

BIEN - Basic Income Earth Network

NEWSFLASH 47 September 2007

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, Erik Christensen, Claudia & Dirk Haardman, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Phil Dines, Sandro Gobetti, Seàn Healy, Marek Hrubec, Malcolm Torry, Philippe Van Parijs, and Karl Widerquist.

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

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1. EDITORIAL: Tribute to André Gorz

French social philosopher and journalist André Gorz (born in 1923) committed suicide with his wife in their home in Vosnon (France), and was found dead on September 24, 2007. Gorz was one of the most prominent advocates of an unconditional basic income. In his classic essays on work, socialism, or green politics, he had first expressed some scepticism with regard to the idea of an “income by right”. His chapter in *Arguing for Basic Income* (edited by Philippe Van Parijs, Verso, 1996) was significantly entitled: “On the Difference between Society and Community, and Why Basic Income Cannot by itself Confer Full Membership of Either”. But since 1997 and the publication of *Misères du présent, Richesse du possible*, Gorz was defending the introduction of a basic income as the logical consequence of technological change, and a necessary complement to working-time reduction. His last book, published in 2006, was a moving love letter entitled *Lettre à D.* It was dedicated to his wife Dorine, who was 83 and of British origin and had been ill for several years. “You have just turned 82”, Gorz wrote. “You are still beautiful, gracious and desirable. We have been living together for 58 years and I love you more than ever.”

The Executive Committee

2. 12th BIEN CONGRESS, June 2008, Dublin (Ireland)

The 12th International Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) will be held on 20-21 June 2008 in Dublin, Ireland. The theme of this World Congress is: **Inequality and Development in a Globalised Economy - The Basic Income Option**. This two-day event involving participants from all the continents of the world will be preceded by a one-day event (June 19, 2008) which will focus on Basic Income in Ireland and will be open to all participants in the World Congress.

This Congress will combine plenary sessions featuring invited speakers and parallel workshops with volunteered papers. Major themes to be addressed include:

- Why Basic Income provides a key part of the answer to the challenges posed on issues such as inequality and development in the emerging globalised world.
- How a Basic Income system can be operationalised and achieved - politically, institutionally and technically.
- The way forward if Basic Income approaches and systems are to become a reality in the foreseeable future.

There will be capacity for a large number of parallel sessions featuring papers on a wide range of topics. A call for papers has been issued and already proposals have been received. Details of the call for papers and of the Congress can be accessed at the dedicated website established for the Congress: www.basicincomeireland.com

The organising committee can be contacted at info@basicincomeireland.com

3. EVENTS

***MANCHESTER (UK)**, 3-5 September 2007: Workshop on 'Ethics, Work and Emancipation'

David Casassas (University of Oxford) and Jurgen De Wispelaere (Trinity College Dublin) presented papers on basic income in a panel on the ethics of work at the 4th Manchester Workshops in Political Theory (Manchester Metropolitan University, panel convened by Keith Breen of Queen's University Belfast). Casassas' paper offered an argument in favour of a republican perspective on the organisation of work in contemporary society, and the need to supplement existing policies with an unconditional basic income to promote people's bargaining power by securing their material independence. De Wispelaere argued that libertarian paternalism offers a viable policy perspective to accommodate concerns about individuals "blowing" their entitlements without having to restrict the unconditional nature of radical basic income proposals. Both presentations generated considerable interest with the audience and a lively discussion ensued.

*** NAPLES (IT)**, 12-15 September 2007, EUROSEAS 5th Annual Conference

As part of the panel on "Timor Leste: How to Build a New Nation in Southeast Asia in the 21st Century?", held within the framework of the European Association for South-East Asian Studies (EUROSEAS) 5th Annual Conference (Naples, 12-15 September 2007), David Casassas, Daniel Raventós and Julie Wark gave a paper entitled "Basic Income and the Right to Existence in Timor Leste". Aiming to spread the idea of Basic Income among social scientists that are non-specialists on Basic Income, this paper tried to open up the doors to a debate on what Basic Income can offer developing countries in terms of economic and social development, social inclusion and political participation, as well as the possible ways to fund

a Basic Income in a country like East Timor, where oil revenues constitute a very important source of income for the State.

* **BASEL (CH)**, 5-7 October 2007, Second German-speaking Basic income Congress

"Unconditional and securing everyone's needs! Basic Income as a human right" is the title of the second German speaking congress to be held on October 5-7, 2007, in the Swiss city of Basel. Several panels as well as various workshops will take place, dealing with the following questions:

- Basic Income as a human right
- Concept(s) of „labor“/„work“ and the „idea of man“
- Social security system - Labour as the centre of traditional models
- How European social security systems could be changed with regard to BI
- Workfare / atypical work / Working poor – which impact do this new forms of work have on the idea of BI
- How to finance a BI

All workshops and discussions will pay attention to the Gender dimension.

