



# A model for implementing sustainable and qualitative growth in the EU

**Sebastiano Sabato · David Natali ·  
Cécile Barbier**

© Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies 2014

The period since the outbreak of the financial, economic and social crises in Europe has witnessed a renewed focus on the need to develop a more sustainable and qualitative growth model. A model where the traditional focus on economic growth (i.e. GDP growth) is complemented by an adherence to a wider range of qualitative indicators. Indicators which more broadly characterise the well-being of society as a whole. This paper defines a model for sustainable and qualitative growth (SQG) in the EU and questions if existing EU economic and social governance arrangements are consistent with this wider approach to building a sustainable growth model. This paper identifies a number of key recommendations. First, a more encompassing, balanced and multi-dimensional EU strategy for growth should be adopted. This refined strategy should take into account the broader indicators underpinning the SQG model and should be addressed in key EU documents such as the Annual Growth Survey. Second, a symmetric and 'time consistent' macroeconomic strategy, allowing for investments in SQG related domains, should be pursued. These growth-enhancing investments should primarily target relevant policy areas such as education and training, technological innovation and lifelong learning strategies. Third, a common automatic stabiliser in the EU should be set up in order to provide a minimum level of EU investment across all member states.



**Sebastiano Sabato** Ph.D., collaborates with the European Social Observatory and with the University of Milan.

**David Natali** Ph.D., is associate Professor at the University of Bologna's Faculty of Political Science in Forlì and a researcher at the European Social Observatory.

**Cécile Barbier** is a political scientist and researcher at the European Social Observatory. She is also in charge of the European Digest – International Digest for the quarterly Belgian Review for Social Security (RBSS).