

# **A Critical Appraisal of the Italian Voluntary National Review 2022 on Sustainable Development**

## **GCAP Italia Shadow Report**





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Authorship and responsibility are by Giulia Caramaschi, Sara Ferigo, Massimo Pallottino, Caterina Rondoni and Andrea Stocchiero.

We are thankful to Francesco Aureli (Sanità Di Frontiera), Paola Berbeglia (Concord Italia and Europe), Luca Iacoboni (ECCO Climate), Francesco Biciato (Forum per la Finanza Sostenibile), Nicoletta Denticò (SID), Nunzia De Capite (Caritas Italiana), Luca De Fraia (ActionAid), Monica Di Sisto (Fairwatch), Serena Fiorletta (AIDOS), Claudia Galetto (IRES Piemonte), Mikhail Maslennikov (Oxfam), Marco Marchetti (Università del Molise), Mariagrazia Midulla (WWF), Riccardo Moro (LVIA), Maria Grazia Panunzi (AIDOS), Francesco Petrelli (Oxfam), Stefano Prato (SID), Daniele Taurino (Movimento Nonviolento), Barbara Terenzi (Vis Diritti Umani), Sabina De Luca (Forum Disuguaglianze e Diversità).

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## Executive Summary

The Italian government has engaged in an important process of participation, governance and policy coherence that needs to be strengthened in order to improve the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), so that it truly becomes a basic framework for all sectoral policies and plans. This is essential to address the backward steps that have been taken globally and in Italy with respect to the 2030 Agenda. We will not achieve the goals set in 2015.

The climatic and social urgency, economic decline, involvement in wars, demand bold and truly transformative policy choices. In this Shadow Report we highlight some of them. All are based on the same awareness: Italy must face a path of reconversion of the industrial-fossil-military-patriarchal complex.

We urgently need a new, more sustainable model of society that, according to the principles of the 2030 Agenda, is based on human rights, on gender equality and the rights of nature, is fairer, more just, healthier and a custodian of the people and the planet. The current model is full of contradictions, imbalances and injustices that lead to new forms of poverty.

This path is complex for many reasons. One of these is that it has to be tackled together and simultaneously at the local, national and international level. We do not live in isolation.

National choices are bound to those of Europe and the international community, they are bound to finance and the world economy, to transnational social, cultural and knowledge relations. This is why partnerships must be transversal, they must touch all dimensions, and be based on real multilateralism, counteracting the competing and conflicting forces of the geopolitical blocs.

Fundamental to all of this is to nurture a culture of peace building based on social, climate justice, on education for global citizenship. Our organizations contribute to this path and are ready to help build better political coherence on the principles of the 2030 Agenda and transform the current unsustainable development model.

For this to be consistently followed-up, we advance a few key elements on which it will be important to see progress in the next months:

- The plan for policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) should be made **operational**: the tools and instances of institutionalized dialogue described therein should be defined and tested, in a process that includes the views of civil society.

- A **participation process** in the NSDS has been activated and it is important to strengthen it. However, as it makes sense when civil society can actually influence policy decisions (otherwise it is just a tick-the-box exercise), it would be necessary to apply the same approach to actual political dialogue opportunities by linking them to existing sustainable development infrastructure. Furthermore, participation is never an accomplished task. An everlasting effort should be made to include the non-mediated voice of the grassroots, building spaces and opportunities so that 'No Voice is Left Behind'.

- A specific and priority case is that of the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan** (NRRP), as such not elaborated with meaningful participatory processes, which is actually rather disconnected from the NSDS; the NRRP is also disconnected from a more general and inclusive political dialogue approach. The availability of relevant data, the institutionalization of the connection between the 'Tavolo di concertazione per i partenariati sociali e territoriali' (consultation body for territorial and social partnership) with an effective political dialogue mechanism, will be an important benchmark in this regard.



► There are many policy processes which are very important, and the following pages try to highlight those that seem to be most urgent. In general, we would like to stress that the current difficult international events should **not be an excuse to slow down a 'just transition' path**, based on human rights and dignity, towards a less unequal social fabric. Very special (and so far largely unattended) attention should be paid to accompanying transitions so that they do not result in increased inequality and social suffering (as is unfortunately very often the case).

► The integration of the environmental, social and economic aspects is a constant need: silos still play a crucial role in reducing complexity. **Reductionism and fragmentation** may really be the grave of any transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

► We are now at the eve of the final approval of the new NSDS, but it has to be noted that different sections of the strategy are **still inhomogeneous**, particularly the Partnership section. The latter appears to be too closely linked only to the Development Cooperation dimension; yet very important aspects of national policies where relevant spillover effects are present are not represented (such as trade and investment policies, migration policies, security and defense policies, etc.). Likewise, there is no room for deepening the position adopted by our Country in international negotiations and processes, particularly since they do not correspond to specific national policies, such as: international human rights processes; nuclear disarmament conferences; WTO/TRIPS (including those 'related to COVID-19') and many others. These issues are of the utmost importance, because they are closely related to the contribution that our Country can make in addressing structural/systemic imbalances. We therefore expect to see developments on this issue.

► **Metrics matter.** There does not seem to be room yet to establish a dialogue on how progress towards the 2030 Agenda is measured. Our Country has a very important tradition in this area, with the BES (equal and sustainable wellbeing) process; however, the complexity of the sustainable development perspective is such that it requires a shared reflection not only on the basis of purely technical considerations, but focused on 'counting what really counts'. The path highlighted in this regard in the 'Vectors' section of the forthcoming NSDS could be promising.



## Introduction

The objective of this Shadow Report by GCAP Italy<sup>1</sup> is to offer a critical assessment of the Italian government's Sustainable Development Strategy<sup>2</sup> (SDS), participating in the UN Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2022. The analysis considers policy processes and outcomes with a close look at the changes taking place in the world, from climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic to the current war in Ukraine, not forgetting that there are over 70<sup>3</sup> conflicts in this tormented planet.

In the Report, we preferred to focus on some priority policy issues according to a GCAP network viewpoint based on respect for the principles of the 2030 Agenda, beyond the targets of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and on the adoption of the Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

This approach allows us to overcome the SD division into silos, to take into account the interconnections between phenomena and policies, with a focus on the interaction between internal and external dimensions, i.e., so-called spillover effects and transboundary impacts. With regard to PCSD, let us recall that GCAP Italy has already contributed to the discussion on the National Plan for Policy Coherence<sup>4</sup>, and that we welcome the process initiated by the Government and in particular by the Ministry for Ecological Transition with the assistance of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).



## Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Preamble and Principles

This Agenda is an action plan for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in broader freedom. (...) All countries and all stakeholders, acting in cooperation, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want, and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps that are urgently needed to set the world on a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge to leave no one behind.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets (...) demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new Universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complement what they have not achieved. They aim to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance to humanity and the planet.

## People

We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

## Planet

We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainable management of its natural resources and urgent action against climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

<sup>1</sup> Chi siamo - GCAP ITALIA <http://www.gcapitalia.it/chi-siamo/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mite.gov.it/pagina/la-strategia-nazionale-lo-sviluppo-sostenibile>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ucdp.uu.se/>

<sup>4</sup> Rapporto "Per una maggiore e migliore coerenza delle politiche in Italia" - GCAP ITALIA <http://www.gcapitalia.it/rapporto-per-una-maggiore-e-migliore-coerenza-delle-politiche-in-italia/>

## Prosperity

We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy a prosperous and fulfilling life and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.

## Peace

We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and there is no peace without sustainable development.

## Partnership

We are determined to mobilize the necessary means for the implementation of this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a strengthened spirit of global solidarity, focused particularly on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

The interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realized. If we realize our ambitions across the full scope of the Agenda, everyone's lives will improve profoundly, and our world will be transformed for the better.

The analysis refers to the available official documents which are: the 2017 Sustainable Development Strategy, ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) reports on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the independent ASviS (Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development) report, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) report and key messages, and the new draft of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).

After this brief introduction with a Box on the statement of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on Italian key messages of the VNR, the following chapter focuses on a qualitative assessment of some policy issues for the different Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership) that we consider to be priorities (also referring to previous years' GCAP reports<sup>5</sup>), highlighting backlogs/delays and possible progress to be made. Some boxes focus on specific issues relevant to NSDS implementation (the role of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan-NRRP, policy coherence for sustainable development, the issue of indicators).

In the annex, taking our cue from the methodology proposed by Action for Sustainable Development<sup>6</sup>, we have developed a Dashboard that suggests an evaluation of the current governance processes in place.

First, we share, in the following Box, the Civil Society Organizations' statement on the Key Messages of the Italian VNR, which also represents the position of GCAP Italy.



<sup>5</sup> See the GCAP Italy reports in document section in <https://www.gcapitalia.it/>

<sup>6</sup> Action for Sustainable Development, Full Template of a People's Scorecard on National Delivery of the 2030 Agenda.



### Statement of Civil Society Organizations/Non State Actors on Italian VNR

With reference to the Italian VNR, it is noticeable that Participatory processes were established for the new Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Plan (PCSD) and the 2022 updated National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) but this must still be extended for an effective participation in current policy making.

We note that COVID-19 in Italy has strongly hit the most fragile and vulnerable. The challenges, however, emerged well before: social inequalities were already on the rise, and previous obstacles inhibited a clean energy transition. The ongoing War in Ukraine should not be an excuse to slow down the ecological transition.

We believe that the linkages between Agenda 2030 transition and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) should be reinforced. We noted very low public scrutiny and participation in elaboration and implementation. Data is still very limited, thus hindering any civic monitoring attempt.

We are concerned that most of the current Italian ODA (Official Development Aid) increase is ascribed to refugee spending, and one-shot 'covid-related' commitments. It is our view that Italy needs long-term structural commitment to the internationally agreed 0.7% NGI (National Gross Income) target.

The NSDS should be better harmonized. The Partnership section articulates an artificial distinction between 'internal' and 'external' agenda, not offering much room for many aspects beyond an assessment of Italian international development cooperation, such as trade and foreign investment, migration, security... All connections and spillovers should be considered and addressed in Policy Coherence terms.

Indicators and metrics are considered a technical domain excluding NSAs/CSOs. How will they be given room for discussion of how relevant phenomena are observed and measured?

Real multilateralism is the key to facing current challenges: not more weapons, but more cooperation! And, how much is Italy investing in multilateralism? Unfortunately, Italy has not supported the TRIPs waiver for COVID related supplies and refused to participate in the recent Vienna Conference on nuclear disarmament.

The Italian Voluntary National Review took place in New York at the High Level Political Forum on July 15, 2022. The Italian Government has chosen to focus on three specific areas: Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development; the territorialization/localization of the 2030 Agenda, and the work carried out at regional /metropolitan level that led to the elaboration of the "Local Voluntary Reviews"; the participation of NSAs/CSOs, with the process leading to the establishment and strengthening of the Forum for Sustainable Development (FSD).

The documents elaborated to this end represent an important compendium of the work carried out so far, and are available at: <https://bit.ly/3odhzy0>

The FSD has elaborated a Position Paper, offering its views on the priorities identified by the Government, and its contribution is included in the documents submitted for the VNR, as quoted. The above statement was compiled by a group of NSAs/CSOs representatives who entered into dialogue with the overall UN dialogue mechanism as a short reaction to the official presentation of the Italian VNR, based on the FSD Position Paper, as well as on the 'key messages' conveyed by the government.







## Sustainable Participation

The participation of social actors in the Sustainable Development process is one of the main - although oftentimes neglected - tenets of the 2030 Agenda. The Forum for Sustainable Development was set up as part of the NSDS review process in order to allow direct dialogue with NSAs/CSOs. These two terms are often used almost interchangeably in official documentation, and the need to specify their composition (non-state actors, including universities, companies, professional organizations, as well as civil society actors) has been the subject of repeated requests since the beginning of the process.

This 'hybrid' composition represents an important asset in terms of diversity of contribution; at the same time, it has sometimes been the cause of misalignment in the interpretation of the Forum's mission, and of the operational methods to be put in place for the development of the work. The Forum is divided into five working groups that recall the '5 Ps' of the 2030 Agenda: People, Peace, Prosperity, Planet; the fifth group is dedicated to the transversal Vectors of sustainability; a further working group is dedicated to the participation of Young Generations. The remaining 'P', that of Partnership, is considered to be the responsibility of Working Group 1 (WG1) of the National Council for Development Cooperation, convened at the MAECI (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), whose coordinator is part of the coordination body of the Forum. However, the section of Partnership of the National Strategy has been compiled following the Three-Year Planning of Development Cooperation, reviewed not by the WG1 but by the WG2 on planning: a certain degree of misalignment that will have to be addressed in future.

Currently, about 200 organizations and networks belonging to the world of NSAs/CSOs adhere to the Forum; and its work is animated from the organizational point of view by a dedicated staff of the Ministry for Ecological Transition (MITE), and supported from a methodological point of view by a working group composed of the three state universities in

Rome. However, the operation of the Forum working groups as such does not enjoy any financial support. In the presentation of the Forum on the MITE web pages, the operating mode of the Multi Stakeholder Platform established on the initiative of the European Commission in 2017 is explicitly mentioned.

The Forum was involved in the revision process of the NSDS, and in the PCSD: a process that allowed the Forum to take root in an institutionally relevant dimension. The Voluntary National Review gave the opportunity to formulate a Position Paper, which was integrated into the documents submitted by the Italian Government to the UN.

Although the experience of recent months in the dialogue with the relevant MITE offices has been positive, flaws in functioning of the FSD, and its ability to play a role in political dialogue were still noted. On the basis of the forthcoming regulation of the Forum, there will be an opportunity to address these shortcomings.

Participation is often meant as pure consultation or information, but it needs to develop into a real empowerment.<sup>7</sup> The real challenge will therefore be to translate this (so far) successful exercise of 'procedural participation' into a real political dialogue.



<sup>7</sup> Pallottino, Massimo, «La partecipazione e i suoi oppositori», in Caritas Italiana, Perché riflettere sul PNRR?, 19–37. Quaderni sulla Ripresa e Resilienza del Paese No. 0, Roma, 2021. [https://www.caritas.it/materiali/Italia/qrrp/qrrp\\_num0\\_dic2021.pdf](https://www.caritas.it/materiali/Italia/qrrp/qrrp_num0_dic2021.pdf). In this article there is a short reflection in terms of 'case study' on the experience of the Forum for Sustainable Development.

## The State of Play: a Qualitative Appraisal on the 5 Ps

In this chapter we focus attention on the main policy issues for each P in the VNR report and the NSDS (the Ps are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership). Policy issues that, in our view, are priorities for consistent implementation of the Strategy, highlighting weaknesses and strengths, and steps forward.

First, we stress the importance of the Italian Government's positive commitment to adopt the **National Plan on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD)**. Its adoption will open a great perspective for the whole-of-government approach to the 2030 Agenda.

The implementation of this National Plan will be even more consistent if civil society (whole-of-society approach), and in particular rights holders, are more proactively involved. In this regard, we emphasize that the current emphasis on the **multi-stakeholder** approach must be overcome because it places very different actors in terms of power and interests on the same level, leaving the weakest and most vulnerable social groups on the sidelines.

The themes of 'Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development' and 'Participation for Sustainable Development' have been identified as key areas for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda goals in Italy, because they have a direct reflection on the setting of the **national governance framework for sustainability**, on the ability to plan and measure the impacts of public policies from a coherence perspective, and finally on the involvement of all stakeholders in participatory and educational processes, as an intrinsic governance practice.



### The draft Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development in Italy<sup>8</sup>

The sustainability horizon proposed by the 2030 Agenda introduces us to a complex perspective of transformation. Change is not linear, but is the outcome of complex and intermingling interactions between priorities of different natures. In this view, dilemmas and trade-offs are the norm rather than the exception. Potential synergies and contradictions need to be negotiated, strongly showing their political rather than technical implications.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development shows up in a kind of disguised form: as a neutral technicality, hiding an opening onto a wide arena of social negotiation. It is clear that the sole connection to objectives, targets and indicators is insufficient from this perspective: the matter is how to represent the trade-offs from the viewpoint of the different components of societies, particularly those whose voices are less heard. The connection to the principles of the 2030 Agenda points in this direction,<sup>9</sup> as does the recognition of how crucial the participation dimension is in addressing these trade-offs, both at the stage of policies and strategies planning, as well as during/after implementation, where experience should be distilled to understand how things are going.

The question is: What kind of space is there really for participation in the National Plan for Policy Coherence? What opportunities arise for CSOs engagement in Italy? It is clear that this field can be perceived as too wide, and somehow confusing, particularly as our limited resources push us toward more concrete (or at least 'perceived' as more concrete) prioritization. The National Action Plan (NAP) does not, at present, provide all the answers to this question, but it nonetheless represents an unprecedented attempt to explore a pathway where participation is taken to a level of institutionalized and formalized provision.

<sup>8</sup>Forthcoming, as an annex of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development.

<sup>9</sup>Prato, Stefano, Massimo Pallottino, «Introduzione», Andrea Stocchiero (a cura di), *Sviluppo sostenibile, per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee*, 1–14, Roma, GCAP, 2018.

An analysis of the different stages of the process shows a clear trend in this direction;<sup>10</sup> it developed mainly within and thanks to the project supported by the European Commission (EC) and facilitated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), through which the coherence plan was finally conceived and elaborated, offering an important contribution to the 'Vectors towards sustainable development' part of the NSDS.

The challenge now is to transform this 'procedural participation' into a real political dialogue.

The Action Plan is not conclusive on how this will happen, but offers several possibilities:

► **It recognises the National Forum for Sustainable Development**, in its relation with the CNCS (National Council for Development Cooperation)<sup>11</sup>, as the permanent dialogue platform for the NSDS and the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and revision processes of the NAP PCSD.

► **It identifies the NSDS/PCSD Implementation and Assessment Group**, as the steering body of the process. The Group will also define how the National Forum for Sustainable Development will be involved.

► **It identifies the instances where this conversation will take place, in the NSDS/PCSD Labs.** Their composition and working methodology are not fully defined. So far it is clear that they will be convened at the institutional level, but will provide some space for CSOs/NSAs to interact.

► **It identifies tools through which policy coherence will be analysed:** the coherence scorecard; the coherence matrix; and the sustainability dashboard. All these tools have not yet been translated into specific methodologies, but the plan specifies that FSD should be engaged in their development.

We share this approach and the participatory process initiated with the various stakeholders of the FSD, the NCDC, and multi-level governance involving the territories, metropolises, and regions of Italy.

We hope and will cooperate for its most effective implementation, but, looking at the complete framework, we reiterate the need for it to be truly inclusive, reaffirming the call for the implementation of a participatory program with rights holders and spaces of real accountability.

The following analysis on policy issues for each P, takes up the definitions and indicators of the VNR but does something more, considering them in an integrated way especially with **the international dimension**.

In fact, the VNR and NSDS lack a comprehensive integrated and interconnected political vision between the Ps, the relevant sectors, and above all between the local/national and the global; at most they refer to the political turn at the European Union (EU) level. Conversely, with globalization, the new multipolarism and the consequences of the war in Ukraine in terms of competition between geopolitical blocs, the connection between local/national and international is unprecedented in history.

The issues of climate and biodiversity, growing inequalities, prevailing economic models based on productivism with nationalistic revanchisms, and the geopolitical influences of the new multipolarism, where relations are based on competition and conflict rather than cooperation and multilateralism, deeply constrain Italian politics. Awareness of this fundamental interrelationship between the international and national/local dimensions led us to look at individual Ps highlighting this interrelationship and thus the importance of integrating the Partnership Ps more closely with the others.

Before going into the merits of each individual P, let us summarize below some **general cross-cutting considerations** that link them.

<sup>10</sup> See for example the much less relevant and clear place reserved to the need for CSO/NSA participation in previous elaborations, such as OECD, Italy Governance Scan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, 2021. <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/italy-governance-scan-pcsd.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> There is still a mismatch between the wider sustainable development mandate, related to the 'Partnership' area which is not at all limited to International Development Cooperation, and the existing institutional arrangements, stemming out the Italian development cooperation law (125/2014).

The analysis of the Ps reveals the absence of **an integrated and coherent vision** among a panoply of plans that chase each other, more or less up-to-date, and do not take into account each other. Each plan is consistent with itself, in silos, but lacks interaction with the others, and above all, lacks a common understanding of the principles of the 2030 Agenda to be held together with regard to social, environmental and economic dimensions, from local/national to international.

This is what the NSDS should be for, to put this puzzle together and provide coherence. To this end, the hope is that the PCSD will facilitate putting the pieces together hence giving more substance to the 2030 Agenda principles. Whereas the current strategy sets SD goals, indicators, and target values to be achieved, but does not go into the substance of policies.

The new strategy is an important step forward, because compared to the previous one, it establishes indicators and target values that will allow policies to be evaluated, but it may seek to take on **more ambitious values and cover targets that remain empty or vague, adopting new indicators** (see Box on Counting) and calling for a revisiting of some plans (such as the one on climate and energy). As a result, policy measures to address climate urgency and inequality still appear inadequate.



### Counting what counts: the indicators conundrum

The debate on the effectiveness of policies revolves critically around how progress is measured. The indicators system plays a crucial role. The international community is working on a system which includes 231 unique indicators. The Italian Statistical System (SISTAN), led by ISTAT,<sup>12</sup> has made a great effort to accompany the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with appropriate statistical measurements.

In the SDGs 2021 Report, 354 statistical measures (including 326 different ones) were released for 135 UN-IAEG-SDGs indicators. Compared to the March 2021 release, 119 statistical measures were updated and 30 new measures were introduced. Special attention was paid to regional data disaggregation, by level of urbanization, as well as by gender, citizenship and disability. A smaller number of indicators, 12, are part of a list used by the Ministry of Finance for budget planning.

One look at this list is enough to raise some concerns: how were these indicators selected? Why is the Peace area represented by the 'Predatory Crime Index'? Why is the UN Indicator related to target 10.7.3 on the number of migrants who died trying to cross maritime, land or air borders not included in the NSDS and VNR?

Often the reflection about indicators revolves around their technical qualities, and it is assumed that the technical bodies that are in charge of their selection and collection have already framed the package in the 'right' way, but it is important not to take everything for granted. Indicators should be selected on the basis of technical suitability by an appropriate institution; however, there is a need for sharing on what is actually shown by the selected indicators and on the key social phenomena that are sometimes not represented adequately due to lack of appropriate indicators. Mention should be made of the 'Vectors' section of the NSDS and its attempt to introduce alternative viewpoints and metrics, focusing on quality and processes.

<sup>12</sup> Il Rapporto SDGs (istat.it) <https://www.istat.it/it/benessere-e-sostenibilit%C3%A0/obiettivi-di-sviluppo-sostenibile/il-rapporto-sdgs>





Finally, in general, **governance is still weak** in the interaction between ministries, the proactive involvement of Parliament and civil society. A path has been set in motion with the previously indicated 'Participation for Sustainable Development' initiative. It is a matter of giving it strength and substance in terms of political impact. In particular, the confrontation with civil society is still insufficient and "tick the box". Consultations are carried out, but no real co-planning has yet taken place.



## P for People

As indicated in the VNR report, the 'People' area relates to the promotion of a social dimension that guarantees a decent life for the entire population, so that all citizens have the possibility and are enabled to realize their potential in a healthy environment. In this framework, the eradication of poverty is associated with both the economic and social dimensions, combating the phenomenon of inequality for the benefit of greater social cohesion, and the environmental dimension, reducing people's exposure to environmental and anthropogenic risk factors.

The strategic framework of the People area of the new SDS, preliminarily associated with Goals 1, 6 and 10 of the 2030 Agenda, designs development paths that combat poverty and social exclusion with a strong focus on: reducing territorial disparities; guaranteeing conditions for the development of human potential; and promoting health and well-being.

The SDS explains that In these directions move, among others, the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights (2021), the NEET (*not (engaged) in education, employment or training*) Plan (2002), the creation of a European Education Area by 2025 to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, on the one hand and, on the other, to promote education as a lever to revitalize European society and economy, especially to recover after the still ongoing pandemic crisis. The Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and the NRRP are moving in the same direction. The latter includes a number of instruments and reform proposals that fall under the National Strategic Choices of the People Area, such as Mission 5 'Social Inclusion' (M5C1: Labor Policies), Mission 4 'Education and research' (M4C1 -Enhancement of the supply of education services: from kindergartens to universities), Mission 5 'Social inclusion' (M5C2: Social infrastructure, families, communities and the third sector), Missions 1 'Digitalization, innovation, competitiveness, culture and tourism' (M1C2: Digitalization, innovation

and competitiveness in the production system), Mission 2 'Green revolution and ecological transition' (M2C4: Protection of land and water resources) and Mission 6 'Health' (M6C1: Proximity networks, facilities and telemedicine for territorial health care).

Regarding the national strategic choices (NSCs) in the SDS, **"Fight poverty and social exclusion, eliminating territorial gaps absolute poverty incidence"**, the indicators shows that the latter is **at its highest level since 2005**. In 2021, over 1.9 million households (7.5% of the total from 7.7% in 2020) and about 5.6 million individuals (9.4% as in the previous year) were in absolute poverty. Thus, absolute poverty substantially confirms the historical highs reached in 2020, the year when the COVID-19 pandemic began. For relative poverty, the incidence rises to 11.1% (from 10.1% in 2020) and there are about 2.9 million households below the threshold (2.6 million in 2020)<sup>13</sup>. In 2021, the incidence of households in absolute poverty is higher in the South (10.0%, from 9.4% in 2020) while it drops significantly in the North (6.7% from 7.6%), especially in the North-West (6.7% from 7.9%). Among poor households, 42.2% reside in the South (3.6% in 2020), and 42.6% in the North (47.0% in 2020).

On the other hand, although the number of people at risk of poverty<sup>14</sup> decreased in absolute terms compared to 2018, **the income gap between the poorest and the richest classes increased**. The per capita income of the lowest 40% of the population has decreased more than that of the total population<sup>15</sup>. The advance estimate provided by ISTAT for 2020 indicates that the pandemic crisis has had a relatively small impact on income inequality (+0.2 points), but such, however, as to cancel out the slight improvements achieved in the previous two years, bringing the indicator back to the level observed in 2017<sup>16</sup>.

When compared with the changes in the indicator recorded during the two recessions between 2008 and 2014, the estimated increase for 2020 is relatively modest, despite a deeper decline in economic activity than that observed during the previous two crises, a sign that

<sup>13</sup> ISTAT: [https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/06/Report\\_Povert%C3%A0\\_2021\\_14-06.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/06/Report_Povert%C3%A0_2021_14-06.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Istat, Indagine sul Reddito e le condizioni di vita (Eu-Silc), 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Eurostat, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Relazione sugli indicatori BES del MEF, p. 32: [https://www.mef.gov.it/inevidenza/2022/article\\_00071/Relazione-BES-2022\\_03\\_03.pdf](https://www.mef.gov.it/inevidenza/2022/article_00071/Relazione-BES-2022_03_03.pdf)



the measures taken by the government (in particular transfers to workers and anti-poverty measures), have contained the negative effect of the economic crisis on the indicator.

Regarding the NSC **“Promote health and wellbeing”**, the indicators<sup>17</sup> show that in 2019 there was an **increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents** of 32.1% for the youngest (3-5 years old) and 25.6% for the 3-17 year-old group, respectively. Moreover, households' concern for climate change decreased by one percentage point to 70.0% in 2020, although it has been increasing over the years (it was 63.3% in 2012).

According to the ISPRA 2021 report, approximately 5.4% of the national territory falls in potentially floodable areas, according to a high probability/hazard scenario, and this percentage rises to 14% in the case of a low probability/hazard scenario. In high-hazard areas, 4.1% of the national population resides and 7.8% of the cultural heritage falls<sup>18</sup>.

Working for the prevention and strengthening of anthropogenic and natural systems is the basis of correct and effective risk management aimed at reducing natural economic and human losses.

An essential framework for national actions towards the People area, which must be given greater consideration, is the relations with European rules and the international community. It is necessary **to link, as much as possible, actions on the NSDS to the European and international policy framework**, thus creating bridges with multi-level programming and key players. This is particularly evident in the case of the NRRP and the Stability Pact. Italy's efforts to recover from COVID-19, supported by the European Union through the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, aim to build a more sustainable and resilient future by aligning short- and medium-term recovery measures with overall long-term sustainable development objectives that address social issues. However, some criticalities emerge, as indicated in the Box.

<sup>17</sup> Istat, 2018/19.

<sup>18</sup> ISPRA, Rapporto sulle condizioni di pericolosità da alluvione in Italia e indicatori di rischio associati, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Caritas Italiana, Avere cura di una Repubblica imperfetta. Contributo al PNRR, percorso di riflessione, analisi e proposta, Dossier con Dati e Testimonianze 67, Roma, 2020. <https://bit.ly/3yLkd2V>



### The National Recovery and Resilience Plan

The **cambiare con National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)** (*Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza*) is part of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) program, namely the € 750 billion package – about half of which is in the form of grants – that the European Union negotiated in response to the pandemic crisis. The main component of the NGEU program is the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which has a duration of six years – from 2021 to 2026 – and a total size of € 672.5 billion – of which € 312.5 billion is in the form of grants, and the remaining € 360 billion is in the form of low-interest loans. This huge financial facility has broad implications for how the Sustainable Development perspective will be concretely adopted in our Country in the medium term.

The plan was not conceived through participatory processes or consultation with social actors; its connection with the 2030 Agenda is rather weak, not only because, as such, it is barely mentioned in the text of the plan, but also - more importantly - because of the lack of a vision<sup>19</sup>. Recently, the connection between the NRRP and the NSDS has been explored in the latest version of the latter<sup>20</sup>: this is a first, and important attempt, but there is still work to be done to develop the holistic vision of the 2030 Agenda, and articulate it in terms of domestic policy making. In this perspective, for example, the watering down of all the attention related to growing inequality is a matter of concern both in the latest version of the National Strategy and in its connection to the NRRP, where no link is made to the forthcoming tax reform (in spite of its crucial expected impact in distributive terms)!

The only space for structured social dialogue in view of the NRRP implementation is the “Tavolo permanente per il partenariato economico, sociale e territoriale” (Permanent table for economic, social and territorial partnership). Chaired by Prof. Tiziano Treu, the Table plays a consultative role on matters related to the implementation of the NRRP and may report to the Steering Committee any profile deemed relevant to the implementation of the NRRP, also with a view to promoting the overcoming of ob-

structive circumstances and facilitating the effective and expeditious implementation of the measures. Issues related to Sustainable Development are not central to the consideration of this table; and NSAs/CSOs attempts to develop a deeper understanding of the NRRP implementation are seriously challenged by the lack of detailed data.

While many observers have acknowledged the NRRP's rather weak coherence in terms of its overall vision<sup>21</sup>, the risk is that the same flaws will translate into the implementation phase: the wide adoption of the 'appeals approach', may have the effect of concentrating resources where the capacities are already there, leaving out the areas of our Country that are already weak and fragile. The idea of treating the NRRP as a 'one-shot' also results in the construction of a somewhat parallel management system within the public administration, hiring only fixed-term staff for the implementation phase: this solution does not help the renovation and integration of capacities in the ordinary public administration.

When addressing poverty and related measures to tackle it, the issue of the country's budget and in particular debt management must also be considered.

As will be addressed more specifically in the Planet and Prosperity section, the **Stability and Growth Pact** has been and may continue to be an element that places strict constraints on the implementation of initiatives that tackle poverty and human health.

On the other hand, there is an urgent need to look beyond the NRRP with a comprehensive view of all the different EU funding opportunities, overcoming the traditional silo approach.

<sup>20</sup> Forthcoming, as this text is written. Its publication is expected before summer 2022.

<sup>21</sup> «Il PNRR nel mirino. Governance, trasparenza e impatto: nasce l'Osservatorio della società civile sulla parte sociale del Piano», Vita, vol. Anno XXVIII, novembre 2021.



### EU funding beyond the National Recovery and Resilience Plan: a wider and neglected challenge

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan represents for our Country the biggest policy-making challenge in the coming years. However, it would be a mistake to focus exclusively on it. Some of the flaws identified in the NRRP (lack of an overall vision, 'by appeal' approach, overemphasis on investments to the detriment of running provisions, building of a parallel structure of fixed-term experts who do not contribute to the overall capacity building of the public administration) represent challenges also in looking elsewhere.

Other important financial envelopes, which are less observed and utilized (partly due to lack of planning capacity in some sections of local and national government), and which risk being used as an ATM in the short term, perhaps to cope with recurring emergencies, rather than as an opportunity for a change of pace. The process related to the implementation of the EU Budget 2021-2027 (Multiannual Financial Framework), cohesion policies and structural funds, should be closely monitored.

A significant share of people in poverty are migrants, and this is partly due to problems of regularization and social inclusion. Problems of regularization have an international dimension, because the scarcity of regular, safe and orderly migration channels forces migrants to choose irregular routes, which are very risky and bind them to lengthy regularization processes, creating the conditions for exclusion and poverty. Already in the GCAP Italia 2018 Report and later in the GCAP Italia 2019 Report, the SDGs were analyzed with reference to migration, noting that the SDG targets were not met. Particularly, Target 10.7 calls on the international community to establish safe channels for migration.

On this indication, the United Nations negotiated the first major global agreement on migration: the **Global Compact on Migration (GCM)** (see also P for Partnership). This pact, signed in Marrakesh in 2018 (which lacks significant signatures such as those of the United States and Australia to some European countries including

Italy), outlines a system of objectives, commitments and actions, which should enable a governance of migration compatible with improving the living conditions of both migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination, balancing migrants' rights with the territorial sovereignty of States. This approach does not apply to Italian migration policy, which continues to be a slave to party and media instrumentalization, condemning thousands of migrants to die in the Sicilian channel, and to be sent back to Libya and the Balkan countries.

Finally, the main instrument to help fight poverty at the international level is the **Italian development cooperation policy** (see also P for Partnership). The new reform law of 2014, the creation of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and the definition of new strategic lines, especially for the effectiveness of public aid for development are strengthening the framework. But, as we will see better in the Partnership section, there is a risk of excessive bureaucratization and, above all, not enough resources are being invested as envisaged by SDGs target 17.7.



## Strengths



On **poverty** the Italian government and parliament have acted in a more structured manner, thanks to the stability of funds for the **citizenship income** (*Reddito di Cittadinanza - RdC*) and emergency measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the citizenship income undoubtedly needs major revisions and adjustments - as it shows major shortcomings in both design and implementation - and more integrated measures for social, economic and political inclusion, particularly for what concerns the exclusion of a wide section of the migrant population<sup>22</sup>.



Through the last Budget Law<sup>23</sup>, and with the Social Planning plan 2021-2023, new essential levels of services were identified. The RdC has acted as a driving force with respect to a number of other processes on the sidelines, such as the definition of **essential levels for social services** (*Livelli Essenziali di Prestazione Sociale - LEPS*). In the social sector, as in the health sector, essential services need to be provided nationwide, through efficient allocation of public funds. This may also imply internal restructuring processes of the public bodies closest to the citizen (e.g., municipalities). This represents an enormous achievement. The challenge certainly remains how to implement them.



The introduction of the **Universal Children Benefit** (*Assegno Unico per i Figli*) which represents a universal instrument with progressive criteria, is a positive step towards the rationalization and simplification of the instruments in force to date, to support families with children.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> On this issue, it is worth mentioning that an organic, 10-point reform aimed at making the *Reddito di Cittadinanza* fairer and more efficient, was proposed by the Scientific Evaluation Committee chaired by Prof. Chiara Saraceno. However, the Committee's proposals were not at all taken into consideration by the government, which intervened on the measure 'in a punitive-denigrating manner' in the Budget Law for 2022. See for example the concluding chapter of the Oxfam report 'The Pandemic of Inequality' (January 2022). A further tightening of the measure came recently with an amendment in the referendum to the "DL Aiuti". See <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/stretta-rdc-si-perde-rifutando-anche-offerte-privati-AECYwfjB>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.normattiva.it/atto/caricaDettaglioAtto?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-31&atto.codiceRedazionale=21G00256&atto.articolo.numero=0&atto.articolo.sottoArticolo=1&atto.articolo.sottoArticolo=10&qId=1800268e-6403-4255-981b-396103fc3f7&tabID=0.7900788624658988&title=lbl.dettaglioAtto>

<sup>24</sup> Some criticalities can be found in the Oxfam report 'The Pandemic of Inequality' (January 2022, p. 25).



With the NRRP, important strides have been made with respect to the issue of the **non-self-sufficient elderly**. This is an issue of great social relevance for Italy, given the aging rate of the population.



The NRRP also touched another important theme, that of **vocational training for people living in conditions of great social hardship**, introducing the GOL (Guaranteed Employability of Workers) program with a perspective until 2025 and an investment of about 4.5 billion euros, which should guarantee 3 million people personalized pathways of employability and/or reintegration into the labor market. The importance of taking care of a particularly fragile segment of the population has thus become structural. However, there are also future challenges which must be taken into account<sup>25</sup>.



Italy nominally adopt the **'One Health' approach**. Practice, however, is still distant due to the push for privatization of health services and big regional differences, as was clearly experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A historical tendency to disinvest in prevention and territories, including a lack of attention to sexual and reproductive health, should also be noted.



**Education** is key to building the future of the national community. The strengthening of education systems that took place during the pandemic (after years of budget cuts!) had very little structural impact to improve this critical aspect of the social fabric. The NRRP offers some room for action, but weaknesses need to be addressed: early childhood education services should be provided with a clear target valid nationwide and for each region, with a specific care for fragile territories; school dropout and education poverty are still insufficiently addressed in systemic terms<sup>26</sup>; and the focus on renovation of school buildings is still insufficient in quantitative and qualitative terms.



Attention to **gender inequalities** is still, in spite of official declarations, weak and episodic. The NRRP targeted interventions for women account for only 1.6% of the total (about 3.1 billion euros) and are concentrated in missions 4 on Education and Research and 5 on Inclusion and Cohesion; 18.5% (35.4 billion euros) concern measures that could have positive, even indirect, repercussions in reducing gaps to the disadvantage of women; for the remaining part of the NRRP interventions (77.9%, or 153 billion euros), the possibility of having an impact on reducing existing gender gaps depends very much on the details of the implementation of the plan itself. In terms of health, the National Prevention Plan 2020-2025 of the Ministry of Health does not consider the impact of gender-based violence on women's health and sexual and reproductive health services<sup>27</sup>.

## Weaknesses



As mentioned above, **absolute poverty** is at its highest level since 2005. In particular, absolute poverty in women went from 7.6% in 2019 to 9.3% in 2021, while the percentage for men in the same years was 7.8% and 9.5% respectively. Very often the issue is approached (not always consistently) in terms of inclusion and assistance, while its systemic drivers are left unattended. Inequality is still a key issue, but surprisingly unpopular as a policy objective. Policy making on these issues is too often led by political drivers (i.e. the proposal to abolish the RdC by referendum).

<sup>25</sup> See the concluding part of the report Disuguitalia 2022: Ridare Potere, Dignità e Valore al Lavoro, page 51 here: [https://www.comunisostenibili.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WEB\\_Disuguitalia\\_2022CLEAN.pdf](https://www.comunisostenibili.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WEB_Disuguitalia_2022CLEAN.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> See the letter of C. Saraceno, V. Pallucchi, M. Rossi-Doria et al., herein: <https://bit.ly/3aNJGku>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_notizie\\_5029\\_0\\_file.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_notizie_5029_0_file.pdf)



In most cases, gender- disaggregated data are not available, thus making real follow-up on policy impacts impossible. Unfortunately, gender-based violence (on the rise during and after the pandemic) continues not to be addressed in a structural way and not put at the center of Italian policies.

**Integration policies for the migrant population** are still very weak and often build on political bias. The latter is also behind the signs of 'differential welfare' that were critically noted during COVID-19, when the migrant population paid a disproportionately high price, and received very limited public support. This approach is blind to the fact that most of the people currently left aside will still be in our country and part of the national community in the years to come. This blind approach to 'migration dissuasion' should be considered a menace to social cohesion and consequently to public security. Finally, the right to citizenship of children and young people with migration background continues to be severely constrained. Finally, insufficient inclusion has a spillover effect in terms of a reduced ability of diasporas to contribute to the development of their countries of origin (see link with P for Partnership) rely constrained.

## Steps Forward



The ongoing review of **Reddito di Cittadinanza** must be closely monitored for its progressive improvement in terms of economic and social inclusion.



The **One Health** approach should be adopted consistently, in institutional and normative systems. Strong support should be given in the direction of **the public health system**, and **adequately financed**. Investments (particularly those planned under the NRRP) should be matched by appropriate attention to an adequate level of recurring costs.



Attention to the **education system** should be put at the center of the political debate, focusing particularly on combating educational poverty, in all its forms and on the elimination of gender stereotypes.



**Gender gaps** should be addressed consistently in policy making and clearer financial and political commitments should be outlined, including in the NRRP. Provisions need to address the structural drivers of gender inequality (e.g. starting from education in schools) and gender mainstreaming should be carried out across all fields of intervention, including health, work, education, etc. In particular, it is important to improve the political participation of women, to invest heavily in female entrepreneurship, not only through greater access to credit, but also through training, to accompany these businesses, which are mostly small, in their first year of life; facilitate girls' access to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines and quality employment; allocate adequate funds to gender-based violence shelters and ensure their sustainability over time; strengthen the family counseling centers (Consultori familiari) with financial resources and trained personnel; establish educational pathways for sexual education and the contrast to gender stereotypes; create social infrastructures,



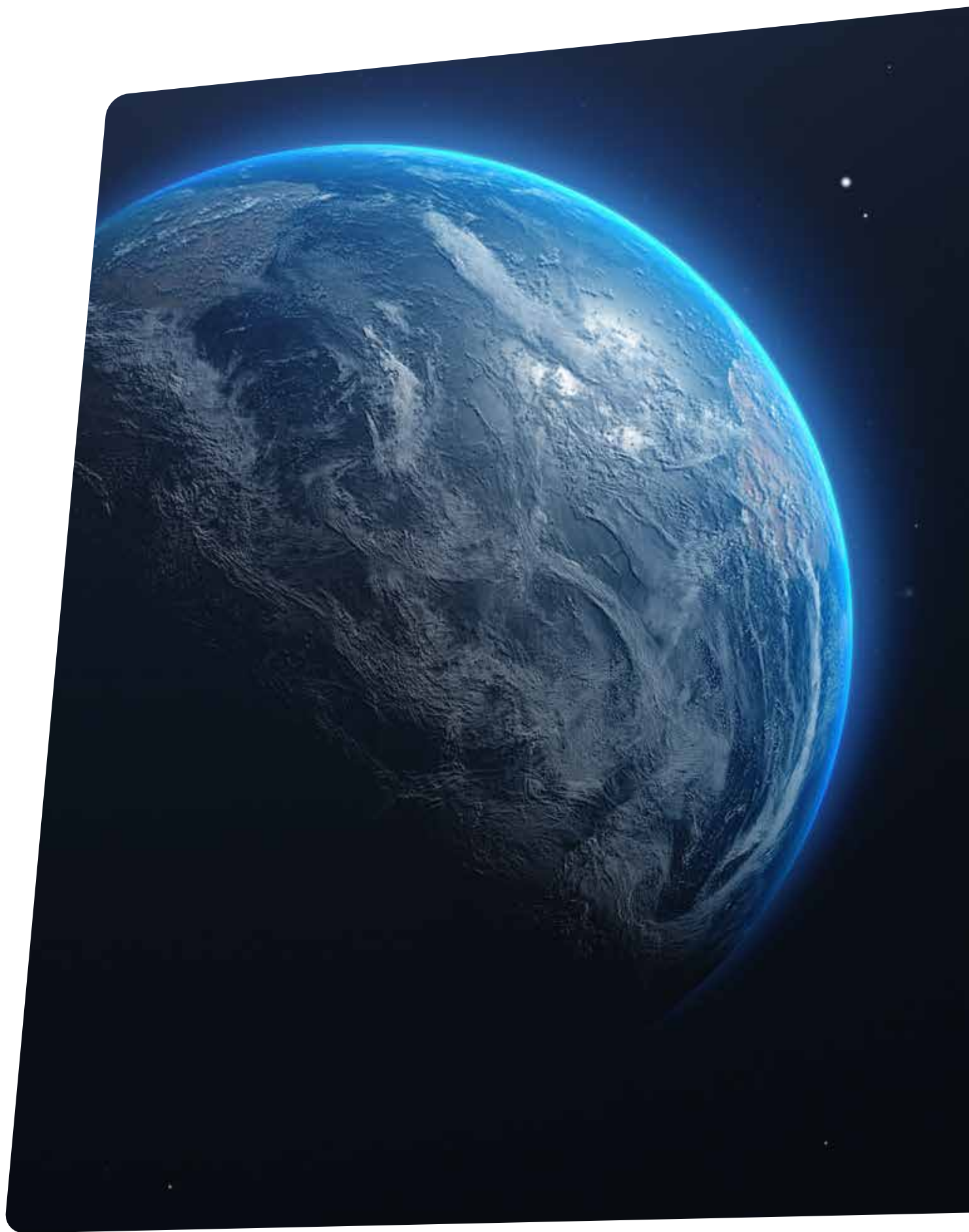
particularly those related to childcare and assistance to the elderly and the disabled, on a person-friendly basis. For example, with reference to nurseries, the situation is stuck at 27% of the necessary coverage (2022). Disaggregated data and accountability tools should be implemented to track progress.

Despite their relevance for Italian society, issues related to **human mobility** are virtually absent from the national policy-making process. As has been noted<sup>28</sup>, it is no coincidence that they do not appear in any form in the NP, while the reforms of the immigration and citizenship laws are stalled. In spite of this, a clearer strategy on integration policies with particular attention to the specific needs of women and girls, is urgently needed. It is a politically contentious area, where close monitoring of the political spaces where it is possible to interact should be carried out (see link with Ps for Peace and Partnership).

Policy processes on social aspects are complex and close social monitoring is needed: in the NRRP, pillar 5 on social inclusion, but perhaps even more the social accompaniment of different transitions (green, digital, administration) where the risk of *leaving many behind* is very important. Equal attention should be paid to the implementation of other important financial packages included in the Multiannual Financial Framework of the EU. All the structural, employment, social affairs and inclusion funds and policies have an enormous impact in terms of social sustainability.



<sup>28</sup> Caritas Italiana, Politiche migratorie: il PNRR che non c'è, Quaderni sulla Ripresa e Resilienza del Paese No. 2, Roma, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3PgXTp0>



## P for Planet

The 'Planet' area of the NSDS targets environmental issues that tackle the loss of biodiversity, alteration of ecosystems, loss of natural capital and related ecosystem services, and the most relevant impacts recorded in anthropic contexts in terms of likeability and health for the population.

For what concerns the national strategic choice (SNC) in the NSDS, **"Halt the loss of biodiversity"**, indicators show that there is **not a significant improvement** in the percentage of protected natural areas in Italy. In 2017, the percentage of protected natural areas included in the official list of protected areas or belonging to the Natura 2000 Network was 21.6%. Although habitats and species have been protected in our country for decades, 89% of terrestrial habitats and 54% of terrestrial flora and 53% of terrestrial fauna are in an unfavorable conservation status. The area with forest cover is growing steadily (31.7% in 2020), which, however, is not linked to increased reforestation or restoration of degraded areas, but rather to the abandonment of agricultural land and inland areas and the spontaneous advancement of pioneer forest vegetation.

Furthermore, the increase in invasive exotic species (more than 13 per year in the last decade), with the consequent damage to agriculture, inevitably requires a reversal of the trend and the implementation of measures to protect and restore genetic resources of agricultural interest. The condition is slightly better for marine habitats, which have a favorable conservation status in 63% of cases (unknown in the remaining 37%) and for marine species, which have an unfavorable conservation status in only 22%.

Regarding the NSC **"Ensure sustainable management of natural resources"**, data<sup>29</sup> indicate that soil consumption has slowed down, although not enough to make the zero-consumption goal by 2030 achievable. In 2019, further 51.9 km<sup>2</sup> of artificial cover (about 14 hectares per

day) were added to bring the total share of artificially sealed surface to 7.1% of the national territory. Over the past five years, there has been a continuous increase in the soil sealing index and per capita soil consumption (from 353 to 355 m<sup>2</sup>).

What is more, the data<sup>30</sup> related to the NSC **"Create resilient communities and territories, protect landscapes and cultural heritage"** show a rather stable figure over time and large gaps between cities concerning the average incidence of usable green areas compared to the incidence of urbanized areas (in 2019, in the 109 Italian provincial capital cities the average incidence of usable green areas compared to the incidence of urbanized areas was 9.1 m<sup>2</sup> per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of urbanized area). Moreover, the excessive **fragmentation of open spaces** is recognized as a factor of degradation, as barriers made by buildings and infrastructures break the spatial continuity of ecosystems. In a fragile territory such as Italy, soil consumption is also a relevant factor of hydrogeological risk and landscape degradation.

The focus on the protection of the planet, also in the wake of the pandemic crisis, is playing an increasingly important role at the **international and European level**. In 2015 there was the recognition of the concept of just transition in the preamble of the Paris Agreement and the ILO guidelines were issued; in 2018 the Silesian Declaration on the Just and Supportive Transition was signed as part of the 24th climate conference in Katowice; in 2019, at the UN Climate Summit, 46 countries pledged to support a just ecological transition with the **Climate action for jobs** initiative, and the European Union launched the **Just Transition mechanism and fund**, included in the European Green Deal Investment Plan.

<sup>29</sup> ISPRA, 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Istat, 2019.



At the moment, however, **the commitments made, in the form of National Determined Contributions<sup>31</sup>, are totally inadequate**: the operational rules of the Paris Agreement are in place, but the lack of a specific carbon market and, above all, of greater collaboration between countries with respect to emissions is underlined. On this, civil society is pushing hard for rules that are environmentally and socially sound and, above all, that do not allow double counting. This is another reason why the Conference of the Parties **COPs** of recent years have been unsuccessful. The commitments under discussion in the negotiations are many, and constantly expanding. They range from the commitment of developed countries to **provide US \$100 billion in climate finance every year** from 2020 to 2025, to the call for help to prepare for and cope with emergencies (loss and damage) by the most vulnerable countries.

At the international level, the SDGs define a cross-cutting focus on the protection of natural ecosystems and human-made contexts. At the European level, the **European Green Deal<sup>32</sup>** sets medium-term (2030) and long-term (2050) targets for achieving climate neutrality in Europe by 2050, to the implementation of which one third of the **Next Generation EU investments** are dedicated. In this context, Italy is called upon to initiate an investment process aimed at the Green Revolution and Ecological Transition (Mission 2 of the NRRP), which, with 59.47 billion euros, intends to intervene in the areas of circular economy and sustainable agriculture, renewable energies, hydrogen, grid and sustainable mobility (especially targeted in the **Fit for 55 policy<sup>33</sup>**), energy efficiency and the redevelopment of buildings, as well as the protection of land and water resources (see **Biodiversity Strategy for 2030<sup>34</sup>**).

In this sense, in the light of the new European Green Deal and the significant commitments undertaken by Italy with the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan<sup>35</sup>**, sustainability is confirmed as the metric for assessing policies at the national, European and international levels.

The NSDS links the vision and objectives of the Ecological Transition Plan (ETP), with the goals of the 2030 Agenda, building a common reference framework and setting up shared evaluation tools.

Moreover, in consideration of the fundamental implementation role that Metropolitan Cities and Municipalities are called upon to play in the sustainability transition and of the substantial national and European resources currently allocated to them (NRRP and **2021-2027 Cohesion Policy cycle**), the NSDS intends to continue to activate and support territories in defining sustainable development agendas.

In addition, the Interministerial Committee for Ecological Transition approved the **Plan for Ecological Transition**. The topics dealt with in the ETP refer to the **main European directives** and identify 5 macro-objectives that are also transversally reported in the National Strategic Choices of this strategy: Climate Neutrality, Zero Pollution, Climate Change Adaptation, Restoration of Biodiversity and Ecosystems, and Transition to Circular Economy and Bioeconomy.

A major element which profoundly constraints the implementation of the NSDS and the various plans, is represented by the **Stability and Growth Pact<sup>36</sup>**. Indeed, public spending on climate is inaccurately considered as debt. This is because the macroeconomic models used by the European Commission do not include the cost of the risks of climate change and the positive role that mitigation would play in reducing them. Defining what can be considered 'debt for climate action' provides an example of good debt, as opposed to so called bad debt, whose excessive exposure is not in line with the European Pact.

<sup>31</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>

<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/fit-for-55-the-eu-plan-for-a-green-transition/>

<sup>34</sup> [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

<sup>35</sup> The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Italy's NRRP) is the document prepared by each EU Member State in 2021 to access Next Generation EU (NGEU) funds, the tool introduced by the European Union for post-COVID-19 recovery, boosting the economies of the Member States.

<sup>36</sup> <https://bit.ly/3Py5KhE>

## Strengths



Italy's commitment to end **fossil subsidies** by 2022 and national subsidies by 2025 are two fundamental pillars of NSDS. For the P of Planet, the R of renewables is fundamental, both in terms of more installations and information sharing, stakeholder involvement, and participatory processes.

Linked to this, another issue that certainly signals Italy's commitment to the path towards sustainability is the process of simplifying access and authorization for **renewables**; and the commitment to energy communities. The NRRP includes good commitments to the development of hydrogen power.



**Energy efficiency** has been promoted by Italian governments for several years, especially in the building sector. An efficiency-first approach should be promoted more because it cuts consumption and dependence on other countries, becoming a structural measure. Industry, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, should be more backed up in its processes to be more efficient.



On the Italian path towards sustainable development, there have been recent signs of openness to debate from the Ministry of Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility with respect to the topic of **electrification** (which is a key issue for the efficient implementation of the NSDS).



With regard to **biodiversity** conservation and protection, in general the level of consideration of this issue is advanced in our country: strategic choices have been made that have borne effective fruit in their operation, such as the system of protected areas and the Natura 2000 Network for the protection of the habitats of various animal and natural species; finally, the protection of biodiversity and the environment has been introduced in the Constitution.



Italy has played a leading role in the **G20** and **COP26** in 2021 with important commitments that should be reinforced and implemented (see link with P for Partnership).

## Weaknesses



There is a **lack of a clear and coordinated vision and governance between the plans** with a multiplication of ineffective instruments, as they are generic and not very incisive in concrete terms. The Energy and Climate Plan is not yet updated; the recent plan for the Ecological Transition is ambiguous by not clearly indicating the real priorities to be pursued, and the Adaptation Plan is missing. The NRRP invests heavily in hydrogen, but it does not clarify energy sources.



Acceleration on renewables has been lost in favor of **investments in gas** and relative infrastructures. This is linked to an inefficient bureaucratic system and to the power of the traditional system of big energy enterprises resisting the decarbonisation process. The consequence of the war in Ukraine is a slow down in the ecological and energy transition.



**Environmentally harmful subsidies** need to be reorganized primarily at a legislative level, while a further step must be taken towards the rationalization of energy efficiency incentives.



The **territorial dimension** needs to be followed more closely by urban regeneration, which is currently insufficient, and on peri-urban and rural planning, where land use change and consumption continues at an alarming pace. This interacts with the geographical divide between northern and southern Italy and livability in large cities. In the latter, about 30% of the population lives in conditions of overcrowding, with more than 40% of unauthorized dwellings, unsatisfactory housing quality, and significant difficulties with public transportation connections (36.4% in the south, peaking at 51.8% in Campania, against 25.9% in the north).

## Steps Forward



A **new coherent policy vision** should be established where the different elements of the 2030 Agenda (economic, social, environmental) are integrated from the earliest phases of policy foresight and conception. Italy should invest more in effective and reformed multilateralism to prevent conflicts all over the world, reducing the military budget in favor of a just ecological transition. The various plans (including the NRRP) should be updated in an ambitious way, elaborated and integrated within the framework of the sustainable development strategy, defining clear priorities for renewable energy, energy communities, .... in line with the European objectives to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990; confirm the phase-out from coal and accelerate the transition to an energy system based 100% on energy efficiency and renewable and distributed sources; and gradually reduce the 19 billion environmentally harmful subsidies, in order to eliminate them by 2025, using those resources for compensatory measures to avoid social and employment relapses.



It is necessary to establish a **just ecological transition** that integrates industrial upgrading with job transformation programs.



The **territorial dimension** needs strong spatial planning, not only infrastructural but also working in terms of complementarity, managing ecosystem services, supporting land restoration with effective Nature-Based Solutions, biodiversity protection, ensuring accountability, favoring integration instead of segregation and gentrification.



The **protection** of biodiversity and the environment in the Constitution provides a way to start a path towards the approval of a **climate law** that allows to review and forecast every measure with respect to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to translate targets into carbon budgets for various sectors. This mechanism makes it possible to identify and recognize the causes of emissions and target them at their root in a coherent way. If there is no forecasting or control policy, this is not possible.



The reform of the European **Stability Pact** must be green and set aside financial and fiscal limits for socio-environmental investments.



More attention and analysis must be dedicated to the spillover effect of climate policy, in terms of, for example, **carbon leakage**, through the new PCSD (see link with P for Partnership).









## P for Prosperity

According to the NSDS, ensuring the Country's prosperity means creating a new circular economic model that guarantees the full development of human potential and more efficient and responsible use of resources. It is therefore necessary to build a development path that minimizes negative impacts on the environment, fosters consumption cycles and more generally promotes the rationalized use of resources and human capital enhancement.

Regarding the national strategic choice (NSC) in the NSDS, **"Promote sustainable economic well-being"**, indicators show that **disposable income of households** fell by 2.8% in 2020 (purchasing power fell by 2.6%). In fact, in the same year, GDP dynamics were largely affected by the COVID-19-related crisis and the suspension of many production activities. As a result, Italian GDP suffered an exceptional decline (-8.9%), stronger than both the euro area (-6.5%) and the European Union (-6.1%). GDP per capita fell by 8.4%<sup>37</sup>.

Regarding the NSC **"Ensure full employment and high quality training"**, data indicate that the production pace decrease has had a significant impact on the labor market. In 2020, the employment rate shrank again to 62.6%, with a 0.9-percentage-point drop compared to the previous year. In addition, the unemployment rate (9.2%) decreased while the inactivity rate increased due to job search restrictions<sup>38</sup>. In 2021 we are witnessing a recovery in employment, driven however by short-term contracts<sup>39</sup>. The problems experienced by the youngest are witnessed by 15-29-year-old NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training), whose share in 2020 increased by 1.1 percentage points, reversing the positive downward trend observed since 2015 reaching 23.3%<sup>40</sup>.

In 2021, Italy maintained the highest incidence of NEETs among EU countries (23.1%), ten percentage points higher than the EU27 average (13.1%)<sup>41</sup>.

On the other hand, the strategy **"Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonize the economy"** records a positive trend. In fact, in 2019, energy intensity recorded a new decline (-1.3%). The gradual decrease in the ratio between gross available energy and GDP in the last decade (-12%) ranked Italy fourth in Europe. The overall share of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption was 18.2%, slightly lower than the EU27 average (19.7%). Italy was above the 17% national target for the sixth consecutive year. Moreover, the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions started in 2005 continued. In 2019, greenhouse gas emissions amounted to 415,622 thousand tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, with a further reduction of 2.8% compared to the previous year<sup>42</sup>.

Finally, it is important to note that, regarding the NSC **"Ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns"**, the progress in limiting material consumption that has characterized Italy since 2010 and allowed for efficiency gains in production processes has marked a setback. In 2019, domestic material consumption (DMC) per unit of GDP remained stable compared to 2017 and 2018 (0.28 tons per 1,000 euros). Intensive fishing activities, combined with the negative impacts of climate change, pose a threat to the sustainability of species inhabiting the seas, significantly limiting the reproductive capacity of fish stocks. In the Western Mediterranean, 92.7% of assessed fish stocks were overfished in 2018, with a 2-percentage-point increase compared to the previous year. Furthermore, in 2019, the surface of organic crops reached 15.8% of the agricultural areas used in Italy, almost doubling the EU average. However, the annual growth rate of the regions converted to organic farming or under conversion (+1.8%) was the lowest since 2012<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 91-92. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 91. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> To know more, see last two quarterly notes ISTAT-Anpal-INPS-INAIL-MinLavoro and Disuguaglianza 2022.

Available at: <https://www.istat.it/it/files/2022/06/NotaTrimestrale-Occupazione-I-2022.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 91-92.

Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> To know more, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg\\_08\\_20/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_08_20/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>42</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 91-92.

Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 91-92.

Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

These figures underline the impossibility of talking about Prosperity and particularly of “inequality” without promoting a profound socio-economic transformation that involves **the global system**. Italian prosperity is deeply embedded in the international and European **market and finance** framework. In many cases, the neoliberal paradigm has shaped finance and the market in such a way that they have lost their social function as an instrument serving the economy and society, to become an end in itself, with the sole objective of producing money from money<sup>44</sup>.

We need a profound paradigm shift. Finance and the market with the value chains must be regulated and oriented to contribute to overcoming inequality, fighting climate change, and pushing for a sustainable transition. In this complex framework, Italy fits in by leveraging the traditional narrative of “Made in Italy” that reflects all the contradictions of the global system.

The Italian **labor market** was characterized, well before the advent of the pandemic, by high and increasing inequalities.

In 2019, a few months after the pandemic outbreak, 11.8% of workers employed for at least seven months of the year were poor. In other words, they had a household income below 60% of the median value of equivalent disposable income on a family basis.

The prevailing discourse on rising wage inequality is focused on human capital. However, several empirical studies show that in the Italian context, human capital explains only minimally the dispersion of wage levels and that other factors contribute to the manifestation of inequalities. These include the role of the market structure, forms of bargaining and types of contracts, technology, organizational models, the institutions that govern the labor market, and the weight of the family of origin in the work trajectories<sup>45</sup>.

A relevant case is that of **fashion**. Italy is a strategic hub for the different functions it performs within the global system: creative, productive, distributive, and symbolic, with a territory extraordinarily close to one of the main basins of cheap labor on the planet: Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, not forgetting the Mediterranean<sup>46</sup>. Starting in the 1990s, big brands started to move their businesses first to Eastern Europe and then to Asia. But the relocated activity stopped being profitable from the moment third-country companies started imitating the products and stealing the related brands. However, the so-called re-shoring or return of industries to Eastern Europe or Italy did not coincide with an increase in respect for workers' rights<sup>47</sup>.

The other great Italian protagonist benefitting from the Made in Italy “miracle” narrative in the international market is **food**. Italy has focused on export-led growth. In Europe, Italian agriculture ranks first in value-added (EUR 31.5 billion). In our country, the sector's share of GDP (2.2%) is second only to that of Spain and higher than that of Germany and France, while agro-industry accounts for 10% of the total value-added produced by the food sector in the EU.



<sup>44</sup> GCAP Italia, Diritto al cibo. Lo sviluppo sostenibile a partire dai sistemi alimentari. Rapporto di monitoraggio sull'applicazione dell'Agenda 2030 in Italia, 2019, p. 77. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3oegeap>

<sup>45</sup> Mikhail Maslennikov, DISUGUITALIA. Ridare valore, potere e dignità al lavoro, OXFAM, 2022, p. 9.

Available online: [https://www.oxfamitalia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WEB\\_Disuguitalia\\_2022\\_CLEAN.pdf](https://www.oxfamitalia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/WEB_Disuguitalia_2022_CLEAN.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> GCAP Italia, Sviluppo sostenibile: per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee Rapporto di monitoraggio sull'applicazione dell'Agenda 2030 in Italia, 2018, p. 46. Available online: <http://www.gcapitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Rapporto-Gcap-Italia-2018.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> GCAP Italia, Sviluppo sostenibile: per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee Rapporto di monitoraggio sull'applicazione dell'Agenda 2030 in Italia, 2018, p. 56. Available online: <http://www.gcapitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Rapporto-Gcap-Italia-2018.pdf>

## Strengths

The success of Made in Italy is characterized by the presence of a nucleus of competitive medium-sized enterprises that have consolidated their position. At the same time, more and more small businesses have closed their doors, and unemployment and job insecurity have unsustainably squeezed household incomes. Among the factors that have made them stronger is "the weakness of our labor market that has determined for some years a lower growth of our labor costs than the main European partners.

The only employment growth recorded recently is defined as "low-labor-intensive" with employees more precarious, for fewer hours, and paid worse and worse. This, of course, has resulted in one of the most depressing factors for the internal market, which should instead represent the solid basis of daily consumption on which to rest, and that is why it worries the most attentive observers. Among the poorest in Italy are farmers<sup>48</sup>.

Moreover, **agriculture** is one of the main sectors affected by undeclared and irregular economic production. More than 450,000 migrants are employed in the agricultural sector, and many of them live in very precarious conditions and/or are exploited within an infamous system called "caporalato". In Italy, in fact, the exploitation of workers by corporals is reported in various sectors (transport, construction, logistics, delivery, and assistance services). However, it is widespread in the agricultural sector, which is characterized by irregularity (see also P for People), and a prevalence of short-term and seasonal employment relationships<sup>49</sup>.

Within this alarming national and international framework, a long-term national strategic vision that takes the direction of a new integral paradigm should be inserted.

<sup>48</sup> GCAP Italia, Sviluppo sostenibile: per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee Rapporto di monitoraggio sull'applicazione dell'Agenda 2030 in Italia, 2018, p. 55-57. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3AYsvGZ>

<sup>49</sup> FOCSIV, Migrazioni e sviluppo sostenibile. Rapporto di monitoraggio della società civile italiana sugli obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile relativi alle migrazioni e per il global Compact on Migration, 2021, p. 40. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3IM1LvK>

<sup>50</sup> To know more, see: Circular Economy Network, 4° RAPPORTO SULL'ECONOMIA CIRCOLARE IN ITALIA - 2022. Available on: <https://bit.ly/3yG1AgU>



The pandemic has forced the European Union and Italy to reconsider the no-debt policy in support of a weak social economy. **The Stability Pact** has been suspended and should be reformed by changing the macro-economic approach. For the first time, the EU has assumed collective debt in support of some of its members. In this perspective, the next Pact must be green and just, setting aside financial and fiscal limits to social-environmental investments.



While the **Circular Economy** slows down globally, Italy is confirmed as one of the most virtuous countries. Following the principles of the Bellagio Charter, Italy seems to have done better than others. In 2020, none of the top five European countries saw an increase in resource productivity. In Europe in 2020, at purchasing power parity, 2.1 euros of GDP were generated for every kilogram of resources consumed. Italy has reached 3.5 euros of GDP (60% higher than the EU average). This trend is also confirmed by the rate of circular use of materials, which in Europe was 12.8%, while in Italy it reached 21.6%; and by waste recycling, which in Italy reached 68%, the highest figure in the European Union. However, Italy appears to be clearly struggling with land consumption, eco-innovation, and goods repair<sup>50</sup>.



With the 2022 Budget Law, **the Italian Climate Fund** has been set up to finance interventions for developing countries and for private and public entities to contribute to achieving the objectives set out in international agreements on climate and environmental protection. However, there is no information on priorities between mitigation, adaptation and loss & damages. Furthermore, the financial framework could worsen the debt problem of low-income countries with few resources dedicated to local communities (see link with P for Partnership).

## Weaknesses



Italy currently lacks a Strategic Analysis Unit dedicated to **ex-ante evaluation** of medium- to long-term policy measures nurturing the political discussion. The only tools for assessing public expenditure, such as the budget report and the ISTAT BES report, are drawn up ex-post, which therefore does not allow for designing actions before they can address the necessary transition.



The absence of a long-term **industrial policy** focused on an ecological and just transition, excessive policies of **labor market flexibility**, and deterioration of **trade union representation**, are undermining national prosperity. All these processes have led to the acute de-industrialization that we have witnessed over the past 20 years, the lack of high-value-added jobs and the spread of working poor. The NRRP does not have a long-term vision that translates into a sum of projects.



The "first half/step" of the **tax reform** was not courageous enough. The redistributive function of the tax lever appeared deeply diminished compared to the first parliamentary decisions. Overall, the reform is predominantly oriented towards promoting economic growth, traditionally understood as GDP growth, and with a marked underestimation of the social dimension of sustainable development to which it should ideally contribute. In this way, the reform seems predisposed to maintain horizontal inequities without a vital redistributive aspect and a rebalancing of the fiscal loads.<sup>51</sup>



**Italian value chains** show problems in respecting human and labor rights and environment standards from the countries of origin of raw materials, to fragmented production in transit countries, to the domestic market. (see link with P for Partnership).

<sup>51</sup> OXFAM Italia (2022), La pandemia della disuguaglianza, OXFAM Briefing Paper, p.23, <https://bit.ly/3Pa686d>

<sup>52</sup> The text of the delegated bills has recently been rejected by the House and has come to a standstill in the Senate. Disappointingly enough, the text devalues the redistributive function of the tax system, and crystallizes the horizontal inequities of the system. See OXFAM Italia (2022), La pandemia della disuguaglianza, OXFAM Briefing Paper, <https://bit.ly/3Pa686d>

## Steps Forward



A **strategic vision** on prosperity is needed. Indeed, the EU role is crucial in providing a common direction, but it is not enough. It would be necessary to develop a specific national path that considers our country's economic, social, and geographical peculiarities. A more serious **democratic engagement** and an antidote to disaffection from politics that allows people to take part in decision-making.



There are many policy processes aimed at reducing inequality that are being discussed in the political and social arena, such as the introduction of a **minimum wage**. The ongoing debate on the fiscal reform is also of great importance because of its distributional potential. These debates need to be closely monitored, as their outcomes need to be determined on the basis of politically functional considerations rather than of evidence.<sup>52</sup>



A long-term national **industrial plan for an ecological and just transition** based on a cooperative approach in the European area, genuinely environmentally friendly and socially fair, keeping competition within the more general framework of an idea of society. This should be coherent with a truly socially and environmentally cooperative agenda within the **WTO**. (see link with P for Partnership).



It will be necessary to define **standards for financial investments and taxonomy** for the private sector to increasingly orient market choices towards ecological transition while avoiding harmful relocations in developing countries. The Italian government should support the negotiation of the **EU regulation on due diligence**, improving human rights and environmental standards in value chains. (see link with P for Partnership).



Transition whose economic and social costs can be met by **more demanding taxation of multinationals** benefiting from the conditions of tax competition or tax havens: the initiative promoted by the G7 and G20 is insufficient.





Furthermore, Italy should relaunch the **Financial Transaction Tax** negotiations, which are stalled in the EU. (see link with P for Partnership).



In the field of **food**, the new **Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP) is being transposed in the national strategic plan, that should be green - agroecology - and aimed at supporting multi-functional small holder agriculture. (see link with P for Partnership). In terms of PCSD, it is important to closely follow up the national follow-up process of the World Food System Summit (the so-called 'national pathways'), including any concerns that have been raised about the whole process.



The **debt-to-investment swap** hypothesis needs to be implemented for the 2030 Agenda, and new international financial agreements should be aligned with climate and biodiversity targets to make financial flows consistent and finance the transition. Italy must strengthen the **debt initiative taken by the G20**, with cancellations and moratoria for the poorest countries, and promote an internationally recognized multilateral forum for negotiations. Italy should create a multilateral platform for debt crisis management, promote fiscal justice, and improve the **regulation of financial markets and derivatives** (eliminating the impact on commodity volatility). Moreover, Italy should commit to increase the amount of **Special Drawing Rights** (SDR) to be reallocated and promote the use of these funds for Official Development Assistance (ODA), at least a share of the SDR resources that high-income countries received in August 2021 (see link with P for Partnership).



What is needed is restructuring and rejuvenation of **public administration** leading to the entry of young people with new skills capable of doing innovative and prudent territorial design. A new way of functioning of the public administration, in which the positive or negative evaluation of a project passes through the administration's contribution to the country's structural development.





## P for Peace

The NSDS and VNR address the need to promote peaceful, fair and inclusive societies – for residents and migrants – by supporting the fight against discrimination (age, gender, disability, and race) and providing measures to combat organized crime, corruption and violence in all its forms.

The resolution adopted by the General Assembly on September 25, 2015 states, "There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development"<sup>53</sup>. However, it seems impossible not to notice that of the 5 Ps, that Peace has been the most neglected and sacrificed in the 2030 Agenda. **Goal 16 of the SDGs** is dedicated to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and aims to provide universal access to justice and build responsible and effective institutions at all levels. While it is undoubtedly crucial that these issues are represented in a sustainable development goal, an analysis of the targets into which it is articulated clearly expresses the co-existence of even relatively different themes, **only very partially related to the issue of violent conflict and the arms trade**<sup>54</sup>.

With Goal 16, what seems to be **missing is a systemic vision of peace**, a 360-degree reasoning based on the construction of a society of peace through education and nonviolent formation. In an effort to fill these shortcomings, other goals and targets can be linked within a more consistent understanding of positive peace, in what is now called Goal 16+: 24 targets from seven other Goals - including SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, and 17 - that directly measure an aspect of peace, inclusion or access to justice<sup>55</sup>.

Global citizenship education, another face of education for sustainable development, mentioned by Goal 4.7, focuses on the need for a change of mindset to acquire the necessary holistic and silo-breaking vision.

A more holistic view of peace, however, does not seem to be reflected in the **VNR. The document reports a disparate set of data that fails to grasp the complexity of the peace discourse**. Among these, we can find data such as employment rates, physical accessibility of schools, intentional homicides, women's participation in political and economic life, people detained in adult correctional institutions, and complete civil proceedings of ordinary courts<sup>56</sup>.

These figures show the difficulties faced by Italy in thinking systemically about peace, rights and the rule of law, as well as the role of our country in promoting global peace. Among these complexities, we cannot ignore the enormity of **the arms problem**. Every year, about 2 trillion dollars are spent on the military sector, of which 126 billion dollars (an increasing figure) are invested in nuclear weapons. All of this with extended CO<sub>2</sub> emission, without being accounted for by national and international statistical indicators on sustainable development.<sup>57</sup> We do not want to diminish the role that the production and sale of arms play in the context of peace-making, especially in a moment of international crisis such as the one we are experiencing due to the war in Ukraine.

Priority must be given to writing **a national development agenda based on a vision of peace systems consistent with the 2030 Agenda**. To this end, as Aldo Capitini<sup>58</sup> recalls, it will be necessary to keep together means and ends to draw a path of choices consistent with their principles. In this perspective, several aspects need to be developed: **climate disarmament** and **humanitarian disarmament** (a people-centered approach to disarmament aimed at preventing and alleviating human suffering and environmental damage). We also recall the concept of **Common Security** developed in 1982 during the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, led by the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, in an attempt to replace the idea of nuclear Deterrence with a positive approach to security.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/ RES/70/1, 21 Oct. 2015, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> GCAP Italia, Sviluppo sostenibile: per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee Rapporto di monitoraggio sull'applicazione dell'Agenda 2030 in Italia, 2018, p. 157-158. Available online. <http://www.gcapitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Rapporto-Gcap-Italia-2018.pdf>

<sup>55</sup> To know more, see: <https://www.sdg16toolkit.org>

<sup>56</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 93. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> To know more, see: <https://www.valigiablu.it/industria-militare-ambientale/>

<sup>58</sup> One of the founders of the Italian peace movements.



## Global Peace Index and Positive Peace Index.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) has been playing a leading role in proposing reliable indicators on the degree of world peace, which consider several aspects both in a narrow and broad sense. The Global Peace Index (GPI) is the world's leading measure of global peace. The GPI covers 99.7% of the world's population, using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources, and measures the state of peace in three domains:

- ▶ the level of Societal Safety and Security;
- ▶ the extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflicts;
- ▶ and the degree of Militarization.

Positive Peace is a transformational concept because it shifts the focus away from the negative, describing the conditions necessary for peace and society to flourish. Due to its systemic nature, improvements in Positive Peace not only strengthen peace, but are also associated with many other desirable outcomes for society, such as higher GDP growth, better measures of wellbeing, higher levels of resilience and more harmonious societies. Importantly, it provides a theory of social change, explaining how societies transform and evolve. Positive Peace describes an optimal environment in which human potential can flourish. Positive Peace can be used as a predictor of future substantial falls in peace many years in advance, thereby giving the international community forewarnings and time to act. The Positive Peace Index (PPI), consists of eight Pillars, each containing three indicators.





## Strengths



Issues related to national defense and security are traditionally segregated from the wider policy-making arena, and treated only in terms of 'competing' budgetary requirements, as they could be set independently from any other 'public good' considerations. The 'Peace' section in **the forthcoming NSDS therefore represents good news insofar as it relates this concern to a broader policy making agenda.**



Human rights protection is a concern, as is **ensuring citizens against law enforcement abuses**. The 'Cucchi trial'<sup>59</sup> has been emblematic in this regard: the prosecution of senior members of the Carabinieri Corps should be hailed as a case where the ordinary justice was able to establish a rightful 'trial truth', despite strong institutional resistance, as well as considerable personal and human costs.



Italy does not perform very well in international peace-related metrics, such as the Global Peace Index (GPI) and Positive Peace Index (PPI).<sup>60</sup> Italy's in both indexes is recognized as improving slightly since 2009, but slowing down in recent years. Italy ranks between 32nd and 34th in the GPI ranking, and between 25th and 27th in the PPI ranking. These datasets highlight **a relative advantage of our Country in terms of lower internal conflict than neighboring countries.**



**The National Global Citizenship Education Strategy** (2021), and now the action plan, is trying to fill a gap that the OECD DAC had identified and promoted as a solution to foster a new vision of 'global citizenship'. However, problems still remain in the identification of relevant indicators. To date, in fact, the only official indicators concern students' competences, while the Italian strategy sees as necessary indicators aimed at the adult target (world of work, communication, policy makers) (see link with P for Partnership).

## Weaknesses



The **lack of a global systemic vision** in terms of peace is also reflected in the Italian national reality, which, following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, has undoubtedly followed the European line **of the arms race**. It is no coincidence that P for Peace was not among the priorities of the Italian government for the G20 Presidency only a few months ago...



But there is also a lack of real institutional dialogue that calls into question the "legal" **production of weapons** as a resource for dealing with local and global crises. There can be no sustainability without peace, but Italy, although bound by Law 185/90, continues to contribute enormously to the international distribution of armaments. In 2021 alone, Italy exported armaments worth over 4.6 billion euros and imported approximately 679 million<sup>61</sup> (see link with P for Partnership)



Italy's public debt amounts to 2.760 billion euros, the sixth highest in the world, and it is not easy to find the resources needed to fight inequality and social crisis. However, following the outbreak of war in Ukraine, **Italy has promised NATO that it will invest 2% of its GDP in armaments**, increasing from the current 25.8 billion euros a year to over 38. In the same NRRP, we find disguised investments in the arms industry<sup>62</sup>.



Italy has **not yet established an independent national authority for human rights**, also in the face of the two voluntary commitments made in this field when Italy was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2007-2010 and 2011-2014, the innumerable relevant recommendations by each body of the United Nations Treaty and, finally, as a result of the three universal periodic reviews that examined Italy.

<sup>59</sup> Stefano Cucchi died on 27/11/2009, while the young man was in pre-trial detention. After an extremely complex judicial affair, several Carabinieri were definitively sentenced in April 2022, while the position of others was postponed for further trial.

<sup>60</sup> To know more, see: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org>

<sup>61</sup> To know more, see: <https://pagellapolitica.it/articoli/vendita-armi-italia-2021> (17/06/2022)

<sup>62</sup> To know more, see: <https://bit.ly/3PyzrPv>

This body is a key element in terms of dialogue with civil society and policy coherence to develop the systemic vision of peace needed for sustainable development.<sup>63</sup>



We are witnessing a **clear separation between the Internal Sustainable Development Agenda and the External Policy Agenda**. Many connections and spillovers lay unaddressed thus hindering the possibility of our country to play an effective role as a global peace promoter (see link with P for Partnership).

## Steps Forward



The commitment of our country to integrating peace in the equally interesting terms of integral peace is the 2018 United Nations agenda, "SECURING OUR COMMON FUTURE. **An Agenda for Disarmament**." There are many activities carried out under the aegis of this program, which can be followed in real time here: <https://bit.ly/3uRqol1>.

In this regard, the positions adopted by Italy in international fora (i.e. its refusal to participate in the recent Vienna conference for nuclear disarmament) need to be closely monitored.



Among the priorities of the State for building integral peace should be disarmament policies that follow article 1(3) of **Law 185/90 on the arms trade**: the option is for a "gradual production differentiation and the conversion for civil purposes of the defense industries." And it is necessary that initiatives carried out in this field be recognized as additional social utility to be declared as a qualifying element in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Particular attention must be paid to those territories and people who are faced with what appears to be a real blackmail between the reasons of ethics and the common good, and the reasons for war.



It will be necessary for the State to work earnestly to write **a national action plan linked to the Youth Peace and Security Resolution**. The Resolution is still blocked, and there is no related working schedule. Its implementation would stimulate the action of youth organizations in the field of peace and security, by providing them with the institutional channels they need for their work. It will also be important to promote awareness of Italy's National Action Plan on **"Women, Peace and Security"**, which refers to Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security adopted by the UN in 2000 and formulated every three years.



Attention should be paid to progress towards the establishment of an independent **national authority for the protection of human rights**.



A critical process toward broadening the rights foundation is the establishment of a **new citizenship law**, based on the principles of *Ius Soli* or *Ius Scholae*. As we write this text, the new bill is being examined in the Parliament, and is still the subject of a fierce political struggle.

<sup>63</sup> W.A.A., La protezione dei diritti umani. Le istituzioni nazionali indipendenti a confronto, Luiss University Press, Roma, 2021.







## P for **P**artnership

As both the NSDS22 and the Italian VNR 2022 report, the **Partnership** is dedicated to the breakdown of the “external dimension” of the Strategy, its areas of intervention and development cooperation objectives, as outlined by Law No. 125/2014, and intended as part of the wider Italian foreign policy carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). Regarding People, Planet, Prosperity, and Peace, the NSDS22 follows the same structure as in 2017. Regarding Partnership, the NSDS22 reinterprets each of the 4 Ps from the point of view of their “external dimension” and incorporates Italy’s 2021-2023 **Three-year programming and policy planning document** (PPPD) of international development cooperation. Symmetrically, the latter fully reflects the principles and vision of the 2030 Agenda, whose logic, spirit and timeframe it adopts.<sup>64</sup>

Regarding the targets and indicators related to the Partnership Section, VNR 2022 exclusively refers to **indicator 17.2.1 - Net ODA, total and to Least Developed Countries, as a proportion of GNI**. Furthermore, it reports that Italy’s provisional data show an increase of its official development assistance (ODA) in 2021, mainly due to increased contributions to multilateral institutions, banks and development funds, and to Italy’s contribution at multilateral level to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>65</sup> According to these data, Italy spent a total of US\$ 6 billion in ODA in 2021, reaching 0.28% of the country’s GNI. However, **all the other targets and indicators related to Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda are not mentioned at all by VNR 2022**. Just to name a few, concerning the Finance section of Goal 17, the indicators linked to target 17.3 *Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources* are missing, as are those linked to targets 17.10, 17.11 e 17.12 which concern the Trade section of Goal 17.

Therefore, **the above-mentioned approach can be misleading as it establishes the coincidence of the Partnership section - as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda - with only the dimension of international development cooperation**. The issue is acknowledging that, despite its importance for some specific objectives, the international cooperation agenda does not represent the entirety of a country’s “external” agenda, but must be considered as part of a broader and integrated agenda in which many other issues converge and on which it is essential for partnerships to work to achieve the 17 SDGs in strict relation with the other SDGs. As the Forum’s Position Paper for Italy’s VNR 2022 points out, the NSDS22 **“is still unclear on where the dialogue on Partnership issues beyond development cooperation should take place, including all issues related to migration, defense, trade and foreign investment policies (among others)”**<sup>66</sup>.

As highlighted in the previous chapters, the choices and policies implemented at a domestic level are closely correlated, with reciprocal influence, to the external one. Italian positioning in the global partnership system inevitably and strongly grafts onto international processes. This should imply the need for coherence between internal and external energy policies, linked to financial, trade and investment policies, as well as migration and defense and security policies.

For example, **the debate and tensions among World Trade Organisation (WTO) members** show some sensitivity in proposing new measures for coherence on trade, food sovereignty and environmental sustainability. International material flows between Italy and the world show the existing geopolitical and geoeconomic interdependencies whose environmental and social sustainability must be evaluated, thus guiding the choices of all economic sectors, from industry to agriculture and farming. It is crucial to actively participate in the definition and implementation of international trade rules and global supply chains, first of all with regard to EU regulations on due diligence, both on environmental and social issues.

<sup>64</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 94-95. Available online: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>; Ministero della Transizione Ecologica, Strategia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile 2022. Italy 2022, p. 18-19.

<sup>65</sup> As reported by the VNR, at international level, Italy confirmed leadership on global priority areas: health, food security, climate. Ministero della Transizione Ecologica and Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Voluntary National Review. Italy 2022, p. 98. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3yNcwJM>

<sup>66</sup> Forum for Sustainable Development, High Level Political Forum 2022 - Italian Voluntary National Review, A position paper of the Forum for Sustainable Development. Italy 2022, p. 2.



Another example concerns **migration**. The 2030 Agenda is the first international tool to include and recognize migration as a dimension of development. Nevertheless, migration has never entered the political debate and Italian public opinion on sustainable development, except in a marginal way. Trade, finance and investments as an end in themselves cause forced migration and exploit the labor of migrants. The phenomena of land grabbing and unfair trade generate the conditions for human insecurity and expulsion.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the governance of migratory flows due to environmental degradation, "energy development" projects leading to the violation of social and human rights, and the absence of a support framework for investments in resilience to climate change, requires special attention.

Finally, coming to the Italian **defense and security policy**, military missions abroad have an environmental and social impact that must be measured, just as their functionality to investments in fossil fuels and their correspondence to peace-building processes based on social justice must be monitored, including all efforts needed to ensure a positive contribution of Italy to international processes to control and limit the production and tra-

de of weapons (including nuclear weaponry). We should not be misled by the idea that the only feasible increase in international cooperation is on the side of military alliances.

Attention should be paid to "real multilateralism": not that consisting of exclusive clubs of powerful countries, such as the G20 or G7. There could be instances in which discussions are made deeper in the search for global consensus, but without assuming that "those powerful" could make decisions on behalf of the whole human family. Attention should also be high where national sovereignties are delegated to opaque processes where (regardless of any possibly arising conflict of interest) financial and economic powers play a role of convenor and agenda setting, thus effectively disempowering open, accountable and democratic (although often difficult and tiresome) processes: it is the case of the recent World Food System Summit<sup>68</sup>.

Likewise, an effort by our government should be made towards the European Union: the new "multiplex"<sup>69</sup> World order requires regional organizations to play a key role in building the global common good and peace.

Finally, it is of utmost importance to place efforts in policy making at national (and regional/European) level within the firm recognition of the need for systemic structural transformation: the emphasis on national/local efforts could be somehow misleading as it contributes by diverting the attention to the overall mechanisms that are at the basis of injustice and tensions.

The importance of the Partnership section of the strategy should point precisely to the role that our country should have in addressing those systemic roots.



<sup>67</sup> GCAP Italia, Monitoring Report of the Italian Civil Society on the Sustainable Development Goals related to Migration and for the Global Compact on Migration, 2021, p. 11; 49. Available online: <https://www.focsiv.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Migrazioni-e-Sviluppo-Sostenibile-2021-ENG-19.04.2021.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Clapp, Jennifer, Indra Noyes, Zachary Grant, «The Food Systems Summit's Failure to Address Corporate Power», Development, vol. 64, no. 3–4, December 2021, pp. 192–198.

<sup>69</sup> Acharya, Amitav, «After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order», Ethics & International Affairs, vol. 31, no. 3, 2017, pp. 271–285.

## Strengths



Italy has always shown very strong **support for the international multilateral system**. Although the narrative is often not enough, it is important to take this approach seriously and to build on it.



The Italian plan for **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development**, which at the time of writing is being finalized prior to its approval, establishes a comprehensive and advanced pathway for institutions, with room for the formalized participation of NSAs/CSOs. The Plan is the outcome of a long effort developed together with the OECD and DG REFORM of the European Commission, through a participatory process that involved the same protagonists who contributed to the drafting of the NSDS.



**Law 125/2014 on the development cooperation** focuses on the issue of effectiveness by aligning the modes of interventions with the evolution of national legislation and developments recorded at the international level in the Italian cooperation system. Italy has an AICS-DGCS **Plan for the effectiveness** of interventions that introduces new operational approaches including a results-based management (RBM) system.<sup>70</sup>



On the occasion of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, and together with other countries, Italy signed a commitment, **the "Addis Tax Initiative" (ATI)**, to increase resources destined to technical assistance for strengthening tax and taxation systems, promoting more effective use of domestic resources and more efficient and fairer taxation regimes to improve services to citizens and act as a mechanism for internal redistribution of wealth for greater social balance.<sup>71</sup>



**At COP26**, Italy signed a commitment to reduce fugitive methane emissions by 30% by the end of the decade together with 80 other countries; together with partners such as Indonesia or Brazil, it has pledged to reverse deforestation activities by 2030 and collectively dedicate US \$19.2 billion to this effort. Italy is among the signatories to a declaration which supports a transition to clean and renewable energy and an end to subsidies, guarantees and other supporting tools to fossil fuels by the end of 2022. Among other commitments, Italy has joined the Breakthrough Agenda to make clean technologies and sustainable solutions more affordable, accessible, and attractive in every emission sector globally by 2030. It has also joined "Boga", the alliance of countries committed to the phase-out of oil and gas. Also important was Italian political support for the financing of adaptation to climate change, both within and beyond COP26.<sup>72</sup>



Among the successful initiatives and Italian good practices, it is worth mentioning: **the Humanitarian Corridors**, created by the Community of Sant'Egidio with the Italian Confederation of Evangelical Churches, the Waldensian Table and CEI-Caritas, in collaboration with MAECI and the Ministry of the Interior, thus contrasting deaths in the Mediterranean and the risk of human trafficking; international student mobility programs for refugees and asylum seekers; resettlement programs, managed by the Ministry of the Interior in collaboration with UNHCR, with travel and reception expenses covered by the State and by European co-financing of 10,000 euros per resettled refugee; humanitarian evacuation operations for transfer to Italy, carried out in collaboration with UNHCR, with travel expenses covered by the State and for which the beneficiaries follow the normal procedure of asylum seekers.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> See: [https://www.esteri.it/mae/resource/doc/2019/12/2019\\_11\\_19\\_final\\_piano\\_aics-dgcs\\_efficacia\\_interventi.pdf](https://www.esteri.it/mae/resource/doc/2019/12/2019_11_19_final_piano_aics-dgcs_efficacia_interventi.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> To know more, see: <https://www.addistaxinitiative.net/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/clima-italia-alla-prova-del-g20-e-della-cop26-32340>

<sup>73</sup> GCAP Italia, Monitoring Report of the Italian Civil Society on the Sustainable Development Goals related to Migration and for the Global Compact on Migration, 2021, p. 58-59. Available online: <https://www.focsiv.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Migrazioni-e-Sviluppo-Sostenibile-2021-ENG-19.04.2021.pdf>

## Weaknesses

Multilateralism needs more than narrative. Recent positions of the Italian government unfortunately do not go in this direction. Examples include: its **opposition to the TRIPS waiver** for anti-COVID-19 products; its **refusal to participate in the Vienna Conference on nuclear disarmament**; the (long standing) **refusal to sign the Global Compact on migration**.



The 2030 Agenda and the effort towards its realization have not changed the Italian approach to planning, which is still based on **ex-post constructs**. Furthermore, Italy essentially moves within the so called global consensus and simply adapts to it. The **absence of a long-term global vision** and the ability to synthesize the elements needed to integrate the various dimensions of sustainable development does not grant any kind of policy to be valid and efficient, either nationally or internationally.



In spite of improvements in the latest version of the NSDS 2022, the section on partnership is still mostly **limited to considering Italian Development Cooperation**. Very few issues beyond the latter are represented - key issues such as migration, international trade, foreign investments. In the current institutional setup for monitoring/revising the strategy, it is unclear where these issues could be tackled.



Concerning **ODA**, the well-known internationally agreed objective of 0.7% of GNI is out of reach. According to preliminary OECD-DAC data for 2021, there has been an increase from 0.22% in 2020 to 0.28% in 2021.<sup>74</sup> However, part of this growth is due to 'one-shot' and 'inflated' aid, such as: debt relief (largely concentrated in Somalia); reporting of the "Refugee costs in the donor country" (resources invested within the borders of the donor country); accounting for the donation of the 31 million vaccine doses for COVID-19 (at a very high price), and extraordinary contributions to UN Agencies or multilateral initiatives (a positive, but still episodic, aspect). Indeed, **an increase that lacks the aspects of structural increase and programmability, consistent with the**

**principles of 'aid effectiveness'**. Furthermore, aid procedures show a risk of excessive bureaucratization that undermines their effectiveness.



**Policies related to migration, and to the migration/development nexus are rather ambiguous and contradictory.** In fact, the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum and the Italian partnership with third countries mainly aim to reduce irregular migration. A recent survey by ActionAid, *The Big Wall*, highlighted how this approach of controlling and externalizing the containment of migratory flows has committed huge resources, also diverting them from the few allocated to development cooperation. The Italian parliament and government have not signed the Global Compact on Migration. The debate has stalled for ideological issues. In this way, Italy is not participating in a multilateral tool of international cooperation and partnership for the governance of migration, while acting bilaterally and within the European Union (where instead most of the Member states have joined the GCM).<sup>75</sup>

## Steps Forward



The biggest challenge is surely the implementation of the PCSD plan, and particularly the **integration of the so called "internal" and "external" agenda**. The institutional setup should be clarified in order to make room for discussing and comprising several issues which are now outside the scope of the strategy (migration, trade, investments, support to international processes)

<sup>74</sup> See: <https://bit.ly/3yQPmlt>

<sup>75</sup> GCAP Italia, Monitoring Report of the Italian Civil Society on the Sustainable Development Goals related to Migration and for the Global Compact on Migration, 2021, p. 78. Available online: <https://bit.ly/3ReDfan>

<sup>76</sup> <https://campagna070.it/>

<sup>77</sup> Ministero della Transizione Ecologica, Strategia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile 2022. Italy 2022, p. 127.





The Italian government should show **firm and effective commitment to international processes supporting global peace**, human development and human rights, in a perspective of multilateral governance of global challenges. This includes: a binding treaty on the private sector and human rights; global disarmament processes (including denuclearization); and a big push of investments on an unprecedented scale and across the global commons.



**ODA** should be increased towards the internationally agreed objective of 0.7% of GNI by 2025<sup>76</sup>, allocating at least 50% to gender equality, and the same deadline should be endorsed by the EU. This increase should be structural and consist mainly of fresh investments for the benefit of the Global South.



Migration and **migration/development policies** should be streamlined in full accordance with human rights. **The Global Compact on Migration should be signed** by our country, and a stronger commitment is needed in the establishment of safe migration channels for those fleeing extreme poverty, war or climate change (including the combination of the three...).

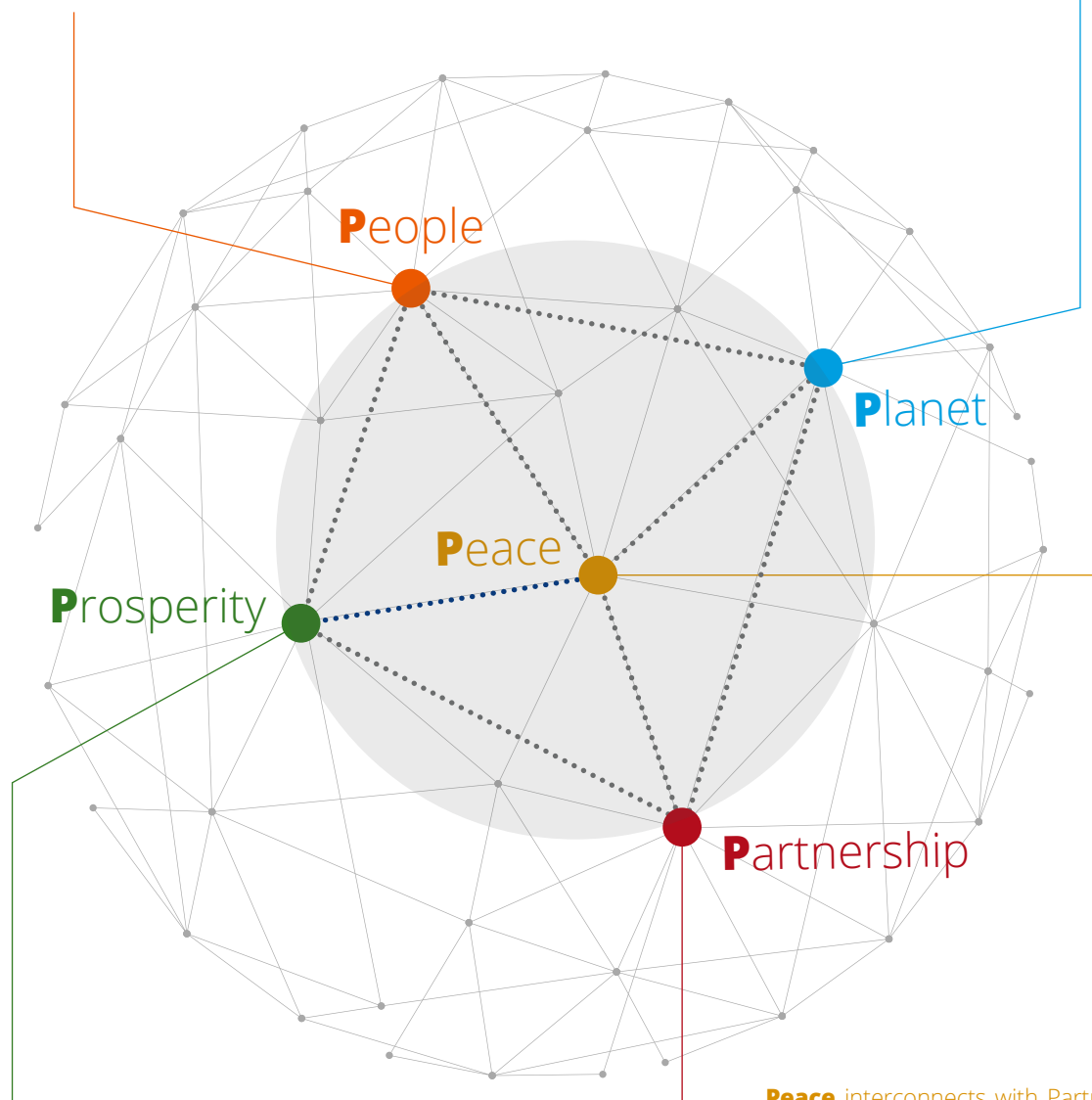


We also urge our government to participate actively and positively in the process towards a **new global summit on Finance for Development** by 2024, after the most recent one held in Addis Ababa in 2015. The international community put a lot of effort on this, especially during the pandemic. Italy should promote this approach in order to open up new possibilities to talk about real, and not simply nominal, “building back better” both in the UN and the EU. Strong action in favor of better financial justice at the global level is needed as, in the three-year period 2021-2023, the responsible administrations (MAECI and Ministry of Economy and Finance - MEF) will participate in multilateral negotiations within the Paris Club and in bilateral negotiations for the conclusion of agreements on the treatment of the foreign debt of developing countries.<sup>77</sup>



**People** interconnects with Partnership when it comes to policies on human mobility and their implication in terms of respect of human rights, the integration of migrants, their potential contribution to the development in Italy and their countries of origin..

**Planet** interconnects with Partnership, for example, on the phenomenon of carbon leakages, on Italy's commitments at COPs from climate to biodiversity issues, on the Italian climate fund...



**Prosperity** interconnects with Partnership, for example, for commitments at the WTO, regarding taxation of multinational corporations, with respect to CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and the proposed regulation on due diligence at the European level...

**Peace** interconnects with Partnership for Italy's role as a multilateral peace promoter, on the arms production and trade, on the the global protection of rights, on global citizenship education

**Partnership** is closely related to other P's on many issues such as international cooperation on financial, debt and tax issues. The blind defense of TRIPS within WTO has a huge impact on the welfare of the global community. ODA commitments in quantitative and qualitative terms may offer an important contribution to international development.





The different domains of sustainability are closely interconnected by their very nature. For example, all the policies geared towards the green transition are called upon to establish the ground for Prosperity, without trespassing the limits of our Planet, and without losing sight of People, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, who all too often pay the highest price. Another case is that of fiscal policies: they play a key role in stimulating Prosperity, but their distributional impacts directly affect People's lives; these impacts are directly related to the prospects of less unequal, less conflict-ridden societies and Peace; and they have huge potential to discourage behaviours that violate the limits of our Planet. Many other examples are cited in this report. However, we often risk neglecting the impacts that policies have in broader terms: both on third countries, on global public goods. From a perspective of true sustainability, **interlinkages and spillovers** are the norm rather than the exception and the implication of policies in global terms, reminds us of our responsibility to global peace, to the entire human family, to the planet. This is the true meaning of building a global Partnership. The global policies in which Italy is called upon to make a positive contribution often have domestic implications: the trade-off between a fairer world order and special interests must be clearly recognized and addressed. Whatever our interest in the short term, there is no 'Planet B' option and the whole of humanity is bound to a common destiny.

# Annex - A Dashboard for Measuring Advancements

## Annex - A Dashboard for Measuring Advancements





In this annex we have adopted the methodology proposed by Action for Sustainable Development<sup>78</sup>, to elaborate a Dashboard that makes an overview of current implementation of the Strategy for sustainable development in Italy looking particularly at the governance processes in place.

AREAS	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<b>1. Governance Framework</b>								✗			
Assessment / Comments	A good process of involving civil society and local authorities in the new strategy has begun. This is a consistent improvement that needs to be strengthened with the adoption and implementation of the PCSD, whose speedy approval is. It can be an essential turning point. Therefore it needs to be seen to what extent the institutional framework will translate into actual policy dialogue. Finally, the weak role of Parliament and insufficient ex ante connection with the NRRP is emphasized.										
<b>2. National Development Plans, Strategies &amp; Budget</b>				✗							
Assessment / Comments	Some kind integration between budget and SDGs is there, but it is ex post, while there is panoply and poor alignment between different plans, including the NRRP. Sustainability-related metrics adopted by the MEF are discretionary and narrow, particularly for what concerns the 'rights & positive peace' sphere.										
<b>3. Institutions with clear mandate</b>							✗				
Assessment / Comments	The new Ministry for Ecological Transition has given a good boost to the Strategy, coordination with the different ministries has been activated and needs to be improved in the process; there are some overlap and undefined connections between the Interministerial Committee for Ecological Transition, the Interministerial Committee for Economic Policy and Sustainable Development, as well as a weak role for the Interministerial Committee for Development Cooperation.										

<sup>78</sup> Action for Sustainable Development, Full Template of a People's Scorecard on National Delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

AREAS	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<b>4. Implementation at the National Level</b>							✕				
Assessment / Comments	Significant efforts by various ministries to adopt the vision of sustainable development can be seen, but it is a slow sedimentation of the culture of sustainable development that needs to be strengthened and accelerated.										
<b>5. Implementation at the sub-national levels</b>								✕			
Assessment / Comments	Italy suffers from historical differences in institutional capacity at the local level. The role played by the Cohesion Plan and the process of localizing the SDGs through MiTE coordination are important. These paths should be supported with greater vigor. However, the experience is very heterogeneous.										
<b>6. Public Awareness &amp; Capacity Development</b>								✕			
Assessment / Comments	Awareness raising has greatly improved thanks to collaboration between institutions and the third sector. The role of ASVIS, civic education and global citizenship needs to be urgently strengthened to have greater political incidence.										
<b>7. Monitoring Mechanisms</b>							✕				
Assessment / Comments	Some mechanisms exist at CIPESS level, but are insufficient. The adoption of the new PCSD will be relevant. The role of ISTAT is also important, but there is no confrontation with civil society. Some mechanisms are only mentioned in the PCSD plan, and still have to be made operational.										
<b>8. Transparency &amp; Accountability</b>						✕					
Assessment / Comments	Monitoring data and tools for the NRRP are totally insufficient. There is still little accountability, we continue to hope for the role of the PCSD and the beginning of real co-programming.										

## Annex - A Dashboard for Measuring Advancements

AREAS	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<b>9. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships</b>											
Assessment / Comments	There is a need to strengthen partnership and pay attention to so-called multistakeholderism, which puts different actors on the same level, without giving pre-eminence to 'rights holders' and to the role/responsibilities of 'duty-bearers'.										
<b>10. Civil Society Participation</b>											
Assessment / Comments	The Forum for Sustainable Development and the National Council for Development Cooperation have opened up participation, but they are still not working well in terms of actual policy-making dialogue. This needs to be strengthened with clear procedures and resources. Participation should also be whole-of-government and not only in certain ministries.										
<b>Additional cross-cutting areas</b>											
<b>11. Progress since last VNR (if applicable)</b>											
Assessment / Comments	Strong progress is evident in institutional mechanisms, but unfortunately not in welfare outcomes, policy measures have not been sufficient to address crises and accelerate transition.										
<b>12. Leave No One Behind</b>											
Assessment / Comments	Important measures such as citizenship income and essential social levels have been introduced, but discriminations continue to persist especially against women and specific social groups such as migrants (see Ps for Person and Peace in the previous chapter).										



AREAS	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<b>13. Planetary Boundaries</b>						✗					
Assessment / Comments	Italy has a climate urgency that is not recognized at the political level. Mitigation and adaptation measures are clearly insufficient, despite the creation of the MiTE and NRRP.										
<b>14. Delivery by CSOs</b>							✗				
Assessment / Comments	CSOs, or the so called Third Sector in Italy, play a fundamental role in sustaining the social and natural fabric. This role is rhetorically recognized, but there is not much experience of real co-programming yet, nor its voice is strongly present at policy making or policy monitoring level.										
<b>TOTAL</b>							✗				

Average 1,07







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