



“SUSTAINABILITY HAS TO BE THE APPROACH OF THE PEOPLE!”

S&D Group President and Progressive Society co-initiator Udo Bullmann joined the debate at the [Sustainable Development Festival](#) in Milan on the 31st of May. His message was steadfast and clear: sustainability must be a matter of solidarity and fairness, with no one left behind.

Udo Bullmann stood firm. “Sustainability has to be the approach of the People! We have to empower and inspire them to commit to the new concept,” he insisted adamantly in the panel discussion, which also featured Silvia Ganzerla (Eurocities), Luca Jahier (EESC) and Mark Bendeich (Reuters).

In the spirit of the topic *Towards a EU2030 Strategy for Sustainable Development*, Bullmann addressed the urgency of imminent action and of a comprehensive plan: “Either we take a decisive step towards sustainability, or we are going to fail!”

He also defended his stance that only a socially just transition from the bottom up can make the achievement of the SDGs in Europe possible: “We need new answers and to integrate areas such as environment, labour, and health. But the most important element is the people.”

An event and an organisation like no other in Europe

Both the [Sustainable Development Festival](#) and its organiser, the **Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)**, are unique in Europe. ASviS was founded in 2016 and brings together more than 180 civil society institutions and networks, championing a bottom-up approach towards sustainability. It is the largest Italian network dedicated to sustainable development with 300 experts and 19 working groups committed to specific SDGs and cross-cutting issues. This year’s edition of the Sustainable Development Festival (from May 22nd - June 7th) is the second in total and comprises more than 200 events across Italy.

The [event](#) on the 31st of May also included a keynote speech by the 1st Vice-President of the European Commission, **Frans Timmermans**, and a presentation by **Enrico Giovannini** who is a member of both ASviS and the Progressive Society’s [Independent Commission for Sustainable Equality](#).

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