

Beyond GDP Growth

Changing our destination:

from GDP Growth to progress within planetary limits

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Over 20,000 scientists say that the Earth's biosphere is on the brink of collapse (1). [Extraction of materials tripled in four decades](#), intensifying climate change, biodiversity loss, air pollution and other environmental pressures. (2). The [sixth mass extinction is ongoing](#) (3). So far, we are not managing the challenge we are facing. We need this to change.

There is an environmental as well as a social necessity to move beyond dependency on growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In [rich countries](#) and in Europe, different forms of poverty have risen or stagnated, in particular the number of the working poor, youth unemployment or homelessness, while the GDP kept growing (4). With the phenomenon of "jobless growth", GDP growth no longer provides the jobs we need (5). No-one now sees GDP growth as equivalent to well-being.

Planned de-growth of unsustainable sectors and phasing out of activities like extracting fossil fuels is possible and necessary. The human urge to "grow" could and should be measured in growth of well-being, abundance of life, an economy of the common good, care for the planet and care for one another.

The world already agreed on a set of goals, targets and indicators: the Sustainable Development Goals. 12 years remain to implement these 17 aims of the UN 2030 agenda. Countries like Bhutan and New Zealand already moved beyond GDP – Bhutan uses Gross National Happiness (GNH) as the key benchmark and New Zealand is working on a well-being budget for 2019. (6)

Initiatives to move beyond GDP growth exist at EU level, but what happened to the Beyond GDP Road Map that the EC agreed on back in 2009? Opinions differ along geographical regions within the EU about how to go beyond GDP growth. So, what can we learn from this diversity, and what could be common ground for progress?



Just before this conference started, 237 academics published an opinion in over a dozen media all over Europe to call upon Europe to *End the Growth Dependency*. (7) They have 4 demands:

1. **Constitute a special commission on Post-Growth Futures in the EU Parliament.** This commission should actively debate the future of growth, devise policy alternatives for post-growth futures, and reconsider the pursuit of growth as an overarching policy goal.
2. **Incorporate alternative indicators into the macroeconomic framework of the EU and its member states.** Economic policies should be evaluated in terms of their impact on human wellbeing, resource use, inequality, and the provision of decent work. These indicators should be given higher priority than GDP in decision-making.
3. **Turn the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) into a Stability and Wellbeing Pact.** The SGP is a set of rules aimed at limiting government deficits and national debt. It should be revised to ensure member states meet the basic needs of their citizens, while reducing resource use and waste emissions to a sustainable level.
4. **Establish a Ministry for Economic Transition in each member state.** A new economy that focuses directly on human and ecological wellbeing could offer a much better future than one that is structurally dependent on economic growth.

If you support these demands – please sign here:

www.wemove.eu/postgrowth

- (1) <https://bit.ly/2B3WAqg>
- (2) <https://bit.ly/2CTJRsx>
- (3) <https://bit.ly/2tAWr9H>
- (4) <https://cnb.cx/2MuaLqI>
- (5) <https://bit.ly/2DrnoPt>
- (6) www.isonomia.co.uk/?p=5452
- (7) <https://degrowth.org/2018/09/12/post-growth-open-letter/>

