

Towards better statistics on well-being and societal progress The European Framework for Measuring Progress

Marina Signore*

* Italian National Institute of Statistics, Rome, Italy e-mail: signore@istat.it

Donatella Fazio*

* Italian National Institute of Statistics, Rome, Italy e-mail: dofazio@istat.it

In the last decade the statistical and economic debate has been dominated by the topics related to the measurement of well-being and societal progress. Reservations over the use of GDP as a unique measure of well-being are not recent in Europe and at the start of the new millennium the agenda began to have a worldwide dimension thanks to a number of international initiatives promoted by both the public and private world of research and at institutional level. Among those that deserve mention there are the OECD World Forums: Palermo 2004; Istanbul 2007; Busan 2009; New Delhi 2012. Furthermore, in 2008, the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy set up the famous Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission. Since then, the debate has engaged the general public, as well as universities and other research institutions. At a European level in 2009 it was established, by the European Statistical System Committee, the Sponsorship Group on ‘Measuring Progress, wellbeing and sustainable development’ with the aim of translating the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission into concrete actions. In its final report (2011) the Sponsorship Group calls the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to push the definition of sound and timely statistics, thus implying a better use of all the available data and developing new data and concise indicators. Against this background, the paper wants to illustrate the initiative carried on by the EU FP7 e-Frame Project, funded by the European Commission with the aim to foster the on-going European debate on the measurement of well-being. *e-Frame -European Framework for Measuring Progress-* is a coordination project (duration 2012-2014) based on a Consortium of 19 European partners (NSI’s, civil society organisations, universities, research centres, OECD) coordinated by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and by Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Its work plan is conceived to spread knowledge and to involve stakeholders and society at large in the debate on some of the main issues related to the measurement of wellbeing and progress beyond GDP. Sustainable development, subjective wellbeing, social capital, human capital and labour market, intangible assets, new national account architecture, environmental indicators and the welfare effects of globalisation are some of the themes focused by the project. Finally, the paper wants to contribute to put the European position on better statistics on “beyond GDP” in a global perspective sharing the results of the e-Frame debate on the emerging research needs.

Keywords: beyond GDP, debate on new measurements, official data, stakeholder inclusion