

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

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

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

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

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

Degrowth from Intersectional Lenses

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

From Degrowth to Post-Growth

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

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

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

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

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

Final Words

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

References

- 1- Vogel, J., & Hickel, J. (2023). Is green growth happening? An empirical analysis of achieved versus Paris-compliant CO₂–GDP decoupling in high-income countries. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 7(9), e759-e769.
- 2- Parrique, T., Barth, J., Briens, F., Kerschner, C., Kraus-Polk, A., Kuokkanen, A., & Spangenberg, J. H. (2019). Decoupling debunked. Evidence and arguments against green growth as a sole strategy for sustainability. A study edited by the European Environment Bureau EEB

Reason

Will be argued for verbally.

ZOS expressed during the CAS that there was no intention to delete a part of the resolution, but only add the part in green.

Supporters

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