Among the experts invited are Anne Alex, Margit Appel, Ronald Blaschke, Alex Demirovic, Wolfgang Engler, Andreas Exner, Maria Hintersteiner, Nicole Lieger, Ueli Maeder, Dagmar Paternoga, André Presse, Harald Rein, Klaus Sambor, Franz Segbers, Aji Sirmoglu, Peter Ulrich, Mag Wompel.

This international congress is organized by the BI-networks of Switzerland, Austria and Germany together with “Attac Deutschland”, “Inhaltsgruppe Grundeinkommen - Attac Österreich” and “Attac Schweiz”.

For further details: www.grundeinkommen2007.org

***OXFORD (UK)**, 10 October 2007: "Will the Right Basic Income Please Stand Up?"

The Foundation for Law, Justice and Society (FLJS), a socio-legal research centre affiliated to Oxford University's Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, is organising a three days workshop on the following theme: "The Social Contract Revisited. The Contract for Income Support and Pension in the Modern Welfare State" (October 10th to 12th, 2007, Rhodes House, South Parks Road, Oxford).

The Keynote Lecture (10th October) by **Amitai Etzioni** is entitled: 'Will the Right Basic Income Please Stand Up? Communitarian Arguments for a Guaranteed Basic Income'. Amitai Etzioni (George Washington University, US) is a former senior advisor to the White House on domestic affairs, president of the American Sociological Association and founder of the international Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics and the Communitarian Network.

The Fourth Panel, on October 12th, will focus on 'Reforming Income Support: Normative and Political Feasibility', with Carole Pateman (UCLA and Cardiff University), Michael Opielka (Jena, Germany), Charles Murray (American Enterprise Institute), Mark Greenberg (Center for American Progress), and Lawrence Mead (New York University)

Further details can be found on <http://www.fljs.org/content.asp?pageRef=44>

***OXFORD (UK)**, 26-27 October 2007, Conference: Towards a 'Basic Income Society'?

The Centre for the Study of Social Justice, along with the Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford's Public Policy Unit, and the Association for Legal and Social Philosophy (ALSP), will be hosting a two-day conference entitled 'Towards a Basic Income Society?'

For further information visit the conference website at <http://social-justice.politics.ox.ac.uk/events/basicincome>, or contact the organizers David Casassas (University of Oxford) and Jurgen De Wispelaere (Trinity College Dublin) at basic.income@politics.ox.ac.uk. A full program with titles of all contributions is now available. Please notice that **registration is open until 18 October 2007, 12 noon**.

Outline: The past two decades have witnessed a remarkable revival in both academic and policy circles of the idea that every citizen should be granted an unconditional basic income by right, without a means test or work requirement. Nevertheless, many questions remain before this idea could be turned into a workable policy. Prominent amongst these are questions about the very shape of a basic income society: what would a society in which an unconditional basic income takes a central place look like in terms of its broader policies and institutions? Relatedly, there are important debates about the normative justification and political feasibility of a basic income society. The conference reflects on these questions, aiming to chart both promising avenues and pitfalls in the current debate.

Participants include Simon Birnbaum, David Casassas, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Antoni Domènech, Tony Fitzpatrick, Louise Haagh, Bill Jordan, José Antonio Noguera, Michael Opielka, Carole Pateman, David Purdy, Daniel Raventós, Yannick Vanderborght, Stuart White and Karl Widerquist.

***MEXICO (ME)**, November 2007: Two Seminars on Basic Income

The public debate on Basic Income keeps progressing in Mexico. The 'Universal Forum of Cultures' 2007, which is currently being held in Monterrey, will include a Seminar on "Emerging Human Rights: Challenges and Perspectives". Daniel Raventós, President of Red Renta Básica, will give a lecture on Basic Income on the 2nd of November. It is worth mentioning that the first edition of the Universal Forum of Cultures took place in Barcelona in 2004 and hosted BIEN's 10th Congress. Basic Income is again on the agenda of this global event. For further information: <http://www.monterreyforum2007.org/>

