

BIEN
BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK
NEWSFLASH 61 May 2010

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.

The present NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of *Paul Nollen, Simon Birnbaum, David Casassas, Gwang-eun Choi, Claudia & Dirk Haarmann, Jennifer Lee, Jim Mulvale, Ian Orton, Dorothee Schulte-Basta, Liesbeth Van Criekingen, Ingrid van Niekerk, Philippe Van Parijs, Karl Widerquist, and Thérèse Davio.*

This NewsFlash can be downloaded as a PDF document on our website www.basicincome.org

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EDITORIAL

A Slate of Nominations for BIEN Executive Committee

Since the creation of BIEN in the late 1980s, it has been run by an “Executive Committee” (EC), which is made up of six to nine members including two co-chairs and other positions defined as needed. All members of the EC (with the exception of the conference organizer) are elected at BIEN’s biennial “General Assembly” (GA). Candidates for the EC must be life members of BIEN and they can be nominated by any life member of BIEN. All life members of BIEN are eligible to vote at the GA.

Members of the outgoing EC have usually nominated a slate of candidates for the next EC. So far, the GA has elected that slate each time. The idea behind this strategy is that the slate provides continuity in leadership and a way to ensure that people with the needed skills agree to fill the positions that require those skills. However, the bigger BIEN gets the more difficult is it for the current EC to know the full membership and to identify people with the right skills who want to get involved.

So, this year we would like to cast the net a little wider. We are going to nominate a slate of seven candidates for seven of the eight elected positions on the EC. Life members of BIEN, of course, are invited to nominate people for any of the positions, but the EC especially seeks nominations for the eighth position. The current EC positions and the current slate of candidates is:

1. Co-chair: Karl Widerquist
2. Co-chair: Ingrid van Niekerk
3. Secretary: David Casassas
4. Newsletter editor: Yannick Vanderborgh
5. Treasurer / Regional Coordinator: Almaz Zelleke
6. Regional Coordinator: Louise Haag
7. Regional Coordinator: Jim Mulvale
8. Regional Coordinator: open
9. Conference organizer: not an elected position (appointment by the EC once a conference site is chosen by the GA)

The job of the regional coordinators is to divide up the world into regions and maintain contact with BIEN affiliates and other BI-related organizations in those regions. They need to help the affiliates work with BIEN and with each other. If you would like to serve in that position or in any other elected position on the EC, please nominate yourself and get someone to second your nomination. The BIEN statutes with the election and nomination rules are online on the BIEN website (basicincome.org). Nominations will be collected by the Secretary, David Casassas <david.casassas@uab.cat>, between now and the night before the GA meeting.

It is not necessary to get elected to get more involved with BIEN. We have great need right now of volunteers to help with several tasks including writing the Newsletter, maintaining the website, creating a database of BI literature, and maintaining our contacts with BI-supporting organizations around the world. If you would like to help with any of these tasks, people contact me, Karl Widerquist <karl@widerquist.com>.

-Karl Widerquist, co-chair, Basic Income Earth Network

1. EVENTS

PAST EVENTS

* **MONTREAL (CA)**, 15-16 April, 2010: Conference of USBIG and BIEN Canada

On April 15 and 16 a conference was held in Montréal, Quebec entitled *Basic Income at a Time of Economic Upheaval: A Path to Justice and Stability?* The event was organized by Centre de Recherche en Éthique de l'Université de Montréal (CREUM), in cooperation with BIEN Canada and USBIG Network. Jurgen DeWispelaere, currently a Senior Research Fellow at CREUM (and also Co-Editor of *Basic Income Studies*), took the lead role in planning and organizing this conference. The event attracted almost 100 participants from North America and Europe, including a number of people who had not previously attended Basic Income conferences or meetings.

The highlights of the conference included presentations by Dr. Louise Haagh of the University of York (UK) on “Basic Income and Public Finance”, by Dr. Guy Standing, University of Bath (UK) on “Basic Income for the Precariat”, and by Senator Eduardo Suplicy (São Paulo, Brazil) on “Steps Towards a Citizen’s Basic Income”.

A ‘political panel’ featured speakers from Quebec, Canada and the United States who focused on political openings and challenges for achieving BI in North America. The panel consisted of Amélie Châteauneuf, spokesperson for FCPASQ; Tony Martin, Member of Parliament and poverty critic for the New Democratic Party; Rob Rainer, Executive Director for Canada Without Poverty; Al Sheahan, long-time activist with USBIG; and Canadian Senator Hugh Segal. The panel was chaired by Sheila Regehr, Director of the National Council of Welfare of Canada.

