, ranging from the development of elementary databases to the processing of accounts. A significant step in this regard is the conversion of the Farm Accountancy Data Network into the Farm Sustainability Data Network, aimed at gathering more data on the environmental and social sustainability of farms.

Environmental accounting should also integrate data from sustainability reporting and its related indicators, in order to achieve a transparent and effective assessment of the economic system's use of natural resources, and a reallocation of public and private funding to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of natural capital, via the adoption of regulatory, fiscal and market solutions.

Maximise renewable electricity production and make the PNIEC more ambitious

Beyond the technical aspects, the ecological transition calls for a shared vision, participation by all components of society and common objectives, all of which arouse controversy within Italian society. While the decarbonisation of a single country would be futile in the fight against climate change unless large countries (such as China, India and the USA) moved seriously in this direction, Italy (accounting for 2% of global emissions) and the EU (approximately 10% of global emissions) can play a vital role in accelerating the process and developing a renewable, circular and inclusive economy, with a view to achieving the currently distant prospect of energy and technological independence and drive markets along that path.

In all international negotiating fora (UN General Assembly, COP, G7, G20, etc.) Italy has always supported the most advanced and courageous positions, together with the European Union and other countries from the Global North. Although Italy's presence has rarely stood out for its originality and leadership, emerging and developing countries deem us to be a responsible and forward-looking nation. However, we now need to accelerate implementation of the commitments that Italy has helped to define at international level, including and above all with regard to the climate issue.

The 2030 Agenda states that in order to integrate measures to combat climate change into national policies, strategies and plans, it is necessary to enhance education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity to concretely address the issue. This requires the construction of a common vision, based on a minimum foundation of shared and scientifically based beliefs, which recognises that climate change is taking place, is man-made, and must be halted.

MAXIMISE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION

In 2022, 70% of the world's electricity was produced from non-renewable sources, and 61% from fossil fuels that alter the climate and warm up our planet. Therefore, it is vital and urgent to launch a campaign of accelerated development of renewable energy sources that matches the commitments undertaken at international and European

level. In this scenario, electricity is destined to account for a growing share of consumption as the fight against climate change progresses, because the yield from electricity is unparalleled and because electricity can be generated without producing CO2. Against this backdrop, the decision to prolong the key role played by natural gas in electricity production will take Italy off the path set out by the European Union and international agreements, without taking into account that gas has high and extremely volatile prices, as the last two years have shown, which is also partly due to growing demand from emerging countries.

Italian industry says it is ready to go beyond doubling electricity from Renewable Energy Sources (RES) by 2030, with the installation of 8-10 GW of new capacity each year and all the necessary storage. With the help of the PNNR, the reshoring of value chains is being promoted, including the production of solar panels and batteries. The process of renewable electrification between now and 2050 is possible, sustainable and safe, and can also be managed on the basis of social self-production, welfare and employment, in accordance with fairness and justice criteria, and supported by current experiences in Italy and overseas, which demonstrate the economic and employment advantages of guided transformations, in keeping with workers' rights, and also the benefits to the industrial and commercial system. The smart electricity grid of the future, supported by digital and artificial intelligence technologies, will be a distant cousin of today's grid, thanks to a system based on renewables, self-consumption, energy storage and consumption efficiency in terms of both quantity and programmed use procedures. Renewable energy communities, developed on a solidarity basis, provide a great democratic and participatory opportunity to combat energy poverty.

The use of waste to produce energy can also play a significant role. Italy is already at the forefront of waste recycling - 55% compared to the European average of 48% - partly thanks to the enlightened policies implemented at the turn of the century. In Italy in 2021, 73% of collected packaging was recycled, which goes beyond the set European target of 65% by 2025. To strengthen this position, the Italian NRRP has earmarked approximately €2.1 billion for the construction of recycling and waste sorting facilities. In addition, in 2021, thanks to waste transformation, Italy recov-

ered 285 tonnes of steel (equivalent to 739 Frecciarossa trains), 16 tonnes of aluminium (equivalent to 1.5 billion cans) and 1.8 tonnes of glass (equivalent to 5 billion wine bottles).

While the reuse of materials for the production of electricity production looks set to grow, nuclear fission will be unable to meet the needs of the transition within the timeframe envisaged by the Paris Agreement and the commitments made at EU level, without forgetting that heavy elements like uranium and thorium are unavailable in Italy. Therefore, we should continue to invest in hydrogen fusion, favouring European tokamak technology rather than North American lasers. Moreover, any decision to opt for fusion would be incompatible with the decarbonisation by 2050 timeframe. With a view to bringing about the energy transition, Italy should invest in boosting Africa's role in the production of solar energy and hydrogen, perhaps by setting up a pilot project in Sardinia via an initiative similar to the Spanish-French-German initiative regarding the European hydrogen pipeline.

STRENGTHEN AND APPROVE THE INTEGRATED NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLAN (PNIEC) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

As described on page 106, at the end of June the Government sent the draft PNIEC to the European Commission, in order to open discussions with the Commission, economic operators and civil society, and achieve its final approval by June 2024. ASviS produced a policy brief³⁴, including a series of recommendations, ahead of the preparation of the draft Plan. During the summer, an analysis of the official text was carried out, which revealed significant weak points that need to be corrected before the final document is drawn up, including:

The PNIEC, which never mentions the definition of an Italian climate law, doesn't comply with the objectives of the Green Deal and subsequent initiatives, up to the RePowerEU plan. Furthermore, it is extremely vague with regard to specific funding objectives, although it does point out that the European targets have been revised upwards, via the REPowerEU plan and the Fit-for-55 package, with figures deemed to be very ambitious as far as Italy is concerned, in part due to our country's starting point;

THE IMPACTS OF THE FIT FOR 55 PACKAGE ON ITALY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEIZED

In a recent report, the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change (CMCC) analysed the economic and employment effects for Italy that would result from implementation of the measures set out in the European Fit for 55 package, which is aimed at achieving a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, in view of the decarbonisation of the European Union by 2050. The package envisages actions in various economic sectors, including agriculture, transport and construction, with the aim of achieving effective, efficient and fair emission reductions.

An example of this trend is the establishment of an additional trading market for emission certificates, the Emission Trading System 2 (ETS), aimed at road transport and buildings, which are sectors where reducing emissions is particularly problematic, both technically and economically. The aim is to produce the incentives and results that the ETS market has enabled in the sectors related to electricity production and heating, energy-intensive industries and commercial aviation. In particular, ETS 2 envisages mechanisms to reduce potential adverse distributional impacts on households by raising a fund (the Social Climate Fund) that will focus on supporting the most vulnerable segments of the population, and on fostering technological innovation in companies.

Technical assessments conducted by the European Commission, as well as independent studies carried out by various scientific institutes, show that the economic costs of the package have considerable potential for providing win-win solutions, with less dependence on fossil fuels and greater economic growth. This can be achieved if the substantial resources generated by the "carbon price" (emission taxes, an auction and emissions trading allocation mechanism) are in turn used to support the transition. In particular, the expansion of green sectors, the development of renewables and reduced dependence on imported fossil fuels lead to improvements in terms of trade and net growth in production and GDP.

The CMCC report confirms that Italy can reconcile environmental protection and economic development, provided that policies are designed and implemented with shrewd planning, and policy choices are based on solid scientific evidence. In particular, allocating financial resources deriving from ETS 2 to offsetting the higher costs incurred by low-income households and transport sectors would avoid negative repercussions on employment, while in the energy sector, the contraction of the fossil fuel sector could be more than offset by expansion of the more labour-intensive renewable sector. Obviously, on the one hand it is essential to support companies undergoing technological change (and maybe even alteration of their business model), and on the other hand, to intervene in the labour market with training and reskilling courses, as well as with support mechanisms for workers during any transitory periods of unemployment.

The report provides an original analysis of costs and opportunities for Italy. Using a general economic equilibrium model, the CMCC compares various hypotheses related to the use of resources generated by ETS 2, and concludes that allocating resources exclusively to households would lead to a slight decrease in GDP, whereas distributing them across support for households, support for renewables and support for investment in the development of green technologies in energy-intensive sectors would result in a 0.44% increase in GDP compared to the reference scenario in 2030. This would make decarbonised energy available to businesses and large households at a lower cost. On the employment front, this combination of measures would produce around 330,000 additional jobs.

The report also points out that offsetting the energy costs arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine has so far resulted in over €60 billion of fiscal measures, equivalent to 3.5% of GDP, while the EU has spent almost €700 billion, as much as the amount spent on the Next Generation EU economic recovery package. This huge public subsidy for the use of fossil fuels is economically unsustainable and mask the real European energy problem: security of supply. The scenarios envisaged in the report clearly show that a policy of CO2 pricing and reuse of tax revenues for the benefit of businesses, renewables, households and the labour market is the most effective means for simultaneously promoting the energy transition and energy security.

