

BIEN - Basic Income Earth Network

NEWSFLASH 54 November 2008

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, Sandro Gobetti, Claudia & Dirk Haarmann, Sascha Liebermann, Ruben Lo Vuolo, 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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1. EDITORIAL: Past Newsletters available online

In recent months, the Executive Committee has been working on the design and contents of BIEN's new website. Thanks to the efforts of our webmaster Simon Birnbaum, we are now pleased to announce that all past Newsflashes and Newsletters are available online in PDF version. Currently, they cover the period from February 1988 to November 2008. For those interested in the debates about basic income in the past two decades, this obviously constitutes an invaluable source of information. See: <http://www.basicincome.org/bien/news.html>

The Executive Committee.

2. EVENTS

* **MONTEVIDEO (UY)**, 3-4 November 2008: *Basic Income as a citizen's right*

On November 3rd and 4th, the Ministry of Social Development together with the National Department of Planning of Uruguay, with the assistance of the Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano (Redaic), organized in Montevideo a workshop entitled: "Renta Básica Universal, derecho de ciudadanía? Perspectivas europeas y latinoamericanas". The objective of the workshop was to discuss the relevance and potential of a basic income scheme in Uruguay. International and national experts, as well as national authorities, members of the parliament, students, lecturers, public officials and members of local NGOs, participated in the two days of discussion. Among the international experts, Senator Eduardo Suplicy (from Brazil), Daniel Raventós (President of Red Renta Básica, from Spain), David Casassas (from Spain, Secretary of BIEN Executive Committee), Rubén Lo Vuolo (President of Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano), Pablo Yanes (President of Asociación Ingreso Ciudadano Universal México) and Corina Rodríguez Enríquez (member of Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano). Among Uruguayan authorities, the director of the Decentralization Unit of the National Department of Planning, Alberto Roselli, the Dean of the National University (Universidad de La Republica), Rodrigo Arocena, the person in charge of the Public Affairs of the European Commission, Juan Victor Monfort, and the Director of the Social Policy Department, of the National Ministry of Social Development, Christian A. Mirza.

More information at: http://www.mides.gub.uy/noticias/mides_061108.htm.

* **BUENOS AIRES (AR)**, 6-7 November 2008: *Ibero-American Conference on Basic Income*

On November 6th and 7th, 2008, the Argentinean Network of Basic Income (Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano), organized in Buenos Aires, the Ibero-American Workshop on Basic Income (See www.ingresociudadano.org). The event gathered experts from the region, with presentations from Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, México, Brazil and Spain. The roundtables counted on the participation of people from academia, public officials, social activists. There was also a public roundtable with the participation of members of the National Parliament, who debated about different legislative proposals inspired by the idea of Basic Income. Among BIEN members, the event was attended by Senator Eduardo Suplicy (Brazil), Daniel Raventós (President of Red Renta Básica, Spain), David Casassas (Secretary of BIEN Executive Committee), Rubén Lo Vuolo (President of Red Argentina de Ingreso Ciudadano), Pablo Yanes (President of Asociación Ingreso Ciudadano Universal México).

As part of the event, on November 10th, an announcement was made regarding the

establishment of the *Centro Cuyano de Estudios sobre Ingreso Ciudadano* (Cuyan Study Center on Basic Income). The center was created on November 10, 2008 as part of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences (Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales) at the National University of Cuyo (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza Argentina). The new University Center is constituted with professors, researchers and students of both the National University of Cuyo (Mendoza, Argentina) and National University of San Juan (San Juan, Argentina). One of the most important objectives of the CCIC is to analyze the proposal of the Basic Income from the Latin American perspective, and to study the possibilities and strategies of implementation at local and regional level inside Argentina.

* **BARCELONA (ES)**, 17-20 November 2008: *Fifth Congress in Political Philosophy*.

The Fifth Congress of Political Philosophy of the University of Barcelona took place in Barcelona on 17-20 November. One lecture by Daniel Raventós was devoted to Basic Income, the title being: “Basic Income as a Right of Existence in the 21st Century”. Further information at: <http://www.ub.edu/demoment/jornadasfp2008/>

* **ROME (IT)**, 24 November 2008: *New Welfare States and Guaranteed Income*

On Nov. 24, 2008, the new Association *Basic Income Italy* (BIN Italy) organized a conference on guaranteed income in Europe and Italy. At the end of the Conference, the Head of Bin Italia, Luca Santini, presented the Association, and Sandro Gobetti, coordinator and responsible for public relations, presented the new website (www.bin-italia.org) and the first Newsletter of the Association.

