

BIEN - BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

www.basicincome.org

The Basic Income Earth Network was founded in 1986 as the Basic Income European Network. It expanded its scope from Europe to the Earth in 2004. It serves as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and fosters informed discussion on this topic throughout the world.

NewsFlash 34, July 2005

BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1000 subscribers throughout the world.

Requests for free subscription are to be sent to bien@basicincome.org
Items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes are to be sent to Yannick Vanderborght, newsletter editor, UCL, Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, vanderborght@etes.ucl.ac.be The present NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of Jurgen De Wispelaere, Sandra Gonzalez, René Heeskens, Eri Noguchi, Paul Nollen, Daniel Raventós, Philippe Van Parijs, Julie Warkand, and Karl Widerquist.

*** !!! Please note that, due to technical problems, BIEN's Secretariat has not been able to reply to e-mails that have been sent to bien@basicincome.org during the past 6 weeks. If you did send an e-mail during this period, please send it again to the very same address. Thank you for your understanding. !!! ***

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1. EDITORIAL

In the past two months, national debates in Belgium and in Spain have pushed basic income towards the front-page of newspapers. In Belgium a new introductory booklet on the idea, and in Spain the presentation of a bill proposing the implementation of a basic income for all citizens, invited the usual stream of opposition arguments against basic income. In both countries, however, the national media gave ample attention to both advocates and opponents of the idea. While some undoubtedly may grow tired of repeating the same points all over again, perhaps the ensuing process of constantly and tirelessly clarifying, revising or reformulating the main arguments in favour of the basic income ideal ultimately benefits its political feasibility.

After all, what does not defeat us makes us stronger. The growing numbers of basic income advocates, including BIEN's core membership, continue to provide the network with the sort of information that, via our NewsFlashes, can be used to strengthen these arguments.

BIEN's Executive Committee

2. EVENTS

ERFURT (DE), 21-24 July 2005: German Social Forum.

In recent years, "social fora" have been held in various countries as popular alternatives to Davos' World Economic Forum. Basic income has often been one of the topics of discussion. This has been the case again in Erfurt on Friday 22 July 2005, during the German social forum. The German network "Netzwerk Grundeinkommen" organized one day of debate with social scientists, representatives of trade-unions, and political actors, and presented basic income as an alternative to current welfare reforms in Germany.

For further information, please contact Robert Ulmer (Robert.Ulmer@gmx.de).

VIENNA (AT), 7-9 October 2005: Basic Income Congress.

In collaboration with the German basic income network ("Netzwerk Grundeinkommen"), as well as the German and Austrian sections of ATTAC, the Austrian basic income network ("Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt" - all details on national networks can be found at the end of this NewsFlash) is organizing an international conference on basic income in the Austrian capital Vienna, where BIEN held its Congress in 1996. Plenary speakers will include, among others, Brazilian senator and co-chair of BIEN Eduardo Suplicy and Philippe van Parijs (Louvain & Harvard). Workshops (in German) will offer the possibility of discussing most aspects of the basic income debate.

For further information, please visit <http://www.grundeinkommen2005.org/> or contact Margit Appel at "margit.appel@ksoe.at"

VALENCIA (ES), 20-21 October 2005: Fifth Symposium on Basic Income.

As already announced in NewsFlash 33, the Spanish Basic Income Network (Red Renta Básica) is organizing the Fifth Symposium on Basic Income in Valencia on 20-21 October 2005. The First Symposium was organized by the network in June 2001, and the event has been held annually since then. All specifications and rules for applying to the 12,000-euro

grant offered by Red Renta Básica are available at www.redrentabasica.org and www.uv.es/rentabasica.

INTERNET: Global Income Foundation renovates its website.

The Global Basic Income Foundation, founded in 2000, has recently launched a new website. The site contains a brief overview of arguments that support the introduction of a global basic income and a FAQ page which gives more detailed answers to questions about ethical foundations and funding possibilities. Other pages include facts on poverty and hunger, links to information and other organisations advocating a global or national basic income, and some information about the GBI Foundation itself.

The GBI Foundation argues for the introduction of a global basic income, but also advocates for a national basic income in different countries. A global basic income is not presented as a substitute for national social security systems, certainly not in the short run, but as a necessary addition. Apart from the ethical and economic arguments that are commonly used to argue for a basic income, three specific arguments are given by the GBI Foundation for the introduction of a global basic income: 1. humanity as a whole has a responsibility to end extreme poverty and hunger; 2. the need for a global framework of social security; 3. the advancement of global awareness.

