

Towards well-being for all in a time of uncertainty

It is not just about economic growth. A policy paper provides guidance on how to help Europe achieve sustainable well-being for citizens.



SOCIETY




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A recent [paper](#) published with support from five EU-funded projects – [SPES](#), [ToBe](#), [WISE Horizons](#), WISER and [MERGE](#) – sets out the path towards a policy model that prioritises sustainable and inclusive well-being. The policy paper was requested by the European Commission and is based on scientific insights and stakeholder input.

Recognising needs, creating change

Rising costs of living, growing inequalities, ageing societies, pandemics and accelerating climate crises – these are just some of the problems Europe is facing, and which the paper states should be tackled simultaneously. The uncertainty people are feeling about the future has led to support for economic model reforms and climate change actions, among others. Also, Europe’s companies know that change is coming, and they need a long-term, consistent EU vision to foster sustainable and competitive business models.

To bring about change, the overarching goal defined in the paper is ensuring well-being now and in the future, which is what the EU’s policy model should prioritise. “To create policies for sustainable and inclusive wellbeing, it is important to identify vested interests, fear of change and resistance that hinders reforms and systemic change,” the authors write. They add that such a policy agenda requires leadership and effort to ensure the horizontal coordination of policies within the Commission, which could be achieved by appointing an Executive Vice-President (EVP) for Wellbeing and Future Generations. The EVP would be responsible for laying the foundations for and overseeing policy implementation.

“What is the best, the European Commission does not need to start from scratch,” remarks co-author Tuuli Hirvilammi of ToBe project coordinator Tampere University, Finland, in a [news item](#)  posted on the university’s website. “In the policy paper, we discuss how policymakers can build on existing measurement and policy frameworks, current legislation and good practices to steer the EU towards wellbeing for all, now and in the future.”

The new policy agenda for sustainable and inclusive well-being consists of three items. First is the need to strengthen the science-based policy toolkit (metrics, accounts, policy models for forecasting and impact assessment). The second and crucial part of the agenda is the reform of the European Semester process – the EU’s socio-economic governance framework – to better support sustainable and inclusive well-being. Last is the need to develop specific policies for societal transformations that could be coordinated by the EVP.

The paper lists five societal transformations – inclusive well-being, sustainable well-being, mission economy and finance, transformative research and innovation, and multi-level governance emphasising citizen participation – linked to 13 policy domains. The authors also provide a non-exhaustive list of concrete policy suggestions.

The policy paper was co-written by the coordinators and policy leads of the SPES (Sustainability Performances, Evidence and Scenarios), ToBe (Towards a sustainable wellbeing economy: integrated policies and transformative indicators), WISE Horizons (Wellbeing, inclusion, sustainability and the economy), WISER (WISER: Well-being in a Sustainable Economy Revisited), and MERGE (Measuring what matters: Improving usability and accessibility of policy frameworks and indicators for multidimensional well-being through collaboration) projects.

For more information, please see:

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Keywords

SPES, ToBe, WISE Horizons, WISER, MERGE, well-being, inclusion, policy

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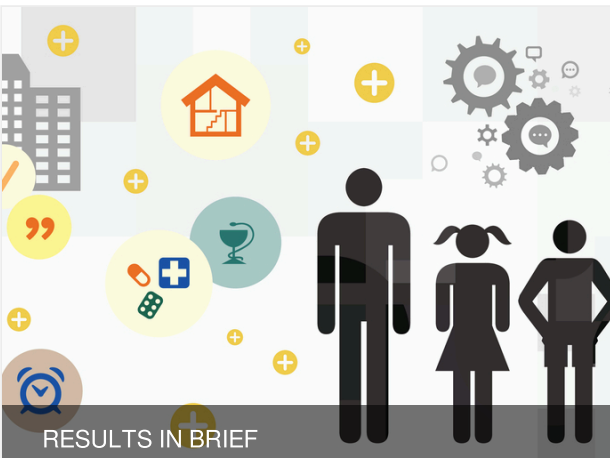
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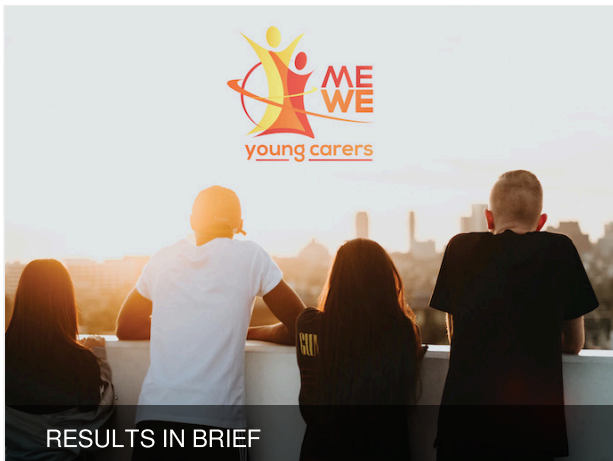
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