Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2023 (2014)[1]
Final version

Measuring and fostering the well-being of European citizens

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Throughout Europe, there is now much public dissatisfaction with economic, social and political systems. They are considered to favour an artificial type of growth – one that depletes our natural resources, while excluding or marginalising many people. This perceived gap between aspirations and delivery should be narrowed. Much more should be done to identify and respect the various needs and, through public policies, far greater efforts must be made to fulfil them.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly recommends the use of certain indicators. While they can enable better measuring of well-being levels, their clarity of focus also serves to foster well-being. Such indicators analyse the quality of life, the nature of disparities and the likely trends. Key indicators are those that gauge access to decent work, housing and public services, the use of skills, environmental impact and physical and mental health. Equally important are indicators that concern educational attainment, social standing and relationships with others, as well as freedom and human rights.

3. The Assembly welcomes all attempts to measure well-being and life satisfaction. These include the existing work of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on measuring progress and the Better Life Index, the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress, pointers from the European Commission's communication on "GDP and beyond: measuring progress in a changing world", the Happy Planet Index and the World Bank's Human Opportunity Index. Finally, within selected European Union countries, the International Labour Organization recently carried out a project called "Monitoring and Assessing Progress on Decent Work".

4. The Assembly holds policy makers responsible for enhancing collective well-being for the benefit of present and future generations. Therefore, it urges the parliaments and governments of Council of Europe member States to:

4.1. develop proper frameworks and tools for both measuring well-being and fostering its progress by making use of current research, as listed above;

4.2. clearly define strategic long-term goals and policies for carrying these out;

4.3. co-operate with countries and relevant international bodies in order to deliver agreed commitments and meet global challenges such as climate change, pollution, food security and the responsible use of natural resources;

4.4. identify trends in inequalities of income and opportunity for different categories of the population, based on markers such as gender, age, family status and disability;

4.5. facilitate social mobility by:

4.5.1. monitoring the performance of essential public services;

4.5.2. adjusting and improving education, vocational training, life-long learning systems and preventive health care;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee*, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 18 November 2014 (see Doc. 13539, report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: The Earl of Dundee).

4.6. encourage national debate on well-being priorities and ways to achieve them, making use of online communication tools, surveys, social networks and media channels;

4.7. enable subjective measures of individual well-being to inform objective standards to be fostered and advanced within European countries;

4.8. seek to adjust policies through well-being indicators, noting how other countries do this;

4.9. consider well-being as a right which includes social, economic and environmental aspects as much as it does civil and political ones;

4.10. restore confidence in political structures through greater transparency and involvement of citizens.