The introduction of a global basic income, the Foundation stresses, would first have to be targeted at eradicating extreme poverty.

Because this is defined by the international community as having less than \$1 a day to spend, the Foundation advocates a global basic income of \$1 a day as an intermediate target. Such a basic income, however small for people in rich countries, would greatly increase the income of the poorest 1.1 billion people, and also of the 1.6 billion more who have less than \$2 a day to spend.

A global basic income is advocated by the GBI Foundation as a right of every human being. The plea is foremost based on ethical values - life, freedom and justice - rather than on economic arguments. The introduction of a basic income, however, is also argued for from a more pragmatic perspective, as an important next step for humanity, which would not only end extreme poverty, but also give the international community the necessary cohesion and strength to tackle other global problems.

For further information, see www.globalincome.org

3. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

BELGIUM: RENEWED ATTENTION TO BASIC INCOME?

On the occasion of the publication of "L'allocation universelle", an introductory book on basic income by Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght (see NewsFlash 32), the Belgian media seem to be paying renewed attention to the idea, at least in the French-speaking part of the country. On Sunday June 12, 2005, both authors were invited to talk for one hour about basic income in a live broadcast of the public radio RTBF. On June 22, 2005, one of the main Francophone daily newspapers, "La Libre Belgique", published a double-page debate on the topic. Van Parijs and Vanderborght restated some of the arguments presented in their essay, and tried to show their relevance in the Belgian context. Three intellectuals were asked to give their opinion on the feasibility and desirability of the proposal. Claudine Leleux (University of Brussels) argued in favour of basic income and explained why she feels

most attracted by a version of the idea defended by Jean-Marc Ferry, a French but Brussels-based philosopher.

The two others were much more skeptical. Jean-Marie Harribey (University of Bordeaux IV and member of the Scientific Council of ATTAC) criticized the idea of disconnecting work and income, arguing that the left should rather go for full employment. Paul Palsterman (scientific council of Belgium's main trade-union CSC-ACV) argued that basic income proponents were too skeptical about the remaining possibilities of collective action in the field of welfare. Finally, on July 9, 2005, the picture of the front cover of the popular weekly "Télé Moustique" featured a typical manager in his three-piece suit, lounging on the beach. It ran as a title: "Tomorrow, paid to do nothing?" While in a long piece a journalist presented the basic income idea and the international debate, including a reference to the Alaskan Permanent Fund Dividend, in a short interview unionist Paul Palsterman restated again some of his main objections. "The BI proponents", he said, "might be good science-fiction authors, but they are bad philosophers."

ISRAEL: SHARON AND NETANYAHU FOR A NEGATIVE INCOME TAX?

On July 21, 2005, the "Globes Online" (Israel's business electronic newspaper) reported that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had instructed Minister of Finance Benjamin Netanyahu to formulate a so-called "negative income tax" (NIT) proposal. If the cabinet approves Ariel Sharon's decision on the matter at its meeting on August 7, 2005, the NIT would come into effect no earlier than January 2007, since the Israel Tax Authority needs 18 months to prepare from the date of decision. As a matter of fact, despite its name the Israelian NIT would rather look like the American Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), since it would only apply to low income wage-earners with salaries below the tax threshold.

For further information see <http://www.globes.co.il/>

SPAIN: HEATED EXCHANGES ON BASIC INCOME IN THE NATIONAL PRESS On June 15, 2005, the Spanish economic daily newspaper *Expansión* devoted its cover article as well as its editorial and three or four additional pages to the idea of a basic income or citizen's income ("renta básica de ciudadanía"). This coincided with the bill presented by ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya: a pro-independence, leftist and republican party) and ICV (Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds: an eco-socialist and leftist organisation), both in the tripartite Government of Catalonia, proposing the implementation of a basic income for all citizens in Spain. Most of the articles trumpeted the evils that, like biblical plagues, would descend on the country if BI were to be introduced: "irrationality", "food for indolence", "shock to the basic structures of the country", failure of the "culture of effort and personal improvement", "perversion of any idea of justice", "capital mistakes", "new religious faith", "freedom-killing proposal". Some of the *Expansión* columnists had previously written against basic income. In its *Revista de Libros* (issue 50, 2001), for instance, one of them predicted that "no political party ... has contemplated proposing this subsidy, not even as a long term objective". Yet, not just one but the three political parties forming the majority in the Spanish and Catalan parliaments have already initiated serious study as a prelude to the legal process of introducing BI.

