

Executive summary

ASviS's 2017 Report highlights that, notwithstanding the progress made in certain areas throughout the last few years, **Italy continues to fall short of a condition of sustainable development**, as defined by the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, adopted on September 25th 2015 by 193 UN countries. **The country will therefore not be able to achieve the Targets set for 2020, nor those for 2030, unless it radically alters its development model.** In the absence of said shift, although there seems to have been an upturn of economic growth as measured by the Gross domestic product, phenomena such as poverty, inequalities and environmental degradation will not be drastically reduced as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda.

At the international level, the past year has seen the proliferation of research, formal commitments and concrete actions by governments, the business sector and civil society organizations to achieve the Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Such activities (from the ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change, to the renewed commitment to the 2030 Agenda in the context of the Italian presidency of the G7 and the German presidency of the G20) brought the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs on center stage, turning them, in less than two years, in a common benchmark for action at global level.

Among the largest geo-political areas of the world, the European Union, whose status in terms of wellbeing and environmental quality is actually relatively advanced, does not seem to have achieved the necessary changes to place the SDGs at the heart of its analytical and political processes. Because of this, ASviS and other civil society organizations have signed the document *Transforming Our Europe*, demanding a more democratic, just and sustainable Europe and offering a "Sixth scenario" in response to the five advanced by the European Commission in its White Paper on the Future of Europe, whose proposals on the integration of the SDGs in the governance of European policies are expected to be implemented in the spring of 2018.

Global progress towards the SDGs was discussed last July in the context of the UN's annual High-Level Political Forum. Italy was among the 44 countries that presented the actions they are undertaking to turn the 2030 Agenda into the scale against which all economic, social and environmental policies should be measured. Italy was represented by its government, who presented the country's National Sustainable Development Strategy, and by ASviS, which appears to be a unique experience among OECD countries due to the extensive scope of its activities and the number of members.

Throughout the past year, attention to the 2030 Agenda significantly grew in Italy, also thanks to the work of the Alliance and its over 170 members. The latter are also working hard at individual level to integrate the SDGs into their own activities. The National Sustainable Development Strategy, which is still too broad and requires the fleshing out of objectives and concrete actions, endorsed many of the recommendations advanced in ASviS's 2016 Report, especially for what concerns the governance of the process of implementation. For instance, it sanctioned the responsibility of the Prime Minister in the implementation of the Strategy, as announced by PM Paolo Gentiloni Silveri himself in the closing event of the first Sustainable Development Festival organized by the Alliance.

With respect to the 17 SDGs, Italy has displayed some progress, but is also lagging behind with regard to the adoption of fundamental strategies for the future of the country, such as those related to energy or combating climate change. While moving towards the right direction, many of the actions put forth in the last twelve months appear incapable of ensuring the full achievement of the SDGs and the fulfillment of Italy's international commitments (such as those related to poverty and the quality of ecosystems) due to their not being conceived systemically.

As demonstrated by the composite indicators elaborated by ASviS and presented in this Report for the first time, Italy displays improvement with regard to nine SDGs (Ending hunger and improving nutrition,

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing, Ensuring quality education, Achieving gender equality, Building resilient infrastructure, Ensuring sustainable consumption patterns, Reducing greenhouse gases to combat global warming, Conserving the oceans and Providing access to justice for all), a worsening with respect to four SDGs (Poverty, Sustainable water management, Inequalities and Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems), and no significant change in relation to other four (Energy, Employment, Sustainable Cities and International cooperation). **However, Italy seems to lag behind many European countries**, as evidenced in the analysis conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation and other international organizations, and the country's **strong territorial, socio-economic and gender inequalities** are in sharp contrast with the motto of the 2030 Agenda, "leaving no one behind".

The various scenarios to 2030 elaborated by ASviS through a general equilibrium economic model and presented for the first time in this Report, clearly show that:

- **business-as-usual policies are unable to improve wellbeing, equity and sustainability in Italy.** In fact, they could actually worsen the country's condition vis à vis its European partners;
- **a "systemic" approach to the development of economic, social and environmental policies can significantly improve the country's overall performance**, even though some fundamental sectorial actions are necessary, such as those concerning water management and ecosystem quality, also to combat the negative effects of climate change.

Chapter 3 of the Report clearly points at what should be done, in the short and medium term, to bring Italy on a pathway to sustainable development. In particular, over the next six months (in other words throughout the current legislature), Italy should:

- **conclude the approval procedure for laws (land use, water management, etc.) and strategies (for energy, circular economy, combating climate change) that are crucial for the future of the country;**
- **further detail the National Sustainable Development Strategy, also in quantitative terms, and activate its governance**, for instance through the transformation of the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) into the Inter-ministerial Committee for Sustainable Development;
- **adopt urgent action to accelerate the pace of implementation of the 22 Targets whose achievement is set for 2020;**
- **lay down "guidelines" for state agencies** so as for them to apply environmental and organizational standards that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

As from the new legislature, the cultural shift of the ruling class and public opinion must be accelerated in favor of a "systemic" approach to development that can ensure the equity and sustainability of wellbeing, making the most of the synergies among sectorial policies. The third chapter also **describes the actions that should be undertaken with this vision in mind.** These revolve around seven areas: climate change and energy; poverty and inequalities; circular economy, innovation, employment; human capital, health and education; natural capital and environment quality; cities, infrastructures and social capital; international cooperation. Moreover, the country needs to be endowed with further "systemic" tools to advance in the 2030 Agenda, such as a **National urban agenda for sustainable development**, whose characteristics have already been laid down by ASviS and Urban@it, along with the existing one for disadvantaged areas.

To achieve said changes, ASviS will work towards **mobilizing political parties** towards including the issues of the 2030 Agenda into their electoral programs and advancing concrete policy proposals to achieve the 17 SDGs. Moreover, the Alliance will **work with the entrepreneurial organizations who signed the "Milan Charter"** to help the entire Italian productive system understand the new perspective and the **business opportunities tied to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.** Lastly, ASviS will continue collaborating with the Government and the Italian Network of Universities for Sustainable Development to **develop an extensive sustainable development education program.**