- the topic of the "just transition" is dealt with superficially. It is merely pointed out that the sustainability of the energy system, including in environmental terms, should be pursued with caution whilst paying attention to the economic impacts on consumers, some of whom are affected by poverty that doesn't just regard energy, and who should be protected. But beyond this declaration of principle, it is not specified who should be protected nor how it should be done. Moreover, three pages (including tables) at the end of the document are devoted to analysis of employment issues. This rather superficial treatment of such a serious matter, merely serves to convey a generic and even pessimistic message;
- the Plan aims at a target of 350 TWh from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption by 2030, equivalent to a share of 40.5%, whereas the RepowerEU figure is 42.5%. It then sets a target of 65% for renewable electricity production, which implies far fewer additional installations than the 10 Gw/year proposed by ASviS, which was deemed to be highly feasible by electricity sector operators. Moreover, energy communities, regarding which implementing legislation is still awaited, are repeatedly mentioned without emphasising their social role, and above all without highlighting the need for their wide dissemination;
- information is lacking with regard to surplus renewable electricity for green hydrogen, which is only referred to generically, except for a reminder of the investments included in the NRRP. However, the document does contain numerous references to the need to accelerate Italy's progress towards becoming "an energy generation and transit hub", and proposes initiatives relating to African and other countries where gas would be sourced and then sold on to Europe;
- the PNIEC refers in general terms to the need to ensure compatibility between energy and climate objectives and landscape protection objectives. For example, it is claimed that some impacts can be mitigated by promoting the deployment of solar panels in areas that are built up or otherwise unsuitable for other uses. Unfortunately, such prior deployment is rife with poor examples, due to the obstacles placed by regional and supervisory authorities;

- according to the Plan, consumption should amount to 92.1 Mtoe of final energy and 112.2 Mtoe of primary energy in 2030. Taking into account that the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) provides for flexibility of +2.5% (which brings the targets up to 94.4 and 115 Mtoe respectively), the Italian inertial reference scenario set out in the PNIEC results in final consumption of 109 Mtoe. Consequently, European and PNIEC targets can only be achieved via a substantial expansion of renewables, electrification of consumption (heat pumps, etc.) appropriate consumer and corporate behaviour³⁵. To this end, it is vital to implement a reform of tax incentives that identifies priorities and differentiates incentive levels in terms of their effectiveness in improving energy performance;
- greenhouse gas emissions derive from ETS and ESR (Effort Sharing Regulation) sectors. Only the second group is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, while the former is governed by the Commission via emission trading. With regard to the ETS share, against a European target to cut emissions by 62% compared with their 2005 level by 2030, the PNIEC sets a reduction target of 45% whereas Europe calls for a 55% reduction, and envisages closing the gap through carbon capture and storage, but the Plan doesn't explain how and when this will be achieved;
- despite the policies envisaged, the Plan still falls significantly short of the new target for ESR sectors, as against a reduction of 43.7%, it would not go beyond a reduction of between 35 and 37%;
- the issue of transport is not addressed in a systemic way in the PNIEC, which, thanks to several energy carriers, envisages a significant share of renewables (30.7%) in the total estimated amount of 41.5 Mtoe. The document embraces three approaches: the modal shift towards public transport; reduction of the need of travel, with policies that encourage remote working and reduction of the number of working days with the same number of hours worked; electrification (27% for all sectors) and the promotion of alternative fuels for hard-to-abate mobility. Unfortunately, the Plan doesn't explain how we should go about this. For example, unbeliev-

ably the document doesn't mention phasing out polluting cars by 2035 and lightweight vehicles by 2040, nor is any reference made to the decarbonisation of heavy goods vehicles, regarding which a new European regulation is under discussion;

- the closure of coal-fired power plants is still scheduled for 2025, except for those located in Sardinia, for which no alternative solutions based on renewables have been envisaged. The phase-out of coal will be implemented via, among other things, the construction of additional gas-fuelled thermoelectric units, which would also be needed for the sharp increase in renewables, the development of additional gas interconnection interconnection infrastructure to diversify supplies, and the expansion of regasification capacity together with the related supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG). The Plan thus seems to ignore the fact that Italy already has too many underutilised gas-fired power plants, which also require the capacity market;
- the Plan barely mentions innovation, and pays surprisingly scant attention to smart electricity grids, or storage, with its impressive related industrial sectors, which are shared with transport. The connection of countless distributed users to the grid already takes several years, and the Plan doesn't clarify how it intends to move towards an "all renewable by 2050" scenario, despite the recent assertions of its feasibility by the Gestore dei Servizi Energetici GSE (Energy Service Operator). The target of 42% for hydrogen from renewables for industrial uses is also optimistic;
- the issue of financing the transition is not addressed at all. With regard to environmentally harmful subsidies, no commitment is made to eliminate them, especially regarding relevant items, such as the €1.4 billion allocated to refund excise duty on diesel in order to assist road haulage in 2021, whereas the abolition of environmentally harmful subsidies with minor impact is announced³⁶;
- finally, the issue of participation and transparency in drawing up energy transition policies wasn't addressed in the PNIEC. No method is proposed for engaging local communities, regions and civil society, and no reference is made to public debate, which is now a legal obligation.

It is currently unknown if and when the PNIEC will be presented to business and social organisations, and also to Parliament, nor how the Government intends to address the clear differences of opinion among the political parties on energy and climate policies. What's certain is that the current text needs to be improved in many respects, and that the timeframe for doing so is relatively tight, if the Plan is to be an effective and shared tool for preparing and implementing the actions that are needed to successfully put Italy on a path to decarbonisation.

Reduce the fragility of the labour market for women, the younger generation and immigrants, upgrade current policies and improve working conditions

Italy's employment outlook for the upcoming seven years, which is measured since the "Proposal for the Joint Employment Report"37 published by the European Commission and Council in November 2022, is still uncertain due to the delays seen in our country on three key issues, especially if compared with other EU countries: the fragility of the labour market for women, the younger generation and immigrants; inadequate working conditions; the weakness of current employment policies. These weaknesses make it almost impossible for Italy to achieve Target 8.5 in the next seven years, which entails the "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value". The achievement of Target 8.6, requiring a substantial reduction of NEETs, and Target 8.b, regarding the preparation of a "Youth employment pact", is looking more feasible.

REDUCE THE FRAGILITY OF WOMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND IMMIGRANTS IN ACCESSING THE LABOUR MARKET

For women, young people and immigrants, the possibilities of accessing a labour market that offers appropriate and adequate salaries are much more restrictive compared with the average for European countries. For example, in Italy, there is still a substantial gap between the rate of male participation in the labour market and the rate seen for females (18.1% in the second quarter of 2023, with significant territorial discrepancies, against a European average of 9.8% in 2022).

Information on the policies designed to increase female employment is provided on page 188. The improvement in the labour market prospects for the younger generation is achieved through the promotion of quality education and professional training in line with industrial decisions ready to seize the opportunities offered by the ecological and digital transitions. In addition, it is important to support access to education for

younger boys and girls from deprived groups and remote areas, promoting training at all levels of qualification, strengthening digital skills and widening the range of digital talents. This will allow the development of digital education and training ecosystems and an integrated supply chain, starting with technical and job-related high-school programmes and advanced technological institutes (ITS Academies).

UPGRADE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT POLICIES, ABOVE ALL FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Both Europe and Italy are affected by two contrasting situations with regard to current policies to promote employment. In addition to persistently high unemployment rates, above all in the younger age groups, there is a lack of labour, which has overtaken pre-pandemic levels in various EU countries, above all in the manufacturing, services and construction sectors. This also affects the health system and, in the long-term, the software development and mechanics. Furthermore, there is a lack of qualified workers for certain sectors related to the ecological transition, at a time when the energy transition is expected to accelerate due to the crisis resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

To revive an effective programme of employment policies, these must be linked to medium to long-term industrial policies, thereby strengthening, integrating and adapting public labour services to the new requirements. This will also mean engaging with labour agencies, through investment in infrastructure and accessible digital services, monitoring and providing expertise and an adequate training programme for people looking for work, in order to create jobs and promote career transitions, also towards the digital and green economies, thereby overcoming the current shortages of labour and skills.

The absence of a national strategy for youth employment that takes into account the intergenerational, territorial, educational and gender inequalities seen in Italy highlights the policy's disregard for this issue, crucial for the future of our country. To make up for this delay, we urgently require the definition of a long-term "youth employment pact" between the various members of society and the economy (social partners, local authorities, the educational system, etc.). The pact must include measures to support youth em-

ployment starting from the transition from school and provide greater funds for research, professional training and other areas, in order to also reduce the number of NEETs.

IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS

One of the most crucial measures to protect the purchasing power of households from the high rate of inflation, which has a significant negative impact on salaries, above all for low-wage workers, is to bring salaries to levels in line with the country's macroeconomic and social scenario. However, these measures must take account of the general target of reducing inflation, whilst also bearing in mind that, in the current macroeconomic scenario, salary increases for low-wage workers would not drive up inflation, nor would it impact competitiveness.

With regard to working conditions, social dialogue plays an irreplaceable role and there must be a prompt and significant contribution by social partners in the decisions regarding economic and social policies, also relating to the implementation of the NRRP. On the other hand, these talks must also be designed to ensure a healthy and safe work environment, significantly reduce work-related injuries, wisely using the opportunities provided by smart working, and promote collective bargaining, also with a view to improved adjustments to minimum wages to keep pace with the increase in the cost of living.

