



Doc. 11597
23 April 2008

Wealth, welfare and well-being: how to reconcile them in a changing Europe?

Motion for a recommendation¹

tabled by Mr Konstantinos VRETTOS and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Europeans can take pride in the many achievements that have transformed the quality of life on our continent in the post-Second World War period. Relative prosperity, advanced democracy and the rule of law have spread in all directions across Europe. Yet under the pressure of globalisation, extreme productivity and unsustainable consumption patterns (European countries are living as if they had 2.6 planets the size of Earth at their disposal), some conventional beliefs and *acquis* are starting to crumble. Reckless consumerism is today increasingly straining natural resources and the social balance of our society whereas well-being stagnates.

We live in a society obsessed with figures and ill-conceived growth. But “more” does not necessarily mean “better” and increased apparent affluence today hardly equals progress if it undermines the prosperity of future generations. What really constitutes progress? Are we not stealing the future from our children and grandchildren with current development trends? At the same time, how can there be improvements without adequate means generated by economic growth?

As the Council of Europe approaches its 60th anniversary in 2009, it is time to explore how its mission can be best accomplished and how it can contribute to genuine progress. A rigid accountancy approach has not done justice to this Organisation struggling to promote human values, dignity and justice. The Assembly believes it is time to move on from a minimalist mentality to a vision-based and ambition-driven action and recommends that the Committee of Ministers provide the new resources that the Council of Europe deserves.

Signed (see overleaf)

1. Referred to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, for report: Reference No. 3468 (27th Sitting, 27 June 2008).



Signed²:

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2. EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group