On June 20, 2005, *Expansión* published a much shortened version of a reply by Daniel Raventós, Professor at the University of Barcelona and

chairman of the Spanish Network Red Renta Basica. In his reply, entitled "A Defence of the Basic Income of Citizenship", Raventós first stresses that most objections to BI appearing in the pages of *Expansión* were actually formulated more than two decades ago.

Subsequently, he tries to tackle some of the most common of these objections, including the idea that "people would not work with a BI". He also addresses the economic aspects of the discussion, referring to more detailed studies ("La Renta Básica de ciudadanía" (Icaria, 2004), written by R. Pinilla; and "La Renda Bàsicade Ciutadania. Una proposta viable per a Catalunya" (Mediterrànea, 2005) written by J. Arcarons, À. Boso, J.

A. Noguera and D. Raventós). "Are these definitive studies?", Raventós asks at the end of his article. "They are certainly not, but they do show that the best remedy against prejudice is detailed and meticulous empirical analysis".

For further information, see *Expansión*'s website at <http://www.expansiondirecto.com/> The full version of Raventos' reply can be found at <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/index.php>

UNITED KINGDOM: GUERNSEY GREENS FOR BASIC INCOME A small group of activists, The "Friends of the Earth Guernsey", has published a statement advocating the introduction of a partial basic income on the British island of Guernsey (30 miles west of the Normandy coast, 60,000 inhabitants). They argue that a basic income could not be implemented in the short term, but that the principle should already be applied on a smaller scale, for instance by recycling some ecotaxes as ecobonuses, at least to recognize "every member of the community's equal share of the island's ecological space". Referring to the Irish Green Paper on basic income (2002), they present some key figures and try to estimate the total cost of such a scheme. For further information, see <http://www.foeg.org.uk/etr.htm>

4. PUBLICATIONS

*ENGLISH

STANDING, Guy (ed.) (2005). *Promoting Income Security as a Right: Europe and North America*. London: Anthem Press, paperback, 601pp., ISBN: 1 84331 151 8 Price: £24.95.

The publication of this volume was already announced in *NewsFlash* 28 (July 2004), but due to printing errors that required the publishers to pulp the first print run, it has just come out again. It consists in a broad selection of the papers presented during BIEN's ninth international congress (Geneva, 2002). Never before had such a large number of contributions to a BIEN congress been published together. With no less than 34 chapters, the book offers an comprehensive picture of the many topics discussed at both the plenary and parallel sessions as they relate to the more developed countries. Starting with a detailed introductory chapter by Guy Standing, director of the ILO's Programme on Socio-Economic Security and master-mind of the congress, it argues that there should be a guaranteed basic income as a citizenship right, paid to each individual, regardless of marital status, work status, age or sex. Some chapters argue that existing selective schemes for income protection are ineffectual, costly and misleading; other chapters present alternative rationales and philosophical justifications for moving towards a new form of

universalism based on citizenship economic rights. The chapters are organized into five sections: "Basic Income as a Right" (with contributions by Anthony Atkinson, Raymond Plant, Claus Offe, Roswitha Pioch and Ron Dore, "Rationales for Basic Income" (with contributions by Rosamund Stock, Sibyl Schwarzenbach, Michael Howard, Michael Krätke, Torsten Meireis, Alan Dyer and Jørn Loftager, "Legitimizing Basic Income Politically" (with contributions by Steven Shafarman, Stefan Liebig and Steffen Mau, Daniel Raventós and David Casassas, Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, José Noguera and Daniel Raventós, Jan Otto Andersson and Olli Kangas, Nanna Kildal and Stein Kuhnle, Sabine Stadler, Andrea Fumagalli, Pascale Vielle and Pierre Walthery, "Building Towards Basic Income" (with contributions by Theresa Funciello, Michael Opielka, Erik Christensen, Christine le Clainche, Gianluca Busilacchi, and "National and Regional Initiatives" (with contributions by Luis Sanzo-González, Claude Gamel, Didier Balsan and Josiane Vero, Karl Widerquist, Simon Wigley, Scott Goldsmith, Joel Handler). The chapter by Scott Goldsmith, in the final section, gives an informative account of the only existing basic income scheme on earth, the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. But the whole volume gives a lively picture of the current state of discussion in many "Northern" countries, from the angle of several disciplines.

Editor's address: <GuyStanding@compuserve.com>. Publisher's website: <http://www.anthempres.com/>

*GERMAN

LIEBERMANN, Sascha (2005). Freiheit statt Vollbeschäftigung: Grundeinkommen als Ausweg aus der Krise. UtopieKreativ 176, June 2005, pp.525-533.