Four days later (November 6 and 7), Fundación Voz Alternativa will hold an International Seminar on Universal Basic Income. Four sessions have been organised. Speakers in session 1 ("Why UBI is Feasible") will include, among others, Daniel Raventós (University of Barcelona and President of Red Renta Básica), Pablo Yanes (member of the Secretariat for Social Development of the Government of Mexico City and member of the Mexican Group for the Promotion of Citizen's Income) and Patricia Mercado (Presidential Candidate for Alternativa Socialdemócrata); speakers in session 2 ("Poverty, Gender and UBI") will include Sara Berbel (Professor at University of Barcelona); speakers in session 3 ("Violence, Gender and UBI") will include Carole Pateman (Professor at UCLA, TBC); speakers in session 4 ("The International Experience: Alaska and Brasil") will include Eduardo Suplicy (Senator for Sao Paulo and Co-Chair of Basic Income Earth Network) and Scott Goldsmith (Professor at University of Alaska).

For further information: <http://www.vozalternativa.org.mx/>

*** BARCELONA (ES)**, 22-23 November 2007: 7th Symposium of Red Renta Básica and Third Seminar of Emerging Human Rights

Convenors: Red Renta Básica (RRB-XRB) & Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya (IDHC)

Plenary speakers will include Ricard Gomà (member of Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds and Fifth Deputy Mayor of Barcelona's City Council), Carme Porta (member of

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya and Secretary for Public Policy and Citizenship Rights of Catalan Government), Jordi Sevilla (member of Partido Socialista Obrero Español, member of Madrid's Parliament and former Minister of Public Administrations), Pablo Yanes (member of Mexican Partido de la Revolución Democrática, member of the Secretariat for Social Development of the Government of Mexico City and member of the Mexican Group for the Promotion of Citizen's Income), Àlex Boso (Secretary of Red Renta Básica), Aida Guillén (General Manager of Catalan Institute for Human Rights), Daniel Raventós (President of Red Renta Básica) and Jaume Saura (President of Catalan Institute for Human Rights).

The Symposium will include 8 panels on the following issues:

- 1) Human Rights and Basic Income
- 2) Women and Basic Income
- 3) Labour Market, Right to Work, and Basic Income
- 4) Basic Income: Financial and Economic Issues
- 5) Rights of Immigrants and Basic Income
- 6) Normative Justifications of Basic Income
- 7) Basic Income and Social and Political Actors
- 8) Basic Income in Comparison with Other Programmes

The final version of the programme, including the list of panels and papers that will be given, can be found at <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/index.php>.

Languages of the Symposium: Spanish and Catalan.

* **BOSTON (US)**, 7-9 March 2008, Seventh USBIG Congress

The USBIG Network will hold its Seventh Congress at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel on March 7-9, 2008. The Keynote Speaker will be Philippe Van Parijs, of Harvard University and Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium), Author of *Real Freedom for All* (1995). Featured Speakers include Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds of the Council of the Religious of Ireland. The Congress will be based on the theme: "What Next: Framing a BIG Discussion for the Next Election and Beyond".

Scholars, activists, and others are invited to propose papers, and organize panel discussions. Proposals and panel discussions are welcome on BIG or topics related to the distribution of wealth and income. All points of view are welcome. Submissions from any academic discipline are invited and non-academics are invited to submit as well. Anyone interested in presenting a paper or organizing a panel should submit either an abstract of their paper or a panel proposal to the chair of the organizing committee, Michael A. Lewis: mlewis@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Please include the following information with your abstract and/or panel proposal:

1. Name
2. Affiliation
3. Address
4. City, State, Zip, and Country
5. Telephone, FAX
6. Email Address
7. Paper or Presentation Title

8. Abstract of 50-150 words

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: October 29th, 2007

Proposals for panel discussions should include a title, topic, and description of the panel and the information above for each participant. If the participants are not presenting formal papers, the title of the paper and abstract may be omitted. Panels with formal paper presentations should be limited to four presentations, although discussions without formal papers can include more.

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

*** ASIA: DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ILO ARGUES FOR BASIC INCOME**

According to a Press Release of the United Nations News Center, Director-General Juan Somavia of the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) said at a three-day conference held in Beijing (August 2007) that a sustainable approach to development is crucial to keep pace with Asia's unprecedented economic growth, and called for national measures across the continent to ensure social welfare, including a basic income. The "job-weak growth" is "not politically sustainable over the long run because underlying it all are different forms of social tensions already expressing themselves in different ways," Somavia said in an address to delegates at an Asian Forum on Growth, Employment and Decent Work. The Forum is the first major gathering of senior government, labour and employer representatives from nearly two dozen countries in Asia and the Pacific since the launch of the Decent Work Decade at the ILO's Asian regional meeting last year. Participants - including representatives of finance and planning ministries, academics and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - discussed how create policies aimed to integrate sustainable development and decent work.

