



ENA

Institute
for Alternative
Policies

FROM ECONOMIC GROWTH TO SUSTAINABILITY AND WELL-BEING

Policy Proposals for Greece 2030



From Economic Growth to Sustainability and Well-being

Policy Proposals for Greece 2030

**Observatory on Sustainability & Well-being -
ENA Institute for Alternative Policies**

Coordinator: Yannis Eustathopoulos

Abstract

The renewed interest for the qualitative dimensions of growth makes holistic and 'beyond-GDP' approaches more relevant than ever. This concern arises from the increase of the frequency, scale and intensity of natural disasters, the widening of social inequalities and the contradictions between economic growth and well-being. This working paper provides an overview of the public debate, of the international policy-making experience and of the literature regarding the concepts of well-being, sustainability (economic, social and environmental) and resilience. First, we proceed with a presentation of the above concepts. Secondly, we provide a timeline with the key-events and developments of the last decade concerning well-being and sustainability as well as a list of best practices regarding their integration in policy making. The third section continues with a review of international literature focusing on key-messages, findings and policy proposals directly related to the specific features of the current economic, social and environmental context. Based on the above, a set of proposals is submitted in the final section in order to contribute to the implementation of policies addressing structural and institutional weaknesses and the limitations -in terms of speed, scale, scope and quality- of current actions for the transition to a new sustainable and fair development model.

Summary

Main Conclusions

- International experience of the last twenty years confirms that using GDP as the sole indicator for measuring economic and social progress and as a top priority in policy-making presents risks for human & social well-being. Today's global economic, social and environmental context reveals the fundamental differences between mere economic growth and holistic development. Development focuses on qualitative dimensions such as the broader economic, productive, social, institutional and cultural transformations that define the sustainability and resilience of economic growth. A more effective utilisation of GDP requires its integration in a comprehensive set of indicators capable of monitoring the complex relationships and interactions between GDP and social progress.
- The approach of sustainability -as a residual priority in dominant economic models- and in superficial and politically-neutral terms in the public discussion has proved to be largely ineffective and inadequate against the size and urgency of today's imbalances which have evolved into "systemic injustices".
- Overall, only a few countries seem to have progressed towards a substantial mainstreaming of sustainability and well-being in their core public policies and development priorities. Some countries do however adopt new indicators and approaches for the preparation and execution of their State Budget and/or in procedures associated with parliamentary work and policy design.
- Despite the flourishing of research and new measures of sustainability and well-being, significant weaknesses - of political or technical nature - hinder their effective integration in the core of the public policy cycle both at the national and the European level. The valuable scientific knowledge which has been produced during the last decades must support the much-needed public debates and social consultations in order to depict the perspectives, dilemmas and challenges faced by countries today and to formulate policies - with the highest possible consensus- which will ensure a timely transition to new resilient models of fair and sustainable development.

- The poor implementation of the various high-level political international statements and commitments for sustainability and well-being and the widening gap between scientific knowledge and policy-making involve important political, institutional, social and environmental risks such as (a) the risk of a non-linear intensification of climate change and of a further widening of social inequalities, exacerbating thus 'systemic injustices' (b) the risk of disregarding noteworthy initiatives by civil society and research organisations concerning proposals for the transition to a new sustainable development model (c) the risk of increasing the loss of legitimacy suffered today by institutions, governments and international organisations. Combined, these downside risks create an adverse environment with unforeseen outcomes.

Policy proposals for Greece 2030

- Setting *Sustainability, Resilience* and *Well-being* as a top national strategic agenda for the 21st century.
- Implementing a national social dialogue on the basis of the existing valuable scientific knowledge in order to create a broad consensus on the priorities for achieving a timely, effective and fair climate transition and ensuring the support and continuity over time of the necessary policies and reforms in the economy, public administration, institutions, businesses and society.
- Ensuring institutional continuity with the implementation and continuous improvement of the National Strategy for Fair and Sustainable Growth 2030 (i.e. the Greek 'National Growth Strategy') which has been agreed both with European and social partners.
- Fully integrating sustainability and well-being in core public policies as well as in the design and implementation of the State Budget: a) Independent ex ante evaluation of new legislations and public policies regarding their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, b) Impact assessment after their implementation. The priority of SDGs in policy-making must be drastically enhanced. SDGs should evolve from a passive framework—relying on statistical monitoring characterised by a time-lag and a poor connection to policy-making processes—to an active tool for integrating sustainability and well-being in core public policies during their design.

- Preparation of an annual report with qualitative information for complementing statistical monitoring and evaluation. The purpose of this report is to interpret indicators based on sectoral, regional and local realities and needs, while enhancing "social ownership" of SDGs, participatory governance and evaluation as well as their integration in key institutional and political work streams (i.e. reporting and debate in the House of Representatives).



ENA
Institute
for Alternative
Policies

ENA
Institute for Alternative Policies
Zalokosta 8, 10671, Athens
+30 210 364 7912

info@enainstitute.org
www.enainstitute.org