The first issue of « BIN report » is available online at www.bin-italia.org
Images of the Rome meeting can be viewed at : <http://www.bin-italia.org/articledb/image-gallery/index.php>.

* **SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (ES)**, 5-7 December 2008: *Social Forum*

The Social Forum of Galiza is to be held in Santiago de Compostela on 5, 6 and 7 December 2008. It will include a panel devoted to Basic Income: *Construíndo cidadanía: renda básica, sociedade civil e movementos sociais fronte ao imperialismo* (Constructing Citizenship: Basic Income, Civil Society and Social Movements against Imperialism). The well-known political leader X.M. Beiras will be a member of this panel along with Antoni Domènech and Daniel Raventós, members of the Red Renta Básica-Xarxa Renda Bàsica (Basic Income Network), official section of BIEN.
Further information at: <http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/index.php>

* **NEW YORK (US)**, 27 February – 1 March 2009: *The Eighth Congress of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network*

The Eighth Congress of the *U.S. Basic Income Guarantee* (USBIG) Network provides a forum for considering alternative frameworks for addressing poverty. It brings together academics, students, activists, policy analysts, and others interested in exploring the merits of the basic income proposal. The conference will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the *Eastern Economic Association* (EEA). Attendees at the USBIG conference are welcome to attend any of the EEA’s events.

Featured speakers invited so far include academics and politicians from both left and right. Conservative Canadian Senator Hugh Segal has been a supporter of the basic income guarantee for the last three decades. He is currently leading a renewed campaign for basic income in Canada. Tony Martin is Member of the Canadian House of Commons for the left-of-center *New Democratic Party* (NDP). Brazilian Senator Eduardo Suplicy is a third-term Senator representing the state of Sao Paulo in the Brazilian Federal Senate and one of the founding members of Brazil's ruling Workers' Party. Steve Pressman, of Monmouth University, is an economist with interests in poverty, public finance, and macroeconomics. He is co-editor of *The Ethics and Economics of the Basic Income Guarantee* and author of *Fifty Major Economists*. Brian Steensland, of Indiana University, is a sociologist and author of *The Failed Welfare Revolution*. Pablo Yanes is the head of the Mexican affiliate of the *Basic Income Earth Network*. USBIG hopes to be confirming these and other speakers soon.

* **EDINBURGH (UK)**, June 29 –July 1, 2009 : *Social Policy Association Conference*

The Citizen's Income Trust—BIEN's affiliate in the United Kingdom—is attempting to organize several sessions on basic income at the Social Policy Association's 43rd annual Conference at the University of Edinburgh June 29 –July 1, 2009. The conference will provide a great opportunity for presentations on all aspects of basic income. Now that BIEN has become a worldwide network, it only has conferences in Europe every four years. The CIT sessions may provide an opportunity for English-language meetings on basic income in Europe in between BIEN meetings.

To participate in one of the CIT's sessions, send a title, an abstract of 300-400 words, together with full contact information and affiliation, to Annie Miller at the CIT office, info@citizensincome.org by Friday, 16 January 2009. These papers will be grouped by topic and sent to the SPA for their approval.

For more information: www.citizensincome.org.

3. NEW ISSUE OF BASIC INCOME STUDIES

Basic Income Studies has just published a new issue. BIS is the first peer-reviewed journal devoted to basic income and related issues of poverty relief and universal welfare. An exciting venture supported by major international networks of scholars, policy makers, and activists, *Basic Income Studies* is the only forum for scholarly research on this leading edge movement in contemporary social policy. Articles discuss the design and implementation of basic income schemes, and address the theory and practice of universal welfare in clear, non-technical language that engages the wider policy community. The journal's editors represent the forefront of research in poverty, political theory, welfare reform, ethics, and public finance, at institutions such as the University of Amsterdam, Columbia University, the University of Buenos Aires, UCLA, the London School of Economics, and the Spanish Ministry of Public Affairs. BIS is sponsored by BIEN.