Other sessions at the conference addressed education for a BIG society (Sally Lerner), pragmatic guaranteed income architecture for Canada (Rob Rainer and Jim Mulvale), exporting the Alaska model (Karl Widerquist), the ecological imperative for a BIG (three separate papers by Anita Vaillancourt, Gianne Broughton, and Michael Howard), economic crisis and income security (three separate papers by Chandra Pasma, James Bryan, and Philip Harvey), Basic Income funded through common assets (Gary Flomenhoft), Basic Income and consumption tax (André Presse), Geonomics (Jeffrey Smith), income security for persons with episodic disabilities (Andrea Vick and Ernie Lightman), and copyright, creative work and the Basic Income grant (Matt Stahl).

A pre-conference workshop was also held, which featured three presentations:

- Sandra Gonzalez-Bailon, University of Oxford, “Labour Behavior, Basic Income and Social Influence: A Simulation Experiment”
- Evelyn Forget, University of Manitoba, “Canada’s Experiment with Social Justice: Using health Administration Data to Assess the Outcomes of a BI Field Experiment” (based on the Mincome Project that ran Dauphin, Manitoba in the 1970s)
- Guy Standing, University of Bath, “Basic Income Pilot Schemes: Ten Imperatives for Design and Evaluation”

Full details of the program can be found at <http://bigmontreal.wordpress.com/>

Audio podcasts of several talks are available at the "Radio CREUM" website: <http://www.creum.umontreal.ca/spip.php?article1168>

Papers from the conference will be posted on the website of USBIG in the near future: <http://www.usbig.net/>

BIEN Canada and USBIG are planning future joint events, building on the strong interest in the programme of this conference.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

* **SAO PAULO (BR)**, 30 June & 1-2 July, 2010: 13th BIEN Congress

BIEN is preparing its next Congress, to be held on June 30, July 1st and 2nd, 2010, at the Faculty of Economics, Administration and Accounting of the University of São Paulo. More than 140 paper proposals have been submitted to date. All details about the congress are available at www.bien2010brasil.com

* **ATLANTA (US)**, 13-15 August 2010: The Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) Conference

The *Society for the Study of Social Problems* (SSSP), an organisation of applied sociologists/social scientists, will hold its annual conference in Atlanta (US) in 2010. It will take place on August 13-15, 2010, and will be held at the Sheraton Hotel located at 165 Courtland Street NE, Atlanta, GA. One of the sessions is being organized by Michael A. Lewis of the Hunter College School of Social Work. The session is entitled "Contested Paths to Good Policy: Assets, Income, Jobs" and will focus on comparing and contrasting social policies intended to promote the right to work, the right to income, or asset development.
- From USBIG Newsletter Fall 2009.

2. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

* **BELGIUM: Senator suggests implementation of basic income in Haïti.**

On February 25, 2010, Senator Roland Duchâtelet (from the Flemish right-liberal party OpenVLD) raised the issue of a basic income for Haïti during question time. He referred to a proposal made by several basic income activists – and wrongly attributed it to BIEN itself, whereas BIEN did not take any official position on the matter. Duchâtelet suggested a basic income of EUR9/month. In his reply, Secretary of State Bernard Clerfayt argued that a basic income certainly deserves to be studied in the framework of the long-term reconstruction of the country (i.e. Haïti). The payment of a basic income can boost economic growth. The income guarantee can help citizens to start activities that will generate wealth. But he also stressed the fact that such a basic income could only be designed in coordination with other industrialized nations. Secretary of State Clerfayt mentioned the fact that basic income was not an appropriate solution in the short term, because priority was to be given to infrastructure and food independence of Haïti. Duchâtelet counter-argued by stressing the positive effects on consumption that could be expected from a basic income.

For further information: <http://www.senate.be/>

* **GERMANY: Petition on Basic Income at the Official “Petitions Committee”**

At the end of 2008/2009, more than 52,000 German citizens signed a mass petition to the German Federal parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) for the introduction of a basic income. The petition was submitted by Susanne Wiest. If a collective or mass petition is supported by at least 50,000 petitioners, German law allows such petitioners to be heard at a public committee meeting. Based on this, the Petitions Committee decided to consider the petition individually in a public meeting in the second half of the year. Dr. Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, basic income supporter and member of the Petitions Committee, supported this new development.