It is also necessary to ensure the availability of schemes for reducing working hours and other measures for job retention, which are also able to preserve the human capital generated over time during difficult moments for the various sectors. In addition, it is important to guarantee access to adequate social protections for atypical workers and those employed in the gig economy.

Invest in sustainable infrastructure, driving the production system towards Industry 5.0 and boosting research and innovation

Developing a sustainable network of infrastructure is a crucial and cross-cutting step in achieving all the SDGs, as it provides a rapid, significant improvement in the living conditions of people, strengthens and enables the abilities of communities to reduce inequalities, provides technological solutions for environmentally friendly development, promotes the creation of jobs and provides access to information, education and medical care. Therefore, it is important to devise a medium-term plan of investment in sustainable infrastructure in crucial sectors for development purposes and for the ecological and digital transitions (telecommunications, transport, water and energy networks, etc.), taking up a key role in enabling the sustainability of our development model.

Scientific texts identify digitalisation as a key factor in growing the economy, thanks to the reduction in costs and the increases in productivity and market competitiveness. The internet of things and robotics, for example, can increase the efficiency of production and logistics, with subsequent financial benefits for the manufacturing sector. In terms of the environment, the ICT sector has a significantly positive direct and indirect impact across the whole supply chain. In particular, the application of digital technologies to crucial sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, transport, agricultural, housing and commercial, allows us to save resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy efficiency.

With regard to social sustainability, this can reduce the digital divide, guaranteeing access to communication services and digital information regardless of the geographical position or socioeconomic conditions; ensure greater inclusion of more vulnerable categories (for example, the elderly and the disabled), allowing them to benefit from increasingly accessible healthcare services and improve their quality through e-healthcare, promoting the development of tools and services that facilitate digital access for people with serious walking limitations, and for deaf or blind people; prevent road accidents by installing integrated connections in vehicles.

PLAN AND BUILD SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ARE RESILIENT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Sustainable development requires us to strengthen the resilience of current infrastructure against climate change and the use of sustainability criteria to plan new increasingly integrated and connected infrastructure and ICT technology systems, able to effectively contribute to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. In this regard, physical infrastructure will have to be integrated with those of a digital nature for a rational use of resources and productive inputs. In addition, it is necessary to develop an infrastructural system that is able to prevent shocks and be resilient to future changes, at the same time applying and promoting the principle of not harming the environment.

Digitalisation and innovation must be promoted across the various productive sectors, through broadband interconnection and coordinated management of the various components of organisational processes. Accelerating investment in connectivity infrastructure would provide great help in overcoming the current critical situation. Digitalisation of the whole system would be able to optimise its services, rationalise its maintenance, manage flows and enable both energy savings and cuts to pollution. A cautious combination of various fixed and mobile broadband connectivity systems and technologies could provide a significant boost in the digital transformation of our productive sectors and in modernising their infrastructure, such as agrifood, farming 4.0, health, security, etc.

The digital transformation of the public works sector is crucial in combining the "project" and "predictive maintenance" cultures, based on priorities estimated by decision support systems (DSS), by analysing data recorded and processed by IoT (internet of things) sensors or SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) systems. The wide range of available data would enable implementation of predictive maintenance ("conditional"), applying Artificial Intelligence algorithms to parameters automatically measured within structures. This will provide estimates on potential behaviours and indications on measures to adopt before leakages, faults or various service issues take place. This would enable us to accordingly put in place counteractive measures through focused monitoring or by replacing and restoring obsolete infrastructure that is unrepairable based on cost-benefit analyses.

CHANGE THE PARADIGM: TOWARDS INDUSTRY 5.0

The country must set itself the goal of planning an industrial system that is, on the one hand, more resilient and ready to proactively respond to future shocks and, on the other, able to facilitate and accelerate the ecological and digital transitions, increasing the sustainability of the socioeconomic system. All of the above falls under the title of "Industry 5.0", the elements of which, required to fulfil Italy's industrial potential, refer to concepts such as resilience, sustainability, regeneration, circularity and innovation. When integrally applied, it will increase competitiveness, reduce the environmental impact and increase decent work. The paradigm proposed by Industry 5.0 goes beyond the traditional principle based on quantitative growth, through the development and use of technology, but applies a more transformative view of the role of business in ensuring human progress and wellbeing, the circularity of production and consumption and social justice.

Pursuing the Industry 5.0 model has significant repercussions for the country's industrial strategy: there needs to be a re-planning of business models, including value and supply chains; new means of collaboration must be developed by companies for the implementation of industrial policies; new approaches are required for research and innovation; there needs to be a high degree of horizontal and vertical coherence across policies and across all levels of government.

An industrial policy measure that has so far neglected the enabling role of electronic communication networks and services is, ironically, so-called "Industry 4.0" and its subsequent evolutions. The current legislation provides for benefits in the form of tax relief on the costs incurred by companies during the digital transition, albeit excluding connectivity services from benefiting from this. With regard to the establishment of a new "Industry 5.0" Plan, strictly related to the general goal of increasing the competitiveness of the Italian productive system, it has been proposed that the new legislation should recognise expenses related to "en-

abling" goods as eligible for tax relief. These goods enable communication between smart devices and intelligent machinery that need to exchange data between each other and with control systems. This will obviously require paying the utmost attention to the procedures with which these goods will be made available to the market, also through "as a service" type formulas that should also be incentivised.

of emissions, the state of ecosystems and material flows. In a circular economy, digital traceability facilitates reuse and recycling (for example, the so-called "material passports" or digital registers for buildings). The combination of digital technologies, such as smart sensors, with data analysis tools provides a real-time understanding of the environmental conditions and parameters (for example, the quality of air or water). This fully accessible data, combined with digital infrastructure and AI based solutions, can facilitate decisions made on concrete data and increase our ability to understand and tackle environmental issues.

The data, algorithms and solutions resulting from the analysis conducted using digital technologies can promote the adoption of models of production and operation that are able to increase the sustainability of economic development, providing information regarding the whole lifecycle of products and optimising services, also from an environmental point of view. The information collected through digital simulations allows us to identify solutions able to improve the environmental impact of products and the reasons that could lead to premature obsolescence. This will boost the solutions for the repair and update of products already in use on a daily basis and provide services in line with the needs of people and companies³⁸.

Thanks to 5G connectivity, virtualisation provides new digital solutions in real-time, virtual reality experiences or digital prototypes able to sustainably support business models in various sectors. The extended reality technologies, such as augmented reality and the metaverse, can potentially transition a great number of services online, including production or consumption services. The successful adoption of Al-based technologies within the manufacturing sector could contribute to increasing the efficiency of production processes and reduce resource consumption. On the

other hand, Digital Twins, powered with actual data, could be useful tools for the smart and more efficient management of machines and complex systems³⁹.

PROMOTE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Research and innovation are the driving factors of the economic system, necessary to address sustainability issues in all areas. They allow us to develop solutions, technologies, processes and approaches that reduce environmental impacts, provide safe working environments and improve people's quality of life. In addition, they could contribute to a better understanding of the impact of climate change, facilitating the development of new adaptation strategies and new solutions to increase the resilience of the social and economic system. Lastly, they help improve public opinion and encourage decisionmakers to behave responsibly and in line with the sustainability principles, at feasible or even lower costs.

For this reason, there needs to be greater investment in universities, research centres and innovative companies, in accordance with European requirements, guaranteeing training in essential expertise and increasing continuous training. This will allow us to achieve the European goal, set for 2025, of having at least 50% of adults between the ages of 25 and 64 complete a training programme in the last 12 months. To boost research within companies, the tax credit for investment in Research and Development must be restored to 50% (at least for SMEs), even when the investment in activities conducted in Italy is foreign, better if bound by collaborations with universities and research centres.

Partnerships between universities, research centres and companies are important to improve the sharing of knowledge and provide training that focuses on the results of research. For this reason, in addition to the technological transition, we must also promote the use of open innovation platforms and support innovative startups and SMEs, with investment and logistical assistance, in order to close the gap with other major EU countries, such as France, Germany and Spain. In this regard, it could be useful to adopt financial and logistical incentives linked to key performance indicators. This would

avoid the creation of "markets" of closed startups, more or less fake, which very often fail to deliver success.

To facilitate, promote and reward sustainability projects, also within the ICT sector, industrial policies must be designed to achieve various macro targets of the ecological transition, such as planning sustainable products, recovery solutions and the monitoring of a product's lifecycle: as a result, the tax credit for Research, Development, Innovation and Design projects must be aimed at resident businesses or stable organisations of non-resident entities located within the area of the State, as permitted under new European laws on state aid.

Improve territorial governance, invest in the urban regeneration and ecological transition of cities and other local areas

The reestablishment of the Committee for Suburbs at the Chamber of Deputies in the current legislature provides a new opportunity to implement existing and increasingly urgent proposals⁴⁰. Specifically, the Committee can submit a specific report to the Chamber of Deputies regarding territorial governance as the basis for an accelerated procedure that will lead to the approval of legislation by lawmakers, without having to wait for the final report.