Contents of vol. 3 Issue 2 (2008)

Research Articles

'Economically Forced to Work: A Critical Reconsideration of the Lottery Question'

by Roland Paulsen

'Basic Income, Republican Freedom, and Effective Market Power'

by Robert Jubb

‘Rawlsian Stability and Basic Income’
by Søren F. Midtgaard

Research Notes

‘Guaranteed Income as a Replacement for the Welfare State’
by Charles Murray

Book Reviews

Review of Daniel Raventós, *Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom*
by Simon Eli Birnbaum

Review of Will Paxton, Stuart White and Dominic Maxwell, *The Citizen's Stake. Exploring the Future of Universal Asset Policies*
by Borja Barragué

Website: <http://www.bepress.com/bis/>

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

*** BELGIUM: FLEMISH GREEN PARTY SUPPORTS BASIC INCOME**

On November 29 & 30, 2008, The Flemish Green Party "Groen!" held its so-called "Horizon Conference", which was intended to discuss "the party platform for the next 20 years". Long-term proposals were thoroughly debated, such as reforms to tackle climate change or urban development. Among the ideas discussed, basic income was given a prominent place. After a tight vote in its favour, the proposal was eventually included in the party's platform, following suggestions to expand Belgium's social security system. The current leader of the Flemish Green Party, Mieke Vogels, is a long-standing advocate of basic income.

For further information (in Dutch only): <http://www.groen.be/>

*** BRAZIL: OIL RESOURCES TO ERADICATE POVERTY**

USBIG reports that, according to a BBC news article (Sept. 8, 2008), Brazilian President Lula has “vowed” to use revenue from newly discovered offshore oil fields to eradicate poverty. Newly discovered offshore oil could be as much as triple Brazil’s oil reserves and possibly make Brazil one of the biggest oil producers in the world. Lula promised not to squander the profits but to open “a direct bridge between natural wealth and the eradication of poverty.” He added, “We won’t allow ourselves to be dazzled and go spending money that we still don’t have on silly things.” This effort may lead to the creation of an Alaska-style dividend system. Senator Eduardo Suplicy, a founding member of Lula’s Worker’s Party, has been pushing for basic income in the form of an Alaska-style dividend for years, and has successfully pushed policy in that direction. New potential oil revenue could help make Suplicy’s proposal a reality.

See the BBC News story on Brazil at:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7603655.stm>

*** FRANCE: LARGE REFORM OF THE MINIMUM INCOME SCHEME**

On November 27, 2008, the French Senate voted on an important bill reforming France’s notorious minimum income scheme ("Revenu minimum d'insertion" or RMI). The bill had

already been approved by the National Assembly on October 8, 2008. The new scheme is called "Revenu de Solidarité Active" (Active Solidarity Income), and will come into effect on July 1st, 2009. According to its main advocate, High Commissioner Martin Hirsh, the measure will greatly contribute to making an end to the unemployment trap, by allowing social assistance recipients to keep part of their benefit when they access the labour market and earn less than €1,200/month (for a single person). Since the benefit reduces as earnings from work increase, some have called the new scheme a basic income under the form of a true "negative income tax". Even if the RSA might be considered a step into that direction, one should stress the fact that the benefit is *not* unconditional. Work requirements are still in place, and every recipient is supposed to sign a "insertion contract", in which he commit himself to perform his duty to search for work.

For further information: www.inclusion.gouv.fr

*** GERMANY: CAMPAIGN IN FAVOUR OF BASIC INCOME**

The German platform "Freedom Not Full Employment" has been promoting basic income since several years. Its new campaign will be launched in December 2008, through stickers in Subway and Tramways in the cities of Dortmund, Frankfurt and Hamburg. They will stay there for four weeks. Local initiatives are preparing events (lectures and discussions) along with the campaign. The platform hopes to attract media attention, as well as citizens.

The group has also launched a call for funding, which can be viewed at

<http://freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de/blog/2008/11/spendenaufruf-aufkleber-in-u-s-und.htm>

For further info:

Web: <http://freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de/>

E-mail: S.Liebermann@FreiheitStattVollbeschaeftigung.de

*** GERMANY: EMANCIPATORY BASIC INCOME**

A few days before the 3rd German speaking basic income congress, that took place on October 24-26, 2008 in Berlin, several prominent advocates of basic income in Germany agreed on a "Declaration on Emancipatory Basic Income". The text was written in the context of the first German-speaking meeting on emancipatory basic income advocates on October 23, 2008, Berlin, House of Democracy and Human Rights. According to the declaration, the following key aspects of basic income should be taken into account when referring to "emancipation":

1. It is an individual right
2. Basic income is paid to all. It is a human right under the perspective of global social rights. It is independent from citizenship and takes into account migrants and refugees.
3. The paid amount secures existence and enables economic, social, cultural, and political participation and is not means tested.
4. Basic income is paid without making demands in return, such as forced labour or coerced return services.
5. The amount of basic income is dynamic, it is based on the development of costs of living and costs of participation. We see further criteria that make basic income an emancipatory measure:
6. Basic income results in redistribution from upper classes to lower classes, especially with the help of the taxation of capital, wealth, and upper incomes.