According to the Press Release, Mr. Somavia stressed that Asian countries share commonalities, and that the "time has come to strive for a social floor in every country according to its means, pursued as a systematic national and international development objective to expand the security of its people." For example, he cited as a strategy "a basic income, health care and education package - together with organization, rights at work and empowerment to voice and defend their interests." When combined, "these measures can no doubt enhance growth and productivity," Mr. Somavia noted. "But they are also justified by the enormous growth in wealth creation that has been taking place."

The Press Release is available at:

<http://harolddoan.com/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=4871>

*** CZECH REPUBLIC: EXCHANGES ON BASIC INCOME IN ACADEMIC CIRCLES**

Marek Hrubec and Martin Brabec initiated a discussion on basic income in the Czech Philosophical Journal No. 3, 2005. Before a publication of their paper and their translation of Philippe van Parijs' paper *Basic Income for All* that appeared in the same issue of the journal, the debate on basic income in the Czech language appeared only in several articles in the Czech newspapers. Hrubec and Brabec wrote a paper *On egalitarian libertarianism* in which they analysed, firstly, left libertarianism in relation to liberalism, communitarianism, Critical theory of the Frankfurt School and other theories. Secondly, they deal with basic ideas of left

libertarianism. Thirdly, they focus especially on political philosophy of Philippe Van Parijs, and analyse his conception of basic income, and especially his book *Real Freedom for All*. In the end, the article reconstructs other authors' reactions to his conception of basic income.

Miloslav Bednar replied in *Philosophical Journal* No. 4, 2005. In his paper *The Critical Standpoint to the Application of Basic Income*, he criticises Philippe Van Parijs, Marek Hrubec and Martin Brabec. The author says that their socialist theory does not distinguish between philosophical and political dimension of equality and freedom, on the one hand, and economic dimension of those, on the other. Moreover, the paper tries to show that basic income leads to the dependency of citizens on the state.

In their article *Misunderstanding of the Discussion on Universal Basic Income* (in the same issue of *Philosophical Journal* No. 4, 2005), Marek Hrubec and Martin Brabec defend Philippe Van Parijs's ideas, and explain why Miloslav Bednar is wrong. They show that Bednar's criticism is not appropriate, and they focus especially on private property. They also raise objection to Bednar's thesis that an application of basic income leads to the dependency of citizens on the state. They emphasize that basic income is unconditional: an every citizen has right to get it, and the state has an obligation to pay it. Consequently, they show that unconditional basic income can provide freedom and independence.

Miloslav Bednar replied again in *Philosophical Journal* No. 5, 2005. In his criticism *The Untenable Conception of Universal Basic Income*, Bednar replies to Hrubec's and Brabec's paper, and extends and deepens his criticism of basic income and its concept of freedom. He criticizes what he calls its Marxist background, i.e. its emphasis on economic dimension of freedom. Then, he criticises basic income's concept of autonomy.

Marek Hrubec's and Martin Brabec's reply *On Freedom and Basic Income* was published in *Philosophical Journal* No. 6, 2005. Authors react to Bednar's reply and raise questions which could clarify basic terms of the discussion, particularly a concept of freedom: What is a definition of concepts of freedom and autonomy, and what is a connection between them? What is a connection between basic income and autonomy? Why do citizens lose autonomy (according to Bednar's criticism) when they receive basic income?

Miloslav Bednar, in his reply *Freedom, State and an Elimination of Freedom by Means of Unconditional Basic Income* published in *Philosophical Journal* No. 1, 2006, tries to explain his concepts of freedom and autonomy, and a relation between political freedom and economic reality. His conception of freedom means autonomy in a sense of self-determining decision and behaviour emanating from the actor independent from an analysis of her or his relation to the economic reality. According to the author, the economic reality influences freedom but it is not a condition of free decision and behaviour.

In his reply *The Issue of Definition of Freedom* in *Philosophical Journal*, No. 2, 2006, Martin Brabec identifies the basic misunderstanding in the discussion in different definitions of a concept of freedom. Author criticizes the arbitrary and strongly anti-intuitive Bednar's opinions that citizen's dependence on basic income destroys autonomy, and that autonomy is not destroyed by her or his dependence on the labour market.

Martin Skabraha wrote a reply *Two Dogmas of Conservative Liberalism* that appeared in *Philosophical Journal* No. 3, 2006. It is a criticism of the discussion on basic income published in previous issues of the *Journal*. Author tries to clarify a general conceptual framework of the discussion. Firstly, he undermines the distinction between the world of politics as a sphere of autonomy and the world of economy as a sphere of necessity. Secondly, author shows that strong social inequality destroys an ideal of freedom, and, therefore, it should be eliminated in favour of liberal freedom.

Ondrej Stech in his reply *Universal Basic Income: On Blindness to the Context* published in *Journal of Philosophy* No. 1, 2007, criticizes the idea of basic income from the point of view of left communitarianism. The paper appreciates libertarian focus on material

equality but criticises libertarian social ontology. From the communitarian point of view, an emphasis on self-ownership is leading to the atomistic society.

Because other Czech philosophers, economists and political scientists wanted to reply and wrote their papers as well, the publishing house *Filosofia* (a part of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic) decided to publish the whole discussion as a book. It will contain all the papers that appeared in the Philosophical Journal and new papers that have not been published yet: together 19 articles, including two papers written by Philippe Van Parijs. The book will be published under a title *Vseobecný základní příjem (Universal Basic Income)* in the Czech language in the series *Philosophy and Social Science* in Prague in the end of October this year (201 pages).

For further information, contact Marek Hrubec hrubec@praha1.ff.cuni.cz

* **FINLAND:** GREEN MINISTER SUPPORTS BASIC INCOME FOR THE DISABLED

On August 20, 2007, Finland's main Newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* reported that Green Minister of Labour Tarja Cronberg was planning the introduction of a basic income for the disabled. "Employment for those with limited capacity could be promoted by extending the subsidies that are available for those in low-paying jobs to the partly disabled - in addition to young people. There are plans for a survey on the possibilities of those on disability pension to return to work. In addition to these plans for the immediate future, Cronberg foresees a basic income as the model for the longer term. She expects that the first steps toward basic income will be taken in a year. She envisions a simplified social welfare system that would combine incentives to work with a guarantee of subsistence for all", *Helsingin Sanomat* reported.

The article is available online at:

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Minister+of+Labour+wants+to+promote+employment+among+partially+disabled/1135229653505>

* **NAMIBIA:** FUNDRAISING FOR BASIC INCOME PILOT PROJECT

The Basic Income Grant Coalition in Namibia is a broad-based civil society coalition, which was formed in April 2005 to advocate for the implementation of a Basic Income Grant (BIG) in Namibia to fight poverty and foster economic development. At the end of 2006, the understanding in the BIG Coalition grew that the BIG campaign needs to be taken a step further by starting a pilot project of the BIG in Namibia. The background is that a pilot project might be able to concretely show that a BIG can work and will indeed have the predicted positive effects on poverty alleviation and economic development.

The BIG Coalition has started to implement the BIG pilot project in Otjivero/Omitara, a small village in the East of Namibia. On July 31st 2007, a team of the BIG Coalition registered 1005 people in this small village to receive a grant of N\$100,- (Euro 12,-) per person per month for two years starting in January 2008.

On August 6th 2007, Bishop Dr. Z. Kameeta officially launched the BIG FUND in order to start fundraising for the pilot project, which entirely depends on contributions by Namibians and the international community. The first person who responded to the call for donations was Honourable Dr. Hage Geingob, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and current Member of Parliament. The payment of the grant including the administration requires an amount N\$ 3 million (~ Euro 315,000) over the period of the two years. The BIG Coalition appeals to proponents of the idea of a BIG to also support the BIG pilot project financially, by either giving a once-off donation or by a monthly contribution for

one or two or three grants for the 24 months period. (e.g. N\$ 100 per month for 24 months: N\$ 2.400)

For more information on the BIG pilot project and the BIG Coalition, see the webpage of the BIG Coalition: <http://www.bignam.org> or write to web@bignam.org

*** UNITED KINGDOM: TOWARDS A "SINGLE WORKING AGE BENEFIT"?**

In its most recent issue, available online at <http://www.citizensincome.org/>, The Citizen's Income Newsletter reports that UK's "Work and Pensions Select Committee" has published a report entitled "Benefits Simplification" (July 26, 2007). The committee has studied the sources of complexity (and particularly tax credits and means-testing), the benefits of simplification, the possibility of introducing a 'complexity index', the effect of high marginal deduction rates on incentives to work, the claimant experience, and the Department for Work and Pensions' Benefit Simplification Unit. The final chapters of the first volume of the report discuss possibilities for incremental change towards greater simplicity and also possibilities for fundamental change. Their conclusions and recommendations, the Citizen's Income Trust (CIT) reports, include the following:

* 'There is a direct correlation between the amount of mean-testing and the complexity of the system. We recommend that the Government specifically evaluates the current caseload of means-testing in the system as part of its simplification efforts and, where possible, reduces it.' (paragraph 51).

* 'The contributory principle adds an additional layer to the current system and research suggests it is no longer as relevant to the benefits system as it once was. We therefore recommend that the Government reviews whether or not the contributory principle remains a relevant part of the modern benefit structure' (paragraph 55).

* 'There is no Government Minister, department or unit which is attempting to address the combined and overlapping complexities of the benefits and tax credits systems. This omission must be urgently addressed' (paragraph 148).

* 'We recommend that the Government undertakes research to investigate whether there remain some groups of claimants for whom work does not offer the best route out of poverty, and more detailed analysis of the impact of high Marginal Deduction Rates in parts of the benefits system on overall work incentives' (paragraph 176).

* 'It is not enough to rely on 'masking' complexity; there is a need to go further and address the rules of the different benefits and the structure of the system itself' (paragraph 262).

* 'The Government should establish a Welfare Commission, similar in format and remit to the Pensions Commission, which can take a holistic view, model alternative systems, and come up with a considered blueprint for a way forward. A benefits system which DWP staff, claimants and welfare rights advisers have a hope of understanding is in everyone's best interests' (paragraph 381).

Appendix A contains the committee's detailed proposal for a **Single Working Age Benefit (SWAB)**: 'The SWAB would provide an income for anyone who is legitimately resident in the UK and is both willing and able to work (or is exempted from the latter criterion because of illness, disability or caring responsibilities). It would, therefore, replace Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and the planned Employment and Support Allowance, and the need for any linking rules for people moving between them' (p.108).

The SWAB would continue as an in-work benefit, and would be reclaimed through the tax system at a Government-agreed Marginal Deduction Rate (MDR) as wages rose until it was

exhausted (the MDR taking into account current rates of income tax and national insurance contributions). The SWAB would therefore replace tax credits and all benefits withdrawal rates and would avoid the need for people moving in and out of employment to notify changes. People already in work would be able to claim the SWAB. The system would abolish means-testing at the point of application. Additions for carers and people with disabilities would be paid, and a SWAB claim would automatically trigger Housing and Council Tax Benefits. Importantly, the SWAB would have no long-term rate (thus eliminating an employment disincentive), and the individual (and not the household) would be the claimant unit.

According to the Citizen's Income Newsletter, the SWAB is nine tenths of the way to a basic income and to all of the advantages which a basic income would offer, particularly in relation to simplicity and to incentives to increase earnings. All that would be required to complete the journey towards the greatest possible simplicity and employment incentives would be to replace the Marginal Deduction Rate with a reduction of personal tax allowances (which would have the same effect as the MDR), to remove the seeking-employment and incapacity tests (which, in the absence of an MDR, would become irrelevant), and to enable every individual to claim a SWAB, whatever their earnings.

The Select Committee's report was published on the 26th July 2007 by authority of the House of Commons by The Stationery Office Ltd., ref. HC 463 (2 volumes). The first volume can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmworpen/463/46302.htm>

The Citizen's Income Trust's evidence to the committee can be found in the second volume on page Ev 84 at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmworpen/463/463ii.pdf>

Citizen's Income Trust has also published a new introductory booklet, based on the evidence submitted to the Select Committee, available at:

<http://www.citizensincome.org/filelibrary/Citizen%27s%20Income%20booklet.pdf>

5. PUBLICATIONS

*** DANISH / SWEDISH**

CHRISTENSEN, Erik, LIEBERKIND, Karsten, and YDESEN, Christian (eds.) (2007), *Retten til basisindkomst - en demokratisk frigørelse*, Göteborg: NSU Press, 2007. 431 p. ISBN 978-87-87564-04-5.

This Danish-Swedish anthology on basic income is the result of a study group at the Nordic Summer University in 2003-2006. Most of the authors come from the basic income networks in Denmark and Sweden. The book features very different approaches and arguments for basic income. Some articles are written in Danish, others in Swedish.

The first portion of the book views basic income in the perspective of 'time for life', and in this context three life stories are presented (Sven G. Sjöberg, Niels Lundsager, Gunilla Paulsen and Kicki Bobacka). Following this is a chapter analysing the ideas, including those relating to basic income, of the German artist Joseph Beuys (Lasse Ekstrand).

In the next section of the book basic income is seen consecutively in an historical perspective (Mats Höglund), as a further development of democracy (Jørn Loftager) and as a

socialist project (Erik Olin Wright). Basic income is further discussed from a feminist perspective (Gunna Starck and Erik Christensen) and as an element in a sustainable development (Marc D. Davidson and Erik Christensen). Ellen Brun and Christian Ydesen discuss basic income as a global liberation project from Marxian and Hardt/Negrian points of view. Finally basic income and different views on justice are discussed by Søren Flinch Midtgaard (John Rawls), Karsten Lieberkind (Philippe Van Parijs) and Simon Birnbaum (social republicanism).

In the last part of the book various proposals for financing a basic income in Denmark and Sweden are discussed by Mats Höglund (Sweden), Per Sørensen (a negative come tax proposal in Denmark) and Per Almgren (a proposal for a new monetary system). The book is concluded with excerpts from the Swedish debate on basic income (Lennart Fernström), and a view on basic income as being in a position between exclusion and inclusion in the public debate (Erik Christensen).

*** DUTCH**

HARDIES, Kris (2007), *Groene partijen en het basisinkomen: beïnvloeden verkiezingsuitslagen de partij-ideologie?*, Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Master Thesis, Political Science (supervisor: Patrick Stouthuysen), 166p. Author's address: kris.hardies@vub.ac.be

Political parties, ideology and elections are logically interlinked. This Master Thesis examines this link and suggests that parties adjust their platforms in response to results of previous elections. In other words, it suggests that elections shape parties ideologies. It does so by examining the (evolution in) opinions of the Flemish and Dutch green parties about basic income.

VAN LANCKER, Wim (2007), *Recht op luiheid? Een politiek-filosofische analyse van het basisinkomen in het kader van een sociaal Europa*. (The Right to be Lazy? A political and philosophical analysis of basic income in the context of a Social Europe), Ghent: Universiteit Gent, Master Thesis in Political Science (supervisor: Dr. Patrick Loobuyck), 108pp. Author's address: wwvlanck.vanlancker@ugent.be

The theoretical foundation of my dissertation consist of a political and philosophical analysis of the 'Just Society' and how the concept of a basic income can serve as an instrument to achieve that purpose. Also in this part the perceived duty of reciprocity is further elaborated. With four arguments it is argued that basic income does not violate that principle. Thereafter basic income is placed vis-à-vis contemporary welfare states in the European Union. The achievements of welfare states with respect to the fight on poverty are analysed and it is explored whether basic income, given its possible merits regarding the abolition of poverty traps, could be a strengthening of these welfare states. Further, these preceding considerations are more specifically applied to the ideal of a Social Europe and the European Social Model. To achieve that ideal I propose, as a first step towards a basic income, the implementation of a universal basic pension (UBP) within all member states of the EU, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity but with financial support from the Union. The duty to provide a UBP should be included into the legal acquis. To conclude, I dwell briefly upon some possible financial resources for this purpose, e.g. a reallocation of the agricultural budget or a European tax on energy consumption or kerosene.

***ENGLISH**

MEYER, Joseph (2007), *Thinking Differently - The Unconditional Basic Income – Taking Employment, Energy and the Monetary System into Account*, Publisher: Vivant-Fraction of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium, ISBN (of the original German version) 978-3-86712-013-5,
<http://www.vivant-ostbelgien.org/Thinking.differently.pdf>

This short essay by Joseph Meyer, a member of the small basic income focused political party Vivant (founded by BIEN Life-member Roland Duchâtelet) and political actor in the German-speaking region of Belgium, includes a presentation of a basic income model with a "new monetary system", partly inspired by the writings of Joseph Huber. Also available in German and French (see NewsFlash 45 and 46, respectively). The essay can be downloaded at: <http://www.vivant-ostbelgien.org/Thinking.differently.pdf>
Author's address: j-meyer@gmx.net

* GREEK

MATSAGANIS, Manos (2007), 'Ένα βασικό εισόδημα για όλους ή ελάχιστο εγγυημένο για τους φτωχούς', *To BHMA*, special "Forum of Ideas" (issue 5, Friday 7 September 2007).

This short article was published in the influential centre-left daily *To BHMA* (roughly translated as "The Forum"), in a monthly supplement called "Forum of Ideas" (no. 5, Friday 7 September 2007). In the article, written for the uninitiated public, Manos Matsaganis (University of Crete) goes through the main ideas of the basic income movement. The concluding paragraph reads as follows: "[...] Should all this concerns us? Does it make sense to discuss a basic income in Greece, one of the very few EU countries where not even a means-tested guaranteed minimum income exists? I think it does. Firstly, because it amounts to an imaginative attempt to provide ingenious solutions to some of the most urgent social problems of our times. Besides, because the basic income proposal is more realistic than it appears at first sight. Lastly, because the entire campaign for a basic income is conducted with humour and an awareness of its own limits, without resorting to thoughtless partisanship and rhetorical inventions."

