

# FROM GDP TO WELLBEING: THE MEASURABLE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURE

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## 1. Preamble

In 1810, everywhere, life average duration was of below 40 years. In less than 200 years, the world population life expectancy and average wealth have dramatically changed. In the present time the differences between the world regions in life expectancy seem wider although a clear convergence toward a much longer life can be traced, except for Africa.

As a result of this enormous transformation, we have seen an impetuous growth of the world population and a substantial change in its distribution. When the western world decisions were shaping world destinies, its population was about 21.5% of the total in 1800 and about 30% in 1900. In 2050, this percentage will drop down to about or less than 10%, as China and India share of the global trade will jump from 5% up to beyond 30%.

A period of almost continued domination lasting centuries is coming to the end. New emerging transitional players and powers challenge the role of the national state as regulator of our lives, as embodiment of citizens' sovereignty. They also challenge all attempts to mitigating the effect of capitalistic economy on the inequality by pushing for the discontinuation and transfer to private market of large chunk of the Welfare. Moreover, Europe is called to deal with the impact of an ageing population where the producers are now a shrinking minority.

The basis on which we built our wealth in Europe no longer exist: people living longer and those in working age are no longer the majority, national States count less, jobs are becoming scarce, citizens sovereignty is endangered, and the natural resources are running out together with the erosion of the basic condition for life on earth. These conditions are not all reversible. There is no going back.

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