7. There are additional needs, special supports, and special needs for certain groups of persons in addition to basic income. This concerns for example single parents, pregnant women, the handicapped, people with chronicle illnesses, and people with high living costs.
8. Basic income is embedded into the extension, quality assurance, and democratization of social security systems.
9. Basic income is an aspect of the maintenance, extension, and the democratization of public infrastructures.
10. Basic income stands in the context of the perspective of gender equality that realizes a radical redistribution of socially necessary labour (paid and unpaid) between men and women. Further measures for realizing gender equality are necessary.
11. The concept of basic income is embedded into societal development towards sustainability and a concept of society that focuses on ecological sustainability.
12. Basic income is situated in the context of the perspective for the creation of a solitary, participatory, and co-operative society that is based on the democratization of economy and society.
13. The demand for basic income is coupled with further demands that concern employment laws, especially minimum wages and the radical reduction in working hours. Also compensations of wages and personnel must be discussed as accompanying measures.

For further information: <http://www.grundeinkommen2008.org>

*** ITALY: STUDENTS VOTE FOR MINIMUM INCOME**

In October and November 2008, several demonstrations against governmental plans to reform the educational system were organized in many cities accross Italy, with the participation of thousands of students. The general and national assembly of the student's movement decided to include the claim for a minimum income in its platform. All students and low-paid workers would be entitled to such a minimum income. In this declaration, one can read the following reference to classic arguments in favour of a basic income: "minimum income in order to benefit from more personal autonomy, to foster individual independence for all". For more information:

<http://ateneinrivolta.org/files/Alcuni%20punti%20per%20il%20workshop%20sul%20Welfare%20il%20diritto%20allo%20studio.pdf>

*** LYBIA: KADAFI TO INTRODUCE A BASIC INCOME?**

According to Reuters (August 31, 2008), Libyan dictator Muammar Kadafi called for the implementation of an oil dividend in his country. He "accused corrupt officials of looting the country's oil wealth and said its 5 million people should be given the money directly", Reuters reports. "You have to be ready, each Libyan will get directly his share of the oil money," Kadafi told a gathering of his supporters including ministers, top military and police officers and members of the General People's Congress, the country's top executive and legislative body. "The implementation will start at the beginning of next year," he said, for the first time giving a date for the direct sharing of oil wealth. Kadafi was speaking on the 39th anniversary of the army coup that brought him to power.- Adapted from USBIG

See the Reuters story at:

<http://www.reuters.com/article/hotStocksNews/idUSLV51859420080901>

*** NAMIBIA: CONTROVERSIES AROUND BIG PILOT PROJECT**

In its Quarterly Economic Review (Issue 66, September 2008), the *Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit* (Nepru), a non-governmental think-tank, questioned the relevance of the basic income pilot project launched by the Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition in Otjivero-Omitara, Namibia. Following the First Assessment report published by the Coalition (see BIEN NewsFlash 53), which was received with great interest and support in Namibia (see <http://www.bignam.org/page4.html>), Nepru argued that "under closer scrutiny" some of the positive effects "do not seem to be very dramatic up to now". Quite the contrary, the author of the article, Rigmar Osterkamp, writes that "neighbouring farmers maintain that they are affected by acts of crime more often than before the introduction of the BIG."

Furthermore, according to Nepru, "some of the changes that occurred can also be explained by other factors than the mere transfer of money: the people were educated before the introduction of the grant system about using the additional money and they have appointed 'control officers' to guide them in their spending behaviour. This could also explain the change in school attendance, malnourishment and crime. If this proves to be true, it underlines the importance of education in behavioural changes." Above all, Nepru questions the feasibility of such a grant for the whole country: "A BIG for all implies that all Namibians, except pensioners, would receive the grant. Is that possible? A monthly cash payment of N\$100 provided to 1.8 million citizens would amount to 9.6% of planned government expenditure for 2008/09. As suggested by the Tax Review Committee the necessary funds could be raised by increasing VAT or other taxes. A thorough analysis is however needed whether this is the best and cheapest option to reduce poverty, and improve health and education."

On November 3, 2008, the BIG Coalition reacted to Nepru's allegations in a Press release. According to the Coalition, "NEPRU's claim of an increase in criminal activities (...) is not evidence-based. Instead, NEPRU relies on unsