

Title: Building an aggregate measure: The case of the European Regional Social Progress Index – EU-SPI

Abstract

The EU Social Progress Index - EU-SPI - is a statistical measure to move beyond GDP. Fully developed in-house by the European Commission (EC), it is as a tool to facilitate benchmarking across EU regions on a wide range of criteria, describing purely social and environmental aspects, helping policymakers and stakeholders assessing a region's strong and weak points. By excluding economic indicators, the EU-SPI represents a direct metric of social progress, rather than an indirect one through economic proxies, allowing for a clearer analysis of the relationship between economic and social development. Through its twelve components, the EU-SPI assesses not only aggregate levels of social progress but also the strengths and weaknesses of the regions in all its different aspects. Its components are further aggregated into three broader dimensions describing respectively basic, intermediate and more advanced aspects of social progress.

The 2020 EU-SPI is an improved version of the first edition of the index, published in 2016 by the EC in cooperation with the Social Progress Imperative and the Basque Institute for Competitiveness. The Director General of the EC Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy will present 2020 EU-SPI at a high-level event on 2 December 2020.

The seminar focuses on results but also on the methodological challenges and issues that a construction of an aggregate metric of this type always poses, especially considering its purely social nature and regional coverage across the whole territory of the European Union.

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