In this article entitled "Freedom Rather than Full Employment: A Basic Income as a Way Out of the Crisis", Sascha Liebermann calls for political freedom by means of an unconditional basic income for all citizens. He considers the present reform debate in Germany to indicate that the political community is in crisis. Instead of trying to find long-term solutions aimed at increasing the citizens' autonomy, all participants in this debate agree that more coercion and control are required. This attitude, the author argues, may not only be found in labor market policy. Even though the very idea of a democracy implies a reliance on responsible citizens, the political climate is pervaded by mistrust in the citizens' willingness to contribute their share to the common welfare.

Journal's website: <http://www.rosalux.de/cms/index.php?id=6686>

Author's address: S.Liebermann@freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de

*ITALIAN

PERAZZOLI, Giovanni (2005). Una proposta minimalista: salario sociale per tutti. MicroMega, Labirinto italiano 3/2005, pp. 126-137.

Taken in a comparative perspective, Italy remains something as an exception in the field of social assistance. With no general minimum income scheme, the Peninsula is often described as a true welfare laggard. Perazzoli (from the "Istituto italiano per gli studi storici" in Naples) shares this point of view, and makes a vigorous plea for the introduction of a minimum income in Italy. Thus, despite its title ("A minimal proposal: a social wage for all"), a few references to the works of Gorz, Van Parijs, Negri, and an appraisal of BIEN, this paper does not constitute a defense of basic income as such.

Journal's address: via Cristoforo Colombo 149, 00147 Roma, tel.
06.865147134.

*SLOVENIAN

VAN PARIJS, Philippe (2004). Brezplacno kosilo za vse? Predlog univerzalnega temeljnega dohodka. Ljubljana: Založba Krtina, 2004, 171 p., ISBN 961-6174-71-1.

A full Slovenian translation of Philippe Van Parijs's "What's Wrong with a Free Lunch?" (Boston, Beacon Press, 2001) and of all the original comments (by Anne Alstott, Brian Barry, Claus Offe, Edmund Phelps, Herbert Simon, and others), supplemented by comments by a number of prominent Slovenian intellectuals (Joze Mencinger, Sreco Dragos, Tanja Renner, Janez Sustersic, Milan Zver).

Publisher's address: Hrenova 16, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia,
krtina@siol.net, www.zalozbakrtina.si/kontakt.htm

*SPANISH

REY PEREZ, José Luis (2005). El derecho al trabajo y la propuesta del ingreso básico: perspectivas desde la crisis del estado de bienestar. Doctoral dissertation (dir.: Francisco Javier Ansuátegui Roig), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Instituto Universitario de Derechos Humanos "Bartolomé de las Casas", February 2005, 594p.

This dissertation by José Luis Perez (Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid & Universidad Carlos III de Madrid) was successfully defended on June 15, 2005. It analyses the crisis of the Welfare State not as a financial break but as the break of a system of guarantees designed to satisfy the social rights. In fact, the main aspect of Social State is the recognition of the social, economic and cultural rights. In this sense, the Welfare State is a specific historical model of Social State. After World War II, the main institution of the welfare systems was the right to work. That right was interpreted as the right to have a job, because in those years labour market worked as a guarantee to social recognition.

This dissertation is an argument in favour of a new perception of 'right to work', understood as the right to social inclusion. To reach this goal, it demands a new concept of work, wider than the one market considers now. Therefore, work is identified with all activity carried out by human beings in which they combine their intelligence with their physical strength, their creativity with their capabilities, and it always implies interaction with other people.

The full employment was the central guarantee to the right to social insertion during the development of the Welfare State. Nowadays, this guarantee is not attained due to the crisis of the labour market.

This study expresses the need for the distinction between rights and duties on the one hand, and guarantees on the other. The guarantees are those institutions which make the content of rights real and effective. The key element of guarantees is the effectiveness; therefore, effectiveness is not an element of the concept of human rights.

As labour market cannot be a guarantee to the right to social inclusion, this dissertation analyses basic income as a possible new guarantee to this right. The dissertation is structured in four chapters that have been the four key points of the research. In the first one, it is studied the differences between Social and Welfare State and the origin, evolution and crisis of this one. The second chapter studies the right to work as the central guarantee of the

welfare state. It is distinguished this right from the freedom to work and the labour rights arguing for an interpretation of the right to work as the right to social inclusion. The third chapter talks about basic income and the discussions about it, studying the normative and pragmatic arguments offered to support it. Finally, the last chapter tries to translate in legal terms what has been studied from philosophical, political and sociological perspectives in the previous chapters to conclude that the basic income can be interpreted as a new guarantee to the right to work understood as the right to social insertion.

