

R5 A Degrowth Transition Towards Post-Growth Economies

Proposer: FYEG EC
Agenda item: 6. Resolutions

Motion text

Beyond the Fairy Tales of Green Growth

1. The urgency of moving beyond economic growth cannot be more urgent. The Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG) aims to address the roots of oppression and the ecological crisis, generating collective responses aligned with science and global justice. Honouring the plural and dynamic history of the degrowth movement and its close connection with the alter-globalisation and ecofeminist movements, FYEG is willing to continue uplifting the voices and struggles in favour of a good life for all within planetary boundaries.

2. A recent study shows that without abandoning economic growth, high-income countries would take over 220 years to reduce their emissions by 95%, far exceeding their quotas to stay within the 1.5° warming limit of the Paris Agreement [1]. The scientific consensus indicates that economic growth cannot be decoupled from ecological impacts at the pace and scale required, necessitating a shift to a post-growth paradigm, including a phase of degrowth in economies that exceed the planet's regenerative capacity [2]. Despite this, "green growth" has been promoted since the 1990s as a way to continue economic growth while reducing environmental impacts, a notion unsupported by biophysical reality. In Europe, "green growth" is embedded in the European Green Deal as a "growth strategy," aligning with corporate interests, including fossil fuel companies.

The Beyond Growth Conference organised in the European Parliament in 2023 marked a significant moment for this paradigm shift to start materialising. The 2024 European Elections revealed the failure of democratic and progressive forces to offer an alternative narrative to the green growth discourse embraced by the European Commission. FYEG believes we are at a turning point in how the EU views post-growth.

Why Do We Need Degrowth?

3. Degrowth involves a planned reduction of energy and material use to bring the economy into balance with the living world, reducing inequality and improving

29 human well-being globally and locally, now and in the future.

30 4. Climate justice advocates argue that the devastation caused by neoliberal
31 capitalism cannot be solved by the same expansionist principles with a green
32 facade. A global political perspective is essential to address ecological
33 injustices and the unequal distribution of impacts. This includes ending
34 resource appropriation from the Global South by the Global North and debt
35 cancellation, alongside urgent decarbonization by countries with the greatest
36 historical emissions. Ignoring these issues can lead to eco-fascism, where
37 wealthy nations externalise damage and collapse to poorer regions.

38 This externalisation affects nature, the Global South, and women, highlighting
39 the care crisis and economic models prioritising the economic benefits of an
40 elite over life. Degrowth opposes the cheapening of labour and resources and the
41 racist ideologies supporting it, realising decolonization and a focus on human
42 needs instead of capital accumulation for organising the economy.

43 5. The degrowth transition requires restructuring economies that exceed
44 ecological capacities, such as those in Europe, to decelerate justly without
45 recession-induced suffering. Regions in Europe with higher historical emissions
46 and higher current ecological footprints must degrow more rapidly. Redirecting
47 resources from less necessary production like fossil fuels, fast fashion,
48 industrial farming, or luxury goods to activities enhancing human and
49 environmental well-being, like clean energy, essential services, agroecology,
50 and care, is crucial. Abandoning GDP growth as a policy goal, in favour of
51 ecosocial metrics like life expectancy, health, education, housing, and
52 sustainable work, is essential for both ecosystems and human well being.

53 Degrowth from Intersectional Lenses

54 6. An intersectional perspective recognizes that systems of oppression are
55 interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Overcoming these oppressions requires
56 addressing the worldview of separation underpinning growth, competition, and
57 profit maximisation. Degrowth represents a relational worldview, recognizing
58 interdependence and humanity's humble place within the broader ecosystem.

59 From Degrowth to Post-Growth

60 7. Given that universal human needs and global well-being cannot be achieved
61 under a growth-centric capitalist system, FYEG advocates for degrowth as a
62 strategy to move beyond an economic growth-centred society to a post-growth
63 society that transcends capitalism. This involves transitioning to an economy in
64 harmony with nature, where thriving without growth is possible.

65 8. We want to be part of the movement to unite as many Greens and progressive
66 forces
67 across Europe as possible around post-growth, influencing whole political
68 systems and working with civil society. We should expand our reflections,
69 movement building, and outreach sources, as well as develop policy alternatives
70 to the current capitalist system, expanding the debates on universal basic
71 services, universal basic income or universal care income, working time
72 reduction, a green job guarantee, caps on income and wealth, flight quotas, an
73 agroecological transition, support to the social and solidarity economy, and
74 deliberative forums among many other policy proposals at different scales.

75 Therefore, we, the Federation of Young European Greens and Young Green political
76 organisations of Europe, commit to:

- 77 • Integrate a post-growth paradigm and degrowth policies into the platforms
78 and programs of our mother parties at all levels.
- 79 • Build alliances with parties, social movements, civic organisations, and
80 academia in support of a degrowth transition.
- 81 • Collaborate with European trade unions to include global justice and
82 degrowth in just transition strategies, and with the social and solidarity
83 economy sector.
- 84 • Engage in dialogue with social and political actors from the Global South
85 to incorporate their perspectives into European policy formulation.
- 86 • Recognize FYEG's role in connecting scientific evidence with social and
87 political demands, focusing on life sustainability.
- 88 • Support researchers facing pressure to omit degrowth from academic papers
89 or exclude it from IPCC reports.

90 We further explore the possibility to join the International Degrowth Network as
91 a formal member.

92 **Final Words**

93 While the goal of a post-growth society is becoming clearer, progressive forces
94 must articulate strategies, political programs, and communication methods to
95 enable radical changes for a dignified life for all within planetary boundaries.
96 FYEG plays a crucial role in connecting scientific evidence with social and
97 political actions centred on life sustainability, emphasising and putting in
98 action degrowth strategies.

99 *References*

100 1- Vogel, J., & Hickel, J. (2023). Is green growth happening? An empirical
101 analysis of achieved versus Paris-compliant CO₂-GDP decoupling in high-income
102 countries. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 7(9), e759-e769.

103 2- Parrique, T., Barth, J., Briens, F., Kerschner, C., Kraus-Polk, A.,
104 Kuokkanen, A., & Spangenberg, J. H. (2019). Decoupling debunked. Evidence and
105 arguments against green growth as a sole strategy for sustainability. A study
106 edited by the European Environment Bureau EEB

Reason

Will be argued for verbally.