The published version is available online:

<http://www.vimaideon.gr//Article.aspx?d=20070907&nid=5913061>

* SWEDISH / DANISH

CHRISTENSEN, Erik, LIEBERKIND, Karsten, and YDESEN, Christian (eds.) (2007), *Retten til basisindkomst - en demokratisk frigørelse*, Göteborg: NSU Press, 2007. 431 p. ISBN 978-87-87564-04-5.

See section DANISH and SWEDISH above.

6. NEW LINKS

* BASIC INCOME IN ITALY

Infoxa Magazine remains active in the Italian basic income debate. It has edited a paper on welfare state reform and basic income, which has been widely distributed in Italy. It can be found at:

http://www.infoxa.org/mayday07/infocxa_foglio_mayday2007.pdf

zip file at:

http://www.infoxa.org/mayday07/infoxa_foglio_mayday2007.zip

* FREEDOM INSTEAD OF FULL EMPLOYMENT

An article by Katrin Pinetzki on “The Abolition of Unemployment” originally published in German in August 2007 is now available in English at:

<http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2007/08/364450.shtml>

Excerpt: “Researchers urge freedom instead of full employment. With a basic income, the unemployed of today would have the freedom to seek for employment that suits them. No one would force them to accept any work. A basic income is a way to solve the dilemma of jobs destroyed by productivity”.

* MARKET, DEMOCRACY & SURVIVAL by Roy Morrison

Roy Morrison's new book on ecological consumption taxes, "*Markets, Democracy & Survival*" is now online at www.RMAenergy.net for free download of advance and review copies. Roy Morrison is Director of the Office for Sustainability at Southern New Hampshire University. Formal publication date by Writer's Publishing Cooperative www.essentialbooks.com is Dec. 1, 2007.

"*Markets, Democracy & Survival*" lays out a plan for the U.S. to replace all taxes on income (personal, corporate and payroll) with a new 18% ecological value added tax or E-VAT on all goods and services. There will be no more income taxes and no more individual tax returns. This is a market based solution for the global warming and sustainability challenge of the 21st century.

According to Morrison, ecological taxes can make economic growth mean ecological improvement, not ecological destruction. Ecological consumption taxes, phased in over ten years, will make sustainable goods cost less, gain market share, and have higher rates of profit. What's polluting will cost more and lose market share and have lower rates of profit.

"*Markets, Democracy & Survival*" includes details of a negative income tax to respond to the regressive nature of consumption taxation by making sure, at a minimum, that current tax burdens on the 40% of households with lowest income do not increase. The book also outlines plans for a National Trust to overcome market failures and invest in sustainability.

* MONETARY REFORM AND C.H. DOUGLAS by Richard Cook

An article by Richard Cook on C.H. Douglas has been published by *Global Research* on September 24, 2007. C.H. Douglas (1879-1952) advocated a National Dividend, which would actually be the proper share of individuals in the bounty of the nation's economy and resources. Cook believes that Douglas's ideas merge with those of a basic income guarantee as a measure of economic freedom and justice promoted by many economists and advocates today.

Available at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6870>

* BASIC FOOD INCOME by Rolf Künemann

The New School of Athens (NSOA) is a recent international initiative whose mission statement is to explore new and better ways of managing our world. NSOA aims at becoming a 21st century version of Plato's ancient Academy, focusing on the management of globalization and the democratization of world governance. On August 21, 2007, it published an article by Rolf Künemann entitled “Basic Food Income: Option or Obligation?”. Basic food income is a universal payment by the state unconditionally to each member of society with an amount sufficient to cover elementary food needs.

Available online at: <http://www.new-school-of-athens.org/spip.php?auteur23>

* FORUM ON BASIC INCOME AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Listserv.kent.edu hosts mailing lists to serve the university community and is maintained by [Kent State University](http://www.kent.edu). One discussion forum on how to reconcile "citizens dividend", "Henry George" and "binary economics" (Kelso) has been opened. See:

http://listserv.kent.edu/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A3=ind05&L=kelso_binary_economics&P=1025825&E=0&B=-----000109000305010609020304&T=text%2Fhtml

7. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

Co-chair:

Eduardo SUPPLY, Federal Senator, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Guy STANDING, Professor of Economic Security, University of Bath, and Professor of Labour Economics, Monash University

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

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 <dcasassas@ub.edu> 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.

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