For further information: <http://www.strengmann-kuhn.de/?p=1915>

*** GERMANY: Green parliamentary group discusses basic income pilot project**

At the invitation of Uwe Kekeritz and Dr. Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, Members of Parliament, Herbert Jauch, labour researcher, educator and one of the initiators of the basic income pilot project in Otjivero-Omitara, Namibia, reported on the results of the project in the green parliamentary group. Inspired by the achievements of the Namibian project, especially in terms of tackling poverty and child malnutrition, Kekeritz and Strengmann-Kuhn put in a request to the federal government to answer several questions related to issues of social protection.

See: http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/entwicklungszusammenarbeit/dok/333/333915.befaehigen_statt_bevormunden.html

See also: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/012/1701278.pdf>

*** SOUTH KOREA: Basic Income Coalition has been launched**

The inauguration event of the Basic Income Coalition (BIC) was held in Seoul on April 25. Fifty civil organizations and more than 770 people participated in this coalition. The aim of the BIC is to support candidates in favor of Basic Income in the upcoming local elections on June 2. There are 28 candidates who are members of the coalition. 23 of them belong to the Socialist Party, 3 of them belong to the Democratic Labor Party, and 2 of them belong to the New Progressive Party. Participants in the event also announced the declaration of BIC's inauguration. According to this, they argue that it is the first coalition which focuses on a future-oriented alternative such as Basic Income in Korean political history. Most committee members of the Basic Income Korean Network (BIKN) are involved in the coalition.

For further information: <http://basicincome.kr/>

3. PUBLICATIONS

DUTCH

Vereniging Basisinkomen (2010), *Nieuwsbrief Basisinkomen*, Issue 53, April 2010; available at <http://www.basisinkomen.nl/>

In the latest issue of its Newsletter, the Dutch basic income network focuses on the upcoming general elections in the Netherlands (June 9, 2010). Several small political parties have included a basic income into their electoral platform: *Partij voor Mens en Spirit* (<http://www.mensenspirit.nl/>), *Nieuw Nederland* (<http://www.nieuw-nederland.nu/>), and the small green party *De Groenen* (<http://www.degroenen.nl/>, to be distinguished from the main green party *GroenLinks*). It should be noted that the probability that one of these parties will get seats in the newly elected Dutch Parliament is very small.

COLOMBINO, Ugo, LOCATELLI, Marilena, NARAZANI, Edlira, O'DONOGHUE, Cathal (2010), 'Alternative Basic Income Mechanisms: An Evaluation Exercise with a Microeconomic Model', IZA Discussion Paper No. 4781, February 2010, available at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp4781.pdf>

This paper develops and estimates a microeconomic model of household labour supply in four European countries representative of different economies and welfare policy regimes: Denmark, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The authors then simulate, under the constraint of constant total net tax revenue (fiscal neutrality), the effects of various hypothetical tax transfer reforms which include alternative versions of a Basic Income policy: Guaranteed Minimum Income, Work Fare, Participation Basic Income and Universal Basic Income. The article includes indexes and criteria according to which the reforms can be ranked and compared to the current tax-transfer systems. The exercise can be considered as one of empirical optimal taxation, where the optimization problem is solved computationally rather than analytically. It turns out that many versions of the Basic Income policies would be superior to the current system. The most successful policies are those involving non means-tested versions of basic income (Universal or Participation Basic Income) and adopting progressive tax-rules. If –besides the fiscal neutrality constraint – also other constraints are considered, such as the implied top marginal top tax rate or the effect on female labour supply, the picture changes: unconditional policies remain optimal and feasible in Denmark and the UK; instead in Italy and Portugal universal policies appear to be too costly in terms of implied top marginal tax rates and in terms of adverse effects on female participation, and conditional policies such as Work-Fare, emerge as more desirable.

Citizen's Income Trust (2010), *Citizen's Income Newsletter*, Issue 1, 2010 available at www.citizensincome.org

This new issue of the Newsletter of CIT, the British basic income network, contains a progress report, a review article on Wilkinson and Pickett's *The Spirit Level*, and other book reviews. It is also available as a Word document or as a pdf.

FORD, Martin (2010), *The lights in the tunnel: Automation, Accelerating Technology and the Economy of the Future*, Acculant Publishing, <http://www.acculant.com/>

One of the book's central arguments is that accelerating technology is likely to result in significant structural unemployment and plunging consumer confidence as machines, computers and software automation algorithms are increasingly able to perform many routine jobs and tasks. The book suggests that unless countervailing policies are adopted, the trend toward concentration of income will be relentless and may well lead to economic disruptions even more severe than the current crisis. The book employs a thought experiment or mental simulation based on "lights in a tunnel" to illustrate the potential economic impact of technologies that will soon be available. The author, Martin Ford, is a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and computer engineer who is deeply concerned that the issues raised in the book are currently not widely recognized and are generally dismissed by economists. His concern is that, as information technology advances, the impact on the job market may unfold at a relatively rapid pace. The author is also a guest blogger at Angry Bear (one of the top 5 economics blogs according the Wall Street Journal and CNN) and has written several posts on

this issue. He also has his own blog at www.econfuture.wordpress.com and writes about the economic implications of future technologies.

Reviews of the book have been published at:

http://thefutureofwork.net/newsletter_0310_Notes.html#bookshelf

<http://www.technologyreview.com/blog/post.aspx?bid=358&bpid=24609>

<http://singularityhub.com/2009/12/15/martin-ford-asks-will-automation-lead-to-economic-collapse/>

Author's address: lightstunnel@yahoo.com

Social Justice Ireland (2010), *An Agenda for a New Ireland*, Dublin: Social Justice Ireland (Socio-Economic Review 2010). Further details at <http://www.socialjustice.ie/>

Social Justice Ireland issued its Socio-economic Review for 2010. Entitled "An Agenda for a New Ireland", it advocates the introduction of a Basic Income system as part of the solution to the many crises that Ireland faces today. The Review provides an alternative narrative to the one currently guiding policy development and public discourse on how Ireland came to be in its current situation, where it is now, where it ought to go in the future and how it might get there. The Review argues that:

1. Ireland's policy-making for more than a decade was guided by many false assumptions concerning economic growth, taxation, services and infrastructure.

2. Many policy failures arose from these false assumptions.

3. These policy failures produced much of the current series of crises that Ireland is facing.

4. These crises have been exacerbated by persevering with failed policies and false assumptions.

5. Ireland needs a new vision to guide policy development and decision-making if it is to move beyond the current series of crises. The Review sets out four core values that should underpin a guiding vision for Ireland in the years ahead. These are human dignity, sustainability, equality/human rights and the common good.

6. These values lead to key policy priorities for moving Ireland towards a desirable alternative vision and spells out the details.

This Review is available free of charge on line. A printed version can also be purchased. For details check the website: <http://www.socialjustice.ie/>. Each section of the Review can be downloaded separately. The complete 250-page book can also be downloaded as a unit. The Basic Income issue is addressed in Chapter 3.1 which addresses the issue of Income.

GERMAN

PATRY, Eric (2010), *Das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen in der Schweiz: eine republikanische Perspektive* [Basic Income in Switzerland: a Republican Perspective], Berne/Stuttgart/Vienna: Haupt Verlag. 336pp.

<http://www.haupt.ch/verlagsshop/oxid.php/sid/x/cl/details/anid/9783258075754>

This book is based on Patry's doctoral thesis at the Institute for Economic and Business Ethics of the University St. Gallen in Switzerland (supervised by Prof. Dr. Peter Ulrich). The basic income idea has increasingly been attracting interest for several years. While most of the contributions in Switzerland have focussed on the question of how to justify basic income, the question of whether the basic income idea is in some respect related to societal and political practices has been neglected. In this thesis it is shown that the basic income idea can be linked

to the Swiss Republican tradition. Republican principles that could justify basic income are deeply rooted in the Swiss civic tradition. There are also political institutions in Switzerland that resemble basic income and that are shaped by republican principles. Based on an innovative link between political theory, Swiss history and current social policy this study highlights the republican political-philosophical justification of basic income as well as pragmatic ways of relating basic income to ongoing developments.

JAPANESE

TATEIWA Shin'ya & SAITO Taku (2010), *Basic Income: Possibility of the Minimal State that Distributes*, Seidosha Publ., ISBN-10: 4791765257
<http://www.arsvi.com/ts2000/2010b1-e.htm>

Part I of this book is based on a serie of papers on basic income published by Tateiwa Shin'ya in the Japanese monthly *Gendai Shiso* (mainly from September 2009 through March 2010). In Part II, Saito Taku, who is one of the Japanese translators of Philippe Van Parijs' *Real Freedom for All*, discusses and critiques and expresses his own views on basic income. In Part III, Saito introduces, comments and describes recent discussions and statements on basic income. This book is one of the achievements of Global COE Program Ars Vivendi: Forms of Human Life and Survival. See the related information via <http://www.arsvi.com>

The Advanced Institute for Law and Politics (2010), *J-Mail Newsletter 32*, Spring 2010,
<http://www.juris.hokudai.ac.jp/~academia/>

On February 26, 2010, Prof. Miyamoto Tarô (Hokkaidô University) organized an international symposium in Tokyo on the following theme: 'Activation or Basic Income? Towards a Sustainable Social Framework'. Guest speakers included Jørgen Goul Andersen (Aarhus University, Denmark), and Yannick Vanderborght (BIEN & Louvain University, Belgium). This issue of the newsletter of the *Advanced Institute for Law and Politics* at Hokkaido University includes a report of the conference.

4. NEW LINKS

*** A Matrix on social transfer programmes**

A matrix which documents the effects of social transfers around the world is now available at the website of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Many of these programmes share the same logic of the Basic Income. For those interested in the BI, it is an important research tool as one can quickly gain access to specific details as to the impact of social transfers (e.g the impact of family benefits on child labour in Latin America or impact of social pensions on labour market participation).

<http://www.socialsecurityextension.org/gimi/gess/ShowWiki.do?wid=59>

*** Namibia basic income pilot project**

A short piece on the Namibian pilot project by Isobel Frye, director of studies at the Poverty and Inequality Institute, a nonprofit research institute based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

<http://www.sowetan.co.za/News/Article.aspx?id=1116620>

*** Basic income and Haïti on Facebook & YouTube**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=291135833623&ref=nf>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNkY1MWQx6k>

*** "Common purpose" manifesto**

A Manifesto written by Ben Wallace, which includes a plea for basic income: "Because direct income equality from free trade is impossible, and free trade is vital, a shared base income, ensuring equal opportunity for all to realise potential, must be created by sharing the earnings we make on our trade (the earnings we make from sale of our products and services after our expenses involved in producing them)."

<http://www.thecommonpurpose.com/>

*** Basic income simulation**

Keith Rankin *Dept of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Creative Industries and Business, Unitec New Zealand*) has published a number of tables that show, for individual taxpayers, average and marginal tax rates for: the status quo; conservative reform options that recognise the comparatively high rates of tax that low income New Zealanders pay; and less conservative (but even more principled) "refundable tax credit" options that integrate a flat tax (inclusive of ACC) with a basic universal benefit.

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL1003/S00196.htm>

*** Canadian basic income petition**

An online petition on basic income was started by Cheryl Ives (Community Engagement Manager with Opportunities Waterloo Region) at

<http://www.petitiononline.com/gai08/petition-sign.html>

See also: <http://tweetmeme.com/story/735743899/sign-the-canadian-gai-citizens-income-petition>

*** Global Ethics Corner slideshow**

Can basic income grants work for those living in extreme poverty? Or are grants discouraging people from taking individual responsibility? This Global Ethics Corner slideshow is based on the Namibian pilot project. It is part of a weekly series from the Carnegie Council:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaWVbTd0-_I

For further information: <http://www.cceia.org>

*** 8 reasons for unconditional basic income**

A short clip about basic income on Youtube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg9tNhUDh5g&feature=player_embedded

5. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

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Further details about BIEN's Executive Committee and International Board as well as further information about the Recognised National Networks can be found on our website

www.basicincome.org

MEMBERSHIP

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 david.casassas@uab.cat, 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 "B(I)ENEFACTORS" by giving another 100 Euros or more to the Network. The funds collected will facilitate the participation of promising BI advocates coming from developing countries or from disadvantaged groups.

B(I)ENEFACTORS:

Joel Handler (US), Philippe Van Parijs (BE), Helmut Pelzer (DE), Guy Standing (UK), Eduardo Suplicy (BR), Robert van der Veen (NL), Richard Caputo (US), Rolf Kuettel (CH), Jeanne Hrdina (CH), Wolf D. Aichberger (AT), Einkommen ist ein Bürgerrecht (DE).

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Waltenberg (BR), Leon Segers (NL), Marco Bossi (BE), Choi Gwang Eun (KR), Wolf D. Aichberger (AT), Regina Sörgel (DE), No-Wan Kwack, Wolfgang Röhrig (DE) [191].

BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1,500 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, yannick.vanderborght@uclouvain.be

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