For further information and a longer version of the English abstract, please contact the author at jlrey@der.upco.es

BERTOMEU, María Julia, DOMENECH, Antoni, and RAVENTOS, Daniel (2005). La propuesta de la Renta Básica de Ciudadanía. El Dipló (Le Monde Diplomatique, edición argentina), issue 73, July 2005, and Le Monde Diplomatique edición chilena, issue 54, July 2005.

This introductory article starts with a useful clarification of the relevant differences between basic income and conditional assistance benefits. It discusses possibilities of financing the reform, and analyzes basic income as a way to counter neo-liberal attacks on the welfare state.

The article is available online at <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/textos/index.php?x=418>

5. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

5.1. BIEN's executive committee

Co-chair:

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Louise HAAGH, lh11@york.ac.uk, Department of Politics, University of York, United Kingdom

Treasurer:

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5.2. BIEN's international board

Chair: Philippe Van Parijs

Former members of BIEN's Executive Committee:

Alexander de Roo

Edwin Morley-Fletcher
José Noguera
Claus Offe
Ilona Ostner
Steven Quilley
Robert J. van der Veen
Walter Van Trier
Lieselotte Wohlgenannt

Representatives of national networks:

Ruben Lo Vuolo for the Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano (AR) Margit Appel for the Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt (AT) N for the Rede Brasileira de Renda Básica de Cidadania (BR) Jørg Gaugler for the Borgerlønsbevægelsen (DK) Katrin Mohr, Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, and Wolfram Otto for the Netzwerk Grundeinkommen (DE) John Baker for BIEN Ireland (IE) Loek Groot for the Vereniging Basisinkomen (NL) Daniel Raventos for the Red Renta Básica (ES) Bridget Dommen for BIEN Switzerland (CH) Malcolm Torry for the Citizen's Income Trust (UK) Michael Lewis for USBIG (US)

5.3. Recognised national networks

ARGENTINA: Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano Founded in March 2004
www.ingresociudadano.org
President: Ruben Lo Vuolo
redaic@ingresociudadano.or

AUSTRIA: Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt Founded in October 2002 www.grundeinkommen.at
Coordinator: Margit Appel redaktion@ksoe.at

BRAZIL: Rede Brasileira de Renda Básica de Cidadania Founded in September 2004 Provisional co-ordinator: Eduardo Suplicy
eduardo.suplicy@senador.gov.br

DENMARK: Borgerlønsbevægelsen
Founded in January 2000
www.borgerloen.dk
President: Jørg Gaugler
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GERMANY: Netzwerk Grundeinkommen
Founded in July 2004
www.grundeinkommen.de
Spokespersons: Ronald Blaschke, Katja Kipping, Katrin Mohr, Guenther Soelken, Robert Ulmer, Birgit Zenker, kontakt@grundeinkommen.de Contact persons: Katrin Mohr (kmohr@gwdg.de), Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn (strengmann@wiwi.uni-frankfurt.de), and Wolfram Otto (wolframotto@web.de).

IRELAND: BIEN Ireland
Founded in March 1995
Coordinator: John Baker
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NETHERLANDS: Vereniging Basinkomen
Founded in October 1987 (initially as "Werkplaats Basisinkomen")
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SPAIN: Red Renta Basica
Founded in February 2001
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SWITZERLAND: BIEN Switzerland
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UNITED KINGDOM: Citizen's Income Trust
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UNITED STATES: U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network (USBIG) Founded in
December 1999 www.usbig.net
Coordinator: Karl Widerquist Karl@Widerquist.com

5.4. BIEN's life members and BIENEFACTORS

All life members of the Basic Income European Network, many of whom
were non-Europeans, have automatically become life members of the Basic
Income Earth Network.

To join them, just send your name and address (postal and electronic)
to David Casassas casassas@eco.ub.es, secretary of BIEN, and transfer
EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK
(IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussels,
Belgium. An acknowledgement will be sent upon receipt.

BIEN Life-members can become "BIENEFACTORS" by giving another 100Euros
or more to the Network. The funds collected will facilitate the
participation of promising BI advocates coming from developing
countries or from disadvantaged groups.

BIENEFACTORS:
Joel Handler (US), Philippe Van Parijs (BE)

BIEN's Life Members:

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