INVEST IN URBAN REGENERATION AND REVI-TALISE HOUSING POLICIES

Talks must be continued on the draft law prepared by the Senate in the previous legislature regarding urban regeneration for its urgent approval, and an interministerial steering committee must be established to coordinate the various related programmes, as part of the new Interministerial Committee for Urban Policies (CIPU), reestablished with a new remit in 2021. With regard to land use, there needs to be a law that demands an agreement between central and local governments (assuming the Government's role) for the establishment of the maximum quantity of land consumption allowed within the area of each region. This must include a breakdown for municipal or supra-municipal areas, based on the available information and pre-established criteria. In addition, an increase is required for urbanisation expenses and grants calculated on the cost of greenfield housing projects.

With regard to housing policies, ASviS's Position Paper proposes: to guarantee constant provision of funding for housing benefits for renters, helping to reduce the impact of rising rents on the incomes of struggling households; include the housing service provided for citizens who are financially struggling as part of the Essential Levels of Service that need to be guaranteed across the whole national territory; schedule a secure, long-term investment plan for the sector, not tied to any extraordinary plans or programmes, above all for the upgrade and development of public residential housing; build public university accommodation as part

of the right to study; approve a **law to regulate** the short-term rental sector, giving more power to municipalities.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

In recent decades, issues regarding the quality of air in urban areas have always been exclusively linked to travel policies. Despite the correlation between polluting emissions and vehicle traffic being obvious and now undisputed, the studies conducted by the Agencies for the Environment of the Po Valley during the lockdown in 2020 showed that the high levels of concentration of dust particles during periods where traffic was significantly reduced are connected to other activities, such as agriculture and biomass combustion. For this reason, we must begin by spreading awareness on the issue, which regards health more than the environment. Subsequently, all policies relating to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that are also beneficial to air quality must be accelerated, such as production from renewable energy sources and zero emissions for both vehicles and home heating. However, these restrictions and bans must also be accompanied by incentives, including those of a financial nature, in view of the just transition programme. These incentives should be primarily aimed at the more vulnerable social classes.

The first area of focus is related to sustainable mobility, above all in cities, following on from the progress made in the last two years thanks to the NRRP and other national funding. As previously mentioned, the draft for the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) does not include significant proposals on this matter. The proposals made by ASviS included in the Position Paper, "The decarbonisation of transport" (May 2023)⁴¹, on the other hand, establish the target of having, by 2030: six million electric cars, 10,000 electric buses and 100,000 electric lorries and vans, accompanied by a significant increase in national charging infrastructure; a yearly increase of 8% in railway freight transport, in line with the last three years, in addition to passenger transport; a greater use of advanced and recycled biofuels, of hydrogen, green synthetic fuel and biogases for non-electric means of transport (specifically, air and sea transport). By staying on this path, Italy could achieve the European targets regarding the percentage of renewable energies in transport and increase efficiency, thereby also acting on overall consumption, which could be reduced by 8 Mtoe compared with 2021.

In addition, we must identify the best practices already trialled for limiting the circulation of the most polluting vehicles, such as the gradual ban on access to urban areas. These must then be extended to other areas of the country where air quality thresholds are exceeded, also by implementing national legislative measures and guidelines for regions and municipalities.

At the same time, the incentives for household heating systems must be reviewed, such as the Conto Termico incentive and tax deductions, introducing environmental performance requirements that prohibit the sale of boilers with a quality rating below four stars and pellets with a certified quality rating below A1. Oil heating systems should also be banned, introducing appropriate incentives for their replacement.

Last but not least, valid incentives for reducing agricultural and livestock farm emissions, which also affect air quality in urban centres, must be provided in the 2023-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) National Strategic Plan and in the Cohesion Policy programming period.

UPGRADE URBAN AND PERI-URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Given the great urgency to deal with climate change and its social implications, upgrading green infrastructure should be a priority in national and local policy. In addition to completing the related projects provided for in the NRRP, there needs to be a full implementation of Law 10/2013 and the green culture must be strengthened among citizens, administrations and the relevant authorities, thereby consolidating the national urban green space monitoring system provided for by the same law. The system should be extended to all Italian municipalities with a population of more than 15,000 residents, applying the same regulations for other levels of local authority with responsibility for public green space.

The targets in the urban agendas for sustainable development should include the goal of increasing the percentage of the population that can reach a public green space on foot and the percentage of usable inclusive green space. At the same time, incentives should be provided for municipalities that encourage them to adopt strategic green and

blue infrastructure plans, strengthening their regulatory effectiveness with respect to urban planning and with a view to halting land consumption. "Cultivation contracts" should then be introduced into law with the aim of making trees and reproductive plant material available to be managed by public and private entities, thereby contributing to achievement of the climate agenda objectives.

STRENGTHEN POLICIES FOR INNER AND MOUNTAIN AREAS

Despite the fact that inner areas have been integrated as a whole in the political agenda of recent governments, the need to focus key policies, such as those relating to schools, transport and health, on these areas has been lost. Resources are distributed as compensation, with investment focused on detailed needs or specific beneficiaries (municipalities in mountain areas, those of small size or where there are high levels of tourism, etc.) unable to systemically deploy existing local capital. On the other hand, the technical committee for inner areas was downgraded to an organisation for the technical approval of decisions taken by national and regional governments, with the risk that co-planning can only survive where regional authorities are willing to continue to use it. A different scenario for the National Strategy for Inner Areas involves carrying out field and independent assessments, to understand how to revise the strategic project, changing what needs to be changed, but without distorting it. In this regard, the impact of the plan for differentiated autonomy on the Strategy must be carefully assessed, taking into account the need for national coordination of the projects related to inner areas.

With regard to mountain areas, the first step must be the NRRP call for tenders regarding green communities (despite its limits, such as the unfortunate timeframe and a selection based on parameters that are not in line with the value of proposals) to understand how the prospects for the ecological transition have been taken into account, interpretated and developed by mountain areas as the essential basis for their commitment in this sense. It will be important to give this process continuity, restoring national funding or, as the Piedmont Regional Authority began to do, allocating a significant portion of the funding for mountain areas to achieving this objective.

Promote environmental and social sustainability within public administrations, increase the adoption of good behaviour among consumers

Given the complexity and urgent nature of the challenge to accelerate the ecological transition, a multistakeholder approach is required, in which public administrations and economic operators play a key role. Their task is to implement production and purchasing policies and strategies, for both goods and services, which are generative and appropriate across the whole value chain. The final goal is to achieve a cultural change in production and consumption, thereby providing greater responsibility and commitment towards sustainability.

SPREAD GREEN SOCIAL PROCUREMENT

One of the crucial steps to accelerate the transition towards more sustainable models, from an environmental and social point of view, is to spread Green Social Procurement (GSP), implementing the social dimension criteria to public tenders for the delivery of public works and service procurement. To avoid delays due to the lack of expertise or the absence of efficient procedures, training should be provided on matters regarding GSP, Minimum Environmental Criteria (MEC), Minimum Social Criteria (MSC) and the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle, on a central and local basis. In addition, each public administration should identify a sustainability representative, meaning an individual responsible for the adoption of sustainability criteria in tender procedures and monitoring the administration's transformation, as seen in private companies.

To increase consistency among the tools available in this field, a "GSP Plan of Action" should be adopted within public administrations. The plan would implement sector planning (mitigating and adapting to climate change, the circular economy, biodiversity, mobility, food policy, gender equality, inclusion) to local planning through Minimum Environmental Criteria (MEC). In addition, Green Public Procurement must be merged with the DNSH principle, and monitoring systems for MEC and GSP policies must be adopted, providing an instant reading of the performance related to its application. At the same time, it is important to

promote the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness or MEC and MSC, ascertaining their environmental and social impact, their strong points and critical issues, thereby enabling the definition of proposals for their improvement.

To ensure the engagement of companies in this transformation, chambers of commerce and local business associations should be involved in: helping to spread information regarding environmental and social criteria that companies, above all SMEs, will come across during tender procedures; simplifying procedures and speeding up tender processes, setting up monitoring systems for social matters, above all regarding the protection of rights not regulated by current laws, but which can provide indications on how to improve the company (for example, assess the level of inclusion within companies supplying public administrations); build a network of companies which, by cooperating with responsible authorities, aim to increase their competitiveness within their sectors, through a process of sharing information along the whole supply chain.

ACCELERATE THE APPLICATION OF DUE DILI-GENCE AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL TAXONOMY, COMBAT GREEN/SOCIALWASHING

The proposed EU Directive on due diligence for sustainability purposes (currently being discussed between the European Commission, Council and Parliament, which could end up with the approval of a weakened text with respect to the initial proposal) could result in the most ambitious regulatory act adopted so far in terms of corporate social responsibility. For this reason, it is in the interest of businesses to bring forward the Directive's entry into force rather than delay it (which, in any case, will be implemented gradually over time). This will automatically start the preparation of a sustainability plan that entails a five-step procedure: identify actual or potential negative impacts; prevent and minimise negative impacts; establish a complaints procedure; monitor the effectiveness of the policies adopted; external communication of the policies (article 4 of the proposal)⁴².

