THE EUROPEAN UNION
AND THE SDGs

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Spokesman of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development
Background

- 2001-2009: Chief Statistician of the OECD
- 2014-now: Full professor of economics and statistics
- 2009-2013: President of the Italian Statistical Institute
- 2013-2014: Minister of labour and social policies
- 2014-2015: Consultant to the EC and to the UN on SDGs
- 2016-now: Founder and spokesman of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)
Background
ASviS – A unique experience worldwide

- **ASviS** was established on 3rd February 2016 with the aim of increasing the awareness of the Italian society about the importance of the 2030 Agenda, and to mobilize them in order to achieve the SDGs.

- It is the largest coalition ever established in Italy, with **more than 220 members**.

- **A small secretariat, 20 working groups, 300 experts.**

- Daily updated **website**, weekly and monthly **newsletter**.

- **A wide range of activities**: education, advocacy, research, policy recommendations, etc.
The Festival of Sustainable Development ...

2017

2018
... to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- 17 goals
- 169 targets
- 240+ indicators
SDGs: A Universal Agenda

Finally a fully integrated vision of sustainable development, based on four pillars:

• Economy
• Society
• Environment
• Institutions

Three principles:

• Integration
• Universality
• Participation
A new development paradigm
People are scared

Automation

Climate change

Globalisation
The future we do not want

Secular stagnation

Growing inequalities

Climate change

Technological shocks
Thinking the unthinkable: is the collapse imminent?
Today ASviS releases the Report on SDGs composite indicators for EU countries

A unique dataset to monitor the progress towards the SDGs for European countries and the EU as a whole

Based on 66 elementary indicators released by Eurostat
Positive trend for EU-28

Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Positive trend for EU-28

Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
Positive trend for EU-28

Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
Positive trend for EU-28

Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
Positive trend for EU-28

Goal 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
No trend for EU-28
Negative trend for EU-28

Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
The role(s) of the EU

1. Help countries to develop a common vision for the future
2. Develop “policy packages” to cope with a world full of shocks
3. Design policies to achieve a higher equitable and sustainable wellbeing
4. Improve policy coherence
5. Develop common analytical tools to be used by countries in planning their own integrated economic, social and environmental policies
Art. 3 of the EU Treaty

1. The Union’s aim is to promote **peace**, its **values** and the **well-being** of its peoples.
2. The Union shall offer its citizens an area of **freedom, security and justice** without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime.
3. The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the **sustainable development** of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at **full employment and social progress**, and a **high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment**. It shall promote **scientific and technological advance**. It shall combat **social exclusion and discrimination**, and shall promote **social justice and protection**, **equality** between women and men, **solidarity** between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial **cohesion**, and **solidarity** among Member States. It shall respect its rich **cultural and linguistic diversity**, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced“.
How to build a new political narrative

Figure 2: Shocks and capacities

DISTURBANCE INTENSITY

High: unbearable disturbance
Medium: greater disturbance
Low: small disturbance

TIME OF EXPOSURE

EU 2010

EU 2012

EU 2020?

EU 2030?
How to build a new political narrative

The EU is not on a sustainable path.

Economic growth alone will not solve our problems.

A new vision is needed, based on resilience and sustainable wellbeing: a resilient society aims to sustain its level of individual and societal wellbeing in an intergenerationally fair distribution, i.e. ensuring current wellbeing without compromising that of future generations.
How to build a new political narrative

Figure 4: Link between capacities and interventions
From a conceptual “system view” to a policy framework

• **Prevention measures** aim at reducing the incidence and size of shocks and, in the best case, to avert them.

• **Preparation measures** aim at putting in place arrangements that would reinforce the necessary resilience capacities in case a disturbance materializes.

• **Protection measures** are required to mitigate their impact, and to provide relief from potential deprivation or a loss of the standard of living.

• **Promotion measures** serve to invoke the adaptive capacity (flexibility) necessary to cope with longer and/or more severe disturbances.

• **Transformation measures** facilitate this process, to avoid unnecessarily abrupt changes.
Resilience to face future shocks and achieve sustainable development

• We are interested in a «transformative resilience» that takes the system onto a new «steady state»: from «bouncing back» to «bouncing forward»
• From Bauman’s «Retrotopia» to an «Equitable and sustainable wellbeing utopia»:
  • Invest in «resilient and sustainable assets»;
  • Invest in «resilient and sustainable businesses»;
  • Invest in «resilient and sustainable people and societies»;
  • Invest in a «resilient and sustainable system»
Break the silos

• Protection measures:
  – Minimum income with measures to foster people’s resilience
• Transformation measures:
  – Energy transition
  – Digicircular economy
  – Educational system
  – Fiscal system
• Preparation and prevention measures:
  – Health system
  – Urban policies
  – Environmental protection and climate change adaptation
• Promotion measures:
  – Gender equality
  – Sustainable companies
  – Active labour policies
From “structural reforms” to “systemic transformative policies”

- New narrative for the European Semester
- New narrative for EFSI II
- New narrative for MFF
- New narrative for cohesion policy
- New narrative for «Social Europe»
- ...
A big challenge: Policy Coherence

- **Political commitment and leadership** – to guide whole-of-government action and translate commitment on the SDGs into concrete and coherent measures at the local, national and international levels.
- **Integrated approaches to implementation** – to consider systematically inter-linkages between economic, social and environmental policy areas before making decisions.
- **Intergenerational timeframe** – to make informed choices about sustainable development considering the long-term impact of policy decisions on the well-being of future generations.
- **Analyses and assessments of potential policy effects** – to provide evidence on the potential negative or positive impacts on the well-being of people in other countries, and inform decision-making.
Learn about SDGs interactions

Different types of interactions:

- **Positive:**
  - Enabling
  - Reinforcing
  - Indivisible

- **Negative (trade-offs):**
  - Constraining
  - Counteracting
  - Cancelling.

- **Neutral**
The role of national academies

- Network of Universities for Sustainable Development
- Modelling for policy making
- Measurement of SDGs and national indicators for evidence-based policy making
- Fight against fake news
- Training of journalists and policy makers
- Foster international cooperation
- ...
Conclusion

«Although many Democrats have come to associate emotional appeals with demagoguery, emotional compelling appeals need not be appeals to people’s fears and prejudices. They can just as easily be appeals to their hopes and dreams, their sense of shared fate or purpose, their better angels, or their sense that there might be someone who genuinely cares about their welfare and has what it takes to help restore it».

*Drew Westen, «The Political Brain»*