**Title: An empirical measure of social progress for the European regions: challenges and solutions**

To go beyond-GDP it is necessary to provide complementary and reliable measures to the ubiquitous measure of an economy's goods and service value, the GDP. The European Union Social Progress Index – EU-SPI – is a first attempt in this direction. It measures the EU societal well-being by including, one of a kind, regional social and environmental indicators while excluding GDP or any other income-based indicators.

The EU-SPI defines *social progress* as the capacity of a society to meet the basic human needs of its citizens, establish the building blocks that allow citizens and communities to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and create the conditions for all individuals to reach their full potential. Three broad elements of social progress are included: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity, each further broken down into four underlying components. The focus is on outcomes relevant for wellbeing rather than on material inputs and outputs.

The first edition of the index was published by the European Commission – Directorate General for Urban and Regional Policy, in cooperation with the Social Progress Imperative, a think-tank responsible for the Global Social Progress Index, and Orkestra, a Spanish research institute. The EU-SPI follows the Global SPI framework but adapts methodology and indicators to the EU context.

Results show an important within-country variability, confirming that the sub-national and local levels often matter more than the national one. A clear contrast between the regions' performance in terms of GDP and its performance in terms of well-being, as measured by the EU-SPI, is generally observed.

Important challenges remain to be solved, most importantly the availability of reliable social indicators for all the EU regions. However, the EU-SPI can be considered as an important starting point in the complex process of providing empirical measures complementing purely monetary ones.