In various EU member states, the initiative has been taken on by national lawmakers⁴³, and the adaptation to the new laws has also already begun for companies established in Italy but part of groups belonging to these countries. The advanced state of the legislative procedures related to the

European due diligence proposals and the fight against forced labour would allow Italian lawmakers to bring forward European laws, making efficient use of the organisational efforts made by our businesses. From this point of view, an effective tool to begin a progressive alignment of our businesses' activity with social sustainability parameters would be the implementation of ethical certification for organisations and their products.

A major boost in adopting due diligence procedures by the corporate world will be given by extending the classification of eco-sustainable activities, launched by the European Union with EU Regulation 2020/852 for social targets. In this regard, it is crucial that the future "social taxonomy" guarantee consistency with the model provided for in the UN guiding principles and in the OECD guidelines as already explicitly requested in the identification, with respect to the procedures provided for by these international instruments, of minimum safeguards, in accordance with article 18 of the Regulation.

INCREASE CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT

The increase in awareness, knowledge and responsibility of the consumer represents a key tool in promoting the change in the paradigm towards sustainable consumption. However, this "revolution" must deal with various obstacles, such as personal habits, insufficient purchasing power, the lack of products and services in line with this new context, social and cultural opposition, established habits and opposition to change. For businesses, a key driving factor in changing the paradigm was the increased ability to secure loans and, in certain cases, knowing that the adoption of sustainable practices would guarantee a competitive and resilient future for the business itself (which is inextricably related to social responsibility). On the other hand, for consumers, the adoption of new behaviours (for example, paying attention to wastage when using resources such as water and energy, purchasing high energy efficient products or long-lasting goods) is strictly related to the financial benefit that this brings. Moral suasion, based on accountability and the "Good for the Planet" concept, risks being a failure due to lack of knowledge on the matter among a huge portion of the population and people's financial difficulties, where purchasing decisions are often based on price alone.

It is important to strengthen the "Good for me" message, which generates a whole series of benefits that sustainability can already offer the population, engaging with all stakeholders involved in production and consumption, regulators, academic institutions and intermediary bodies, starting with consumers' associations. In other words, we must transition from accountability to a campaign where sustainability provides more positivity, regarding environmental (save the planet) and social (guarantee decent work) matters, showcasing all the benefits it can bring for consumers.

To deliver this message in a convincing manner, a system of incentives (public or private) must be devised, with the aim of encouraging and enabling consumers to adopt sustainable consumption behaviour, such as: applying a waste tariff on a pay-as-you-throw basis (currently only used in 10 provincial capitals); adopting tariffs designed to reward consumers who reduce excessive consumption; apply tax relief (as seen in France with home appliances and textiles) to consumers who adopt practices that extend the life of products by repairing or recycling them, thereby generating new jobs for repair services.

In addition, there needs to be a change in the culture and mobilisation of citizens and civil society organisations in order to monitor and challenge greenwashing, enough to make it an inconvenience. Thanks to this monitoring, the reputation of individual businesses will be on the line. To contribute to this discussion and to make Italy a European leader in this field, ASviS has developed a series of recommendations⁴⁶, with reference to a recent UN document on this matter⁴⁷. In September, the European Commission came to an agreement with the Council for a new text⁴⁸ of Directive 2022/92, giving governments 24 months to adapt. This resulted in a series of obligations for businesses and private entities to combat greenwashing:

- announce the commitment to achieving climate neutrality within a certain date, with clear interim targets, establishing and publishing a transition plan. Increase transparency, monitoring and responsibility of administrators in statements on future environmental performances;
- rapidly eliminate the use of fossil fuels and increase accordingly the adoption of renewable energy. Align lobbying and advocacy activities with decarbonisation goals;

- include false declarations based on the compensation of greenhouse gas emissions in the list of prohibited commercial practices and abandon the voluntary offsetting of emissions, transitioning to requirements regulated and ensured by governments, thereby guaranteeing the competitiveness of members seriously committed to the climate and avoiding double counting;
- invest in the "correct" transition, giving a leading role to people, social partners and nature;
- improve the credibility of sustainability labels, publishing the key elements of the certification system on which they are based.

With regard to the circular economy, the EU Directive clarifies the responsibility of certification bodies as regards premature or planned obsolescence, unessential software updates or the unjustified obligation to purchase original spare parts. These practices are prohibited, but professionals are only responsible if they are provided with information on how a product has been designed. In addition, EU legislation has introduced standard labelling with information on the product lifespan guarantees provided by producers, which also refers to the legal guarantee of compliance. An appropriate notice will be on display in shops and on websites to provide information on this guarantee.

Improve the judicial system, develop an ethics of artificial intelligence, strengthen democratic participation

In line with Goal 16, the coming years will see a need to take increasingly concrete steps to protect peace and justice and make institutions more inclusive, effective and responsible. The intersecting nature of the recent global crises has posed a series of ever more complex challenges. Achievement of Goal 16 has been delayed by, among other things, the pandemic, which highlighted and exacerbated existing fragilities and inequalities and severely tested the resilience public institutions. Geopolitical tensions and conflicts in various parts of the world (55 at the time of writing) are intensifying and putting global security and multilateralism in question.

To achieve the 10 targets included in Goal 16 in the 2030 Agenda, a number of steps should be taken. These fall into three topic areas.

PROTECT RIGHTS AND COMBAT CRIMINALITY, ORGANISED CRIME GROUPS AND CORRUPTION

On 15 June 2023, the Italian Cabinet approved a draft law (the so-called Nordio Draft Law Decree) reforming the criminal justice system. The reform includes abolishment of the crime of abuse of power, more severe limits on wiretapping, limitations on appeals by public prosecutors, and redefinition of the offence of influence trafficking and of pre-trail detention. Although intended to protect civil rights, the reforms have drawn harsh criticism from the opposition and above all from judges in view of the potential impact on offences such as corruption, bribery and criminal conspiracy. We recommend, therefore, that Parliament is fully engaged during the bill's passage, given the need for amendments addressing the concerns raised regarding the potential distortionary effects.

In terms of the prevention of violence and crime, the recent law Decree 123 of 15 September 2023, containing "Urgent measures to combat vulnerability among young people, educational poverty and child crime, and to ensure online protections for children". These emergency measures, giving far greater powers to the police and tightening criminal law, must be accompanied by lasting social and cultural initiatives. These will be more effective than any attempts to combat such phe-

nomena, by over the medium to long term creating the conditions for guaranteeing the protection, rights and wellbeing of citizens, whilst progressively tackling the roots of crime.

We recommend, moreover, that the Government reverse its decision to cancel the measures in the NRRP designed to make use of the assets confiscated from organised crime groups. Funding of approximately €300 million was provided in November 2021, for which a final list of qualifying local authorities had already been drawn up.

We also recommend an expansion of civil rights with a view to both combatting discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexuality and with regard to the rights of same-sex parents, introducing a form of legal recognition in line with the main conventions applied at EU level⁴⁹.

DEVELOP AN ETHICS OF AI, INCREASE TRANS-PARENCY AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

The topic of artificial intelligence (AI) is very much an issue of the moment, raising a number of questions: these range from governance to social aspects, from ethics to economics and geopolitics. On 14 June 2023, the European Parliament approved the Artificial Intelligence Act, the first legislation in the world designed to ensure that the way in which AI is used protects the rights and freedoms of individuals. The legislation marks a historic step, given the major impact that AI is expected to have on the future lives of citizens and businesses. It is therefore necessary to implement this framework of principles and rules in Italy as soon as possible.

The main challenges to be addressed in the coming years to ensure the correct use of AI are:

- the need to strengthen democracy by enhancing the ability of citizens to access and examine information, preventing disinformation and effectively protecting against hacking. Beyond any actions at local level, there is a continuing need for global governance to deal with the threats posed by AI and halt the growing trend of using autonomous weapons systems, as suggested by the UN Secretary General (see page 23);
- respect for the rights of people, including the rights to information and education, which are being put at risk by the accelerated rollout of Al applications. It is thus necessary to contain

and combat the creation and dissemination of fake news for propaganda, commercial and political purposes, and the production of deepfake images, videos and audio recordings that can be used in cyberbullying, sexting, phishing, online fraud, etc.. Moreover, AI has the ability to create online "bubbles", where content is presented based on what the user has interacted with in the past, rather than creating an open inclusive and accessible environment for debate involving a range of

- views. In the field of education, we need to protect the privacy of children and prevent the potential distortions found in algorithms that can adversely affect experiential and learning processes;
- the birth of new forms of discrimination or the reinforcement of pre-existing ones, with the need to develop applications able to combat such phenomena, making Al systems more inclusive with regard to ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, political dissent and

EUROPE'S "REAL DEAL" PROJECT AND ASVIS'S PLAN THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

ASviS is a partner of the European "Real Deal" project (www.realdeal.eu), which is part of the Horizon 2020 research programme. The project, led by a consortium of sixteen partner, including European civil society organisations, universities and research centres, aims to develop models for active participation and forms of deliberative democracy to enable EU citizens to take part in implementation of the Green Deal within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. The ultimate goal is to arrive at a "Real Deal protocol" for the participation of civil society in political decision-making processes at EU and member state level, with the aim of having it adopted by institutions to implement structured, permanent processes for participation. The project was launched on 1 February 2022 and will end on 31 January 2025.

As part of the project, in the coming months ASviS will enable the involvement of Italian civil society. This will take place alongside the process being conducted by the Italian Government within the framework provided by the EU policy guidelines and rules for the "European Semester" (see the box on page 59). For this purpose, ASviS intends to review and coordinate the long-standing activities carried out in previous years (the publication of annual reports and other documents, web publications, communication, government and media relations, the Sustainable Development Festival) as part of a series of initiatives beginning with the presentation of this Report and ending with the Festival of May 2024. In autumn 2023, ASviS will publish information and organise debates on the proposals contained in this Report and in December's Territories Report. This will involve institutions and stakeholders, with the aim of expanding participation to include civil society representatives not already involved in ASviS's activities and in developing the proposals contained in the Report. At this stage, the Alliance will also assess the potential for collaboration and exchange as part of the participatory process with existing institutions, such as the Forum for Sustainable Development at the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security and CNEL.

As part of our information campaign, ASviS will boost the part we play in making available the information and data needed to ensure informed and effective participation. This will place particular focus on the integrity, clarity and solidity of scientific evidence and the traceability and transparency of the information provided. In the first quarter of 2024, the Alliance will test selected participatory models with the "Real Deal" partners with the aim of arriving at the production of a sort of Economic and Financial Planning Document by Italian civil society. This will be published in parallel with the document that the Government has to submit to the European Commission as part of the European Semester. This Document produced by civil society will be presented at the end of April 2024. The results, compared with the Government's proposals, will be made public and discussed at the Sustainable Development Festival to be held between 7 and 23 May 2024, shortly before the European and local elections of June. The Document will also out forward recommendations regarding the position that Italy should assume in relation to the issues to be dealt with at the "Summit of the Future" promoted by the UN Secretary General, to be held in September 2024.

disability, and to generally respect people who are fragile and vulnerable from a physical and cognitive point of view.

As described in the previous pages, the government urgently needs to reconsider certain decisions that have recently led to a significant reduction in opportunities for participation by stakeholders and civil society organisations. In this regard, we above all recommend:

- taking into account the recommendations put forward by the Civic observatory on implementation of the NRRP, which highlight the need for more transparency in providing data on the projects funded⁵⁰ and for the decision-making process to be opened up more to civil society organisations, which are excluded from the steering committee that replaced the permanent social and civil partnership group;
- making public consultation procedures more systematic and efficient, starting from those for consultations on public works and infrastructure, which have been recently downgraded and are inconsistently organised by the various ministries and administrations, overcoming the systematic absence of feedback to requests for access and participation. Above all, the mandatory open NRRP consultation mechanisms provided for in 2021 should be restored and fully implemented to enable civil society and local organisations to play a greater role in the assessment and design of projects.

More generally, priority should be given to respecting the principle of transparency in relations between the public administration and the users of public services, with opportunities for collaboration between public and private entities and more effective co-planning and co-design mechanisms for public spending and the use of cohesion and EU funds.

We also recommend that the Government introduce innovative ways of encouraging young people to play a greater role in democratic life and ensuring that people take full advantage of their citizenship, above all the young. In terms of democratic participation, above all among the younger generations, recent years have seen a decline in political and electoral participation, also due to the failure to implement adequate digital systems for the purposes of voting and promoting referenda⁵¹.

As a result, priority should be given to encouraging greater representation for the young and democratic participation, approving the law on voting rights for Italian students who live away from the place of residence and establishing efficient, secure online procedures for people to cast their votes in elections and referenda remotely. There should also be greater investment in the Universal Civil Service through the preparation of a multi-year budget. This would enable more young people to be involved in and contribute to the country's social and civil life, including through the development of innovative global citizenship initiatives, such as for example the "Civil Peace Corps"⁵².

Promote peace, strengthen the coherence of development aid policies and improve their effectiveness, ensuring that civil society can participate in decision-making

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development is an essential condition for guaranteeing the Planet and its inhabitants a different future with respect to the current one. The Partnership strengthens policy coherence, boosts the effectiveness of measures and programmes, and provides a strategic, systemic vision for international cooperation.

If the promotion of peaceful and more inclusive societies for sustainable development forms the basis for Goal 16, during a period in history such as the current one, in which war and human rights violations are spreading throughout the world, starting from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it is essential to take a multilateral approach to crisis prevention, giving priority to diplomacy as the main route to resolving disputes. Above all, we need to encourage progressive reductions in rearmament and military expenditure, adopting in full the recommendations in the document, "The New Agenda for Peace" presented by the UN Secretary General at the High-Level Political Forum of 23 July 2023 (see the box in Chapter 1)⁵³.

STRENGTHEN THE COHERENCE OF DEVELOP-MENT AID POLICIES

This issue gives rise to concerns over the Government's future strategy, based on elements developed and implemented by previous administrations (an example is the Memorandum signed by Italy and Libya). This strategy links development to migration, with the emphasis placed on security by turning people away at Italy's, and thereby Europe's, borders.

The recent International Conference on Migration and Development, which launched the so-called "Rome Process", insisted on the need for cooperation between police forces to halt illegal migration, emphasising the security aspect without making any reference to the 2030 Agenda or the SDGs. Moreover, the bilateral agreements announced for cooperation between governments, and between EU and partner countries in Africa, refer to a form of aid that gives carte blanche to

governments in Africa in the use of any funds. This is instead of making aid conditional on investment in improving environmental, economic and social sustainability, giving local areas and communities a central role and safeguarding and protecting human rights. In fact, the document provides for an exemption from the need to consider sustainability in favour of commercial interests, energy procurement and the rejection of migrants and asylum seekers and their return to their countries of origin.

Networks of civil society organisations have instead repeatedly voiced the need to devise effective programmes for combatting poverty, inequalities and environmental disasters in the countries of origin, as these are all factors that drive people to "flee for their lives". It is no accident that the "0.70 campaign" (in which ASviS also participates) aims to promote legislative measures designed to gradually bring Italy closer to meeting its commitment to spend 0.7% of gross national income on official development cooperation by 2030.

On the other hand, in terms of diplomatic relations and agreements for creating an action plan for Africa, it is necessary to draw up a strategy that, to be credible, needs to be coherent and backed up by adequate funding. The strategic priorities should also avoid any relationship with the emergency and utilitarian nature of the above approach that will only benefit our country.

For example, under a systematic approach to development aid and in building Global Partnerships, more attention needs to be paid to scientific and technological cooperation. Such a need emerged during the debate on Covid-19 vaccines but is in truth a more wide-ranging and complex issue. This calls for the involvement of international university networks that work together to address issues such as environmental sustainability, the energy transition, the protection of ecosystems, the circular economy, the development of our cultural and natural heritage and health. Similar attention should be paid to the issue of digitalisation, which for poorer nations should not translate into a new form of dependency on countries that are more advanced in this field. Putting territories, communities and their resources at the heart of the dialogue between university cooperation, the world of research and society is the challenge to be met by development partnerships.

The report on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, approved in July 2023 by the European Parliament, invites member states and the Commission to work towards the creation of public infrastructure in Europe to develop vaccines and drugs. This is an important step towards health as a common good. The report could have an impact on the amendment of European legislation on drugs and relations with pharmaceutical companies. This could mean that, in the future, in return for taxpayers primarily assuming the financial risk associated with vaccine production, as happened during the pandemic, research should focus more closely on priorities for public health⁵⁴. A shared infrastructure for biomedical research, with the aim of independently developing new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and medical technologies, would enable us to fully exploit the excellent capabilities of European universities, non-profit entities and innovative firms. This would be done on the basis of transparent contracts and without exclusive patents, thereby also promoting access to production in the poorer countries.

Again, in terms of coherence between policies for achievement of the SDGs within the framework of Goal 17, it is necessary to pay greater attention to global value chains. These are forms of economic activity that, in producing goods and services, make use of a global supply chain. International production and trade must be able to be monitored and assessed on the basis not only of economic and financial sustainability, but above all in terms of their environmental and social impacts. Today's global trade and economic cooperation risks masking forms of exploitation and the creation of dependence on the interests of the world's corporate giants.

The World Bank estimates that, in 2015, global value chains represented 45% of total global trade, amounting to approximately US\$10.7 trillion, a figure in excess of European GDP. Global social economy networks have always lamented that fact that little attention is given to this situation, calling attention to sustainable shared development models that interact virtuously with each other, starting from the Fairtrade movement. Close attention, in this regard, should be paid to agricultural production, as it touches on the issue of land grabbing, which puts sustainable forms of agriculture and ecologies at risk. ASviS intends to make a contribution to this debate with

analysis and proposals developed together with the networks and platforms that operate in this sector. This is in readiness for the Italy-Africa Conference to be held next autumn, when Italy's Plan for Africa will be presented, and the G7 summit in Bari in 2024.

INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOP-MENT COOPERATION AND ENSURE THE PARTICI-PATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organisations have frequently stated the need for a working group to be set up with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Secretary General for Development Cooperation and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. This would produce joint plans for the use of official development aid funds and for the preparation and management of operational programmes. Unfortunately, this request has never been granted, despite it being present in the Third Sector Code (Legislative Decree 117/2017), which, with regard to relations between public organisations and third sector bodies, formally recognises the principles of subsidiarity.

The vast and widespread presence of Italian civil society organisations in developing countries, working on charitable projects and programmes, emergency aid and international cooperation, is a valuable asset widely acknowledged as such by all Governments and above all in Law 125/2014. This establishes that Italy's public and private international cooperation system must have a common purpose and plan of action.

In this regard, it is essential that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Cooperation convene the National Council for Development Cooperation with the frequency required by the above law. This body brings together all the public and private actors to discuss and debate the development of a joint multi-year programme, and to indicate the policy priorities for the sector as part of a coherent national and global approach.

NOTES

- ¹ For three of these, given the lack of explicit political commitments, the objective values were defined by ASviS working group experts (Target 6.4, regarding the efficiency of water infrastructure), or based on a comparison with the other three major European countries (France, Germany, Spain), taking the best performer in the latest available year (Target 10.4 regarding income inequality), or using the Eurostat methodology, which envisages a 1% annual increase compared with the base year (Target 11.2 regarding the number of seat-km per inhabitant offered by public transport).
- When the historical data series for assessment with the arrow systems is unavailable, this sign ":" is used. The actual growth rate is calculated using the data for the base year and the latest available year, whereas the theoretical growth rate represents the progress needed to reach the Target, also in relation to the level of the indicator in the base year. If possible, two analytical timeframes are provided here one long term (15-10 years) and one short term (5-3 years).
- https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2023/751445/EPRS_IDA(2023)751445_EN.pdf
- https://www.mase.gov.it/sites/default/files/archivio_immagini/Galletti/Comunicati/snsvs_ottobre2017.pdf
- https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/italy-governance-scan-pcsd.pdf
- 6 The recommendations set out in the Declaration of the UN SDG Summit led to the proposal regarding national transformative acceleration plans. See https://sdgs.un.org/gsdr/gsdr2023
- ⁷ https://www.politichegiovanili.gov.it/comunicazione/news/2022/6/linneguidaimpattogen/
- https://www.politichegiovanili.gov.it/media/idvcoo3w/linee-guida-covige.pdf
- http://www.fondazionebrunovisentini.eu/cosa-mette-un-freno-ai-giovani-parma-sperimenta-lo-youth-check/
- 10 https://www.unesco.it/it/ItaliaNellUnesco/Detail/189
- 11 http://musei.beniculturali.it/progetti/sistema-museale-nazionale
- 12 https://www.camera.it/leg19/824?tipo=A&anno=2023&mese=10&giorno=03&view=&commissione=21#data.20231003.com21.al-legati.all00010
- https://politichecoesione.governo.it/it/la-politica-di-coesione/la-programmazione-2021-2027/risorse-2021-2027/
- 14 In 2018, 30% of private sector employees earned less than 60% of the average annual income (€11,880/annum). See Inequality and Diversity Forum (2022), "I lavoratori e le lavoratrici a rischio di bassi salari in Italia", https://www.forumdisuguaglianze-diversita.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FORUMDD_Rapporto-lavoro-povero_DEF_.x11008.pdf
- 15 https://lavoce.info/archives/99964/contrastare-il-lavoro-nero-avvantaggia-anche-i-contribuenti/
- https://www.pattononautosufficienza.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Guida-Delega-Anziani-Maggio-2023-DEF.pdf
- In particular, care of dependents is severely penalised as it's largely delegated to families and volunteers, while the National Health Service has been described as an "inverted pyramid", which only partially includes the areas not covered by the public welfare system (also referred to in the 2023 report by Cittadinanzattiva entitled "Healthcare Emergency"), and results in failure to access services (29.6% of the approximately 20,000 analysed), hospital care (15.8%), prevention (15.2%) and local assistance (14.8%), leading to the conclusion that "a house built over 40 years ago, with the birth of the National Health Service, in order to guarantee free and equal healthcare to everyone, in every corner of the country (...) is in danger".
- 18 https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health
- 19 The vast international scientific literature on this issue highlights the impact, at all levels, that climate change has on our society. As pointed out in the ASviS Quaderno "Global health and social, environmental, and economic determinants", the effects of global warming on our health are manifested in various ways, which may be broken down into three main categories: direct impacts linked to extreme weather events, such as sudden accidents and deaths caused by floods and heat waves; indirect impacts resulting from modification of ecosystems, such as malnutrition caused by reduced agricultural production and fishing; and indirect impacts arising from socioeconomic changes, such as increased migration and political instability. See Alessandro Messeri, Il ruolo del clima e dell'ambiente sulla salute: https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/QuadernoASVISGoal3.pdf
- ²⁰ ASviS Ten-point Health Plan: https://asvis.it/public/asvis/files/Festival_Sviluppo_Sostenibile_2018/Decalogo_ASviS_sulla_salute_2018.pdf
- ²¹ ISS, Il fenomeno suicidario in Italia. Aspetti epidemiologici e fattori di rischio, ISS 2019
- The report calls on the Commission and the Member States "to assess the need for a large-scale, mission-oriented, public European R&D infrastructure that operates in the public interest to manufacture medicinal products of health and strategic importance for healthcare, in the absence of existing industrial production, in order to support the EU in overcoming market failure, guaranteeing security of supply and preventing possible shortages of medicines, while contributing to greater preparedness for facing health threats and emergencies". https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0282_EN.html (paragraph 169).
- ²³ Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents *Il fenomeno della dispersione scolastica in Italia*, June 2022. See Genzone A., *La dispersione scolastica in Italia è un problema molto serio*, in Fondazione Archè, L'Atlante dei Talenti, paper, Quarto Oggiaro, 2019. According to various analyses, loss of learning and educational failure are the main risk factors (See Focus Europa, Istruzione 2020, Il percorso dell'Italia e degli altri paesi membri verso gli obiettivi UE sull'istruzione, Openpolis e Agi, September 2019).
- ²⁴ According to INVALSI, which published the results of the 2023 national tests in July, 49% of students leaving high school have difficulty in correctly understanding an Italian text (compared with 36% in 2019). In southern Italy, 61% of students fail to achieve a minimum level of Italian, while 65% fail to achieve a minimum level in mathematics.

- ²⁵ A recent study by the University of Trento estimates that in the next 15 years the share of workers at high risk of technological replacement will be between 33 and 18%, equivalent to between 7.1 and 3.9 million people. This appears to be confirmed by the latest ISTAT data on "Citizens and digital skills", which shows that in 2021 only 45.7% of Italians aged between 16 and 74 had basic digital skills.
- Moreover, in 2024 the results of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study carried out in 2022 by the International Association for Evaluation (IAE) will be published, and in Italy INVALSI examined the ways in which young people are prepared to play an active role as citizens in democratic societies. Next year will see the publication of an international comparative study entitled Education for sustainability at school in Europe, which analyses the formal inclusion of skills related to sustainability in school curricula and the methods used to actually teach them, together with factors that facilitate effective learning about sustainability, with a focus on measures to support teachers, and on the creation of beneficial learning environments in schools.
- ²⁷ In the 45-64 age range, in six cases out of ten, women have this kind of responsibility, of whom one out of two are employed (49.7%). Compared to women who don't have this kind of responsibility, a gap of almost four percentage points in the employment rate has been registered.
- ²⁸ Between 2013 and 2021, the supply of full-time, nationwide crèches and pre-school services rose from 22.5 to 27.2 places per 100 children under three years of age, although the percentage has remained almost stable over the last two years. Compared to the European target of 33 places per 100 children, the central and northern regions have almost reached this figure (32%) (two-thirds of municipalities offer this service), while in southern Italy the number of places per 100 children is only 13.5 (the service is guaranteed in less than half of municipalities).
- ²⁹ https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment
- 30 https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-2/
- 31 2022 Natural Capital Report.
- 32 Ministry of Economy and Finance Decree of 31 December 2022. See https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2023/03/10/23A01535/sg
- ³³ The European Commission proposed inclusion of the SEEA-EA system (https://seea.un.org) in the European Environmental Accounts (COM(2022) 329 final of 11 July 2023), given the importance of such data in the drawing up of biodiversity policies.
- 34 https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/PolicyBrief/2023/ASviS_PolicyBrief3.pdf
- ³⁵ The Plan aims to reduce the consumption of buildings by 13%, including retrofitting of 2% of the existing building stock. In addition, it envisages a 60% share of renewable energy for new buildings and the installation of heat pumps accounting for 20 TWh of additional consumption. Moreover, by 2030 consumption in the agriculture sector should fall by 25%, and in the industrial sector by 8%.
- Reduction of excise duty on fuels used for rail transportation of people and freight; exemption of excise duty on energy products used to produce magnesium from seawater; reduction of excise duty on energy products for ships that handle freight exclusively within transhipment ports; research, development and demonstration funds for hydrocarbons; research, development and demonstration funds for coal.
- ³⁷ https://www.parlamento.it/notes9/web/docuorc2004.nsf/8fc228fe50daa42bc12576900058cada/4f324e4b05c1aa15c125894 e00623477/\$FILE/COM2022_0783_IT.pdf
- ³⁸ For example, computer models for buildings can test alternative cooling approaches to reduce energy consumption during their lifecycle. Predictions through simulation can make it possible to balance supply and demand in energy networks, prevent outages and prevent emergencies of various kinds. In predictive maintenance, the analysis of material wear and tear can indicate the need for repair and avoid machine downtimes. For heating for buildings, self-learning thermostats can understand user habits and optimise heating cycles. For traffic management, 'digital twins' powered by real-time data can optimise transport routes according to usage conditions. In agriculture, Artificial Intelligence fed by constant streams of data can optimise the use of fertilisers and the use of an increasingly scarce resource such as water. In disease prevention, digital twins, powered by constantly updated data streams, make it possible to simulate the effects of medicines and food supplements given to individual patients.
- ³⁹ In the energy sector, 'smart' electricity grids can optimise grid capacities by managing and rationalising consumer usage (such as electric vehicle charging points), coordinating storage options to balance electricity production and shifting demand (peak shaving, valley filling). Data visualisation is made possible by geographical information systems and dashboards that improve data understanding and interpretation. Modern information and communication technologies offer the possibility to collect and disseminate information without limits, with the potential to positively influence user behaviour. For instance, smart labels and packaging can communicate the environmental footprint and 'full cost' of a product. Digital platforms can also provide matchmaking between supply and demand for specific products. Furthermore, each individual could become a commercial actor, sharing or exchanging surplus energy, used or unused products and means of transport.
- ⁴⁰ See ASviS Goal 11, Spatial governance, urban regeneration and housing policies for sustainable development, Position Paper, https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/PositionPaper/2023/pp_goal_11_governo_territorio.pdf
- ⁴¹ ASviS Goal 11, *The Decarbonisation of Transport*, Position paper, pp. 13-16, May 2023, https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/PositionPaper/2023/PositionPaperASviSGoal11DecarbonisationTransport230516Final.pdf
- ⁴² This procedure should take into account the productivity of processes with respect to labour and other resources by type of company. France is an example, with the adoption in 2017 of the Law on the Duty of Vigilance of Parent Companies and Principals; the Netherlands, which passed the Due Diligence Against Child Labour Law in 2019, with a subsequent proposal for a general due diligence law.
- ⁴³ Germany, with the Supply Chain Due Diligence Act, which came into force in January 2023.

- See the Final Report presented by the Fourth Working Group of the Platform on Sustainable Finance, Report on Social Taxonomy, 22 February 2022, available here: https://finance.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-08/220228-sustainable-finance-platform-finance-report-social-taxonomy_en.pdf
- ⁴⁵ A revised edition of the Guidelines was published on 8 June 2023: https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-guideli- nesfor-multinational-enterprises-on-responsible-business-conduct-81f92357-en.htm
- http://www.comitatoscientifico.org/documents/FEDERICO%20Greenwashing%200623.pdf
- ⁴⁷ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/high-level_expert_group_n7b.pdf?%20Financial%20Institutions,%20Cities%20and%20Regions
- 48 https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7808-2022-INIT/it/pdf
- ⁴⁹ Throughout Europe, except in a few countries such as Italy, Poland and Hungary, children of same-sex couples are recognised from birth.
- ⁵⁰ In November 2022, a data transparency campaign was launched to strengthen the open source capacity of the Italiadomani.it portal by providing open and machine-readable data on the main topics of interest to citizens, starting with NRRP data.
- ⁵¹ In order to give centrality and prominence to the topic of the democratic participation of young people, a special ASviS policy brief, jointly edited by the Goal 16 Working Group and the cross-cutting youth working group, will be published in autumn 2023.
 - On the topic of universal civil service as a promoter of peace and citizenship for the younger generations, see the Position Paper "Universal Civil Service: Youth, Citizenship and Peace", drafted by the ASviS Working Group on Goal 16 in collaboration with the National Conference of Civil Service Organisations and published on 20 October 2022.
- The Budget Law of 2023 revealed an underfunding of the Universal Civil Service compared to the actual needs for 2023, but especially for the years 2024 and 2025 while the civilian peace corps has never been refinanced. This is a particularly worrying situation, in the face of the growing demand of young girls and boys to have an experience of peace that is useful to the community, which all political forces have said they want to support.
- https://lavocedinewyork.com/onu/2023/07/21/guterres-e-la-nuova-agenda-per-la-pace-presentato-allonu-il-suo-brief/.
- The Report recommends that the Commission and member states 'create a large-scale, mission-oriented, public European health R&D infrastructure that operates in the public interest to manufacture medicinal products of health and strategic importance for healthcare, in the absence of existing industrial production, in order to support the EU in overcoming market failure, guaranteeing security of supply and preventing possible shortages of medicines, while contributing to greater preparedness for facing new health threats and emergencies'. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0282_EN.html (paragraph 169).



Appendix: Goals and Targets



Goal 1: NO POVERTY

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Targets

- 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

- 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters
- 1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions
- 1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on propoor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

Goal 2: ZERO HUNGER

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

- 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
- 2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons
- 2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other

- productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment
- 2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality
- 2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed



- 2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries
- 2.b Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export
- measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round
- 2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

Goal 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages

- 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births
- 3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol
- 3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all
- 3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- 3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all
- 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States
- 3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Goal 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Targets

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- **4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- **4.3** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- **4.4** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- **4.6** By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- **4.a** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

Goal 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- **5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life



- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- **5.b** Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Goal 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- 6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- 6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- 6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

- 6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- 6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- **6.b** Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management



Goal 7: CLEAN AND ACCESSIBLE ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Targets

- **7.1** By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
- 7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix
- **7.3** By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency
- 7.a By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology
- 7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

Goal 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Encourage sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries
- 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
- **8.4** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic

- growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead
- **8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- **8.6** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
- 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms
- 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
- **8.9** By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products



- 8.10Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all
- 8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries
- **8.b** By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

Goal 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

- 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries
- 9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
- 9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities

- 9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending
- 9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States
- 9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
- 9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020

Goal 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Targets

- 10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
- 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
- 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
- 10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
- 10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations

- 10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
- 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
- 10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
- 10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes
- **10.c** By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent

Goal 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

- 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums
- 11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
- 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
- **11.4** Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
- 11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

- 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
- 11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
- 11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation
- and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
- 11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

Goal 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Guarantee sustainable models of production and consumption

- 12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries
- **12.2** By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources
- **12.3** By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses
- 12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment
- **12.5** By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse
- **12.6** Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

- **12.7** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities
- 12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
- 12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production
- 12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- 12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities



Goal 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Targets

- 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries
- **13.2** Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning
- 13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the

- needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- 13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities
- * Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change

Goal 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

- **14.1** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
- 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels
- 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks

- in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
- 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
- 14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation
- 14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism



- 14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries
- **14.b** Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
- 14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The future we want"

Goal 15: LIFE ON LAND

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

- 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements
- **15.2** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally
- 15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world
- **15.4** By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development
- 15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

- 15.6 Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed
- 15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products
- 15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species
- **15.9** By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts
- **15.a** Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems
- 15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation
- 15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

Goal 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote peaceful and more inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all and create efficient, accountable and inclusive organisations at all levels

Targets

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

- 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- **16.8** Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- **16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
- **16.b** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Goal 17: PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Targets

Finance

- 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection
- 17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to

- developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries
- **17.3** Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources
- 17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining longterm debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress
- **17.5** Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries



Technology

- 17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism
- 17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed
- 17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

Capacity-building

17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

Trade

- 17.10 Promote a universal, rules-based, open, nondiscriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda
- 17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020
- 17.12 Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access

Systemic issues

Policy and institutional coherence

- 17.13 Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence
- **17.14** Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Multi-stakeholder partnerships

- 17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multistakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries
- 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public- private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Data, monitoring and accountability

- 17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts
- 17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

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he Report prepared by the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), now in its eighth edition, assesses the progress our country, its regions and the European Union have made in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the UN's 2030 Agenda, adopted by the governments of 193 countries on 25 September 2015. The Report also sets out the areas where action is needed to ensure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of our growth model. The Report for 2023, drafted by experts from the Alliance's over 320 member organisations, offers a wide-ranging view of the situation in Italy vis à vis the various aspects of sustainable development. It offers concrete proposals for policies capable of improving people's wellbeing, reducing inequalities and increasing the quality of the environment in which we live.

ASviS was established on 3 February 2016, on the initiative of the Unipolis Foundation and Rome's Tor Vergata University. The Alliance is committed to spreading a culture of sustainability at all levels and aims to raise awareness in Italian society and among economic stakeholders and government institutions of the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ASviS is the largest network of civil society organisations ever created in Italy and has rapidly become a point of reference for the government and an authoritative source of information on sustainable development issues, made available via the Alliance's website at www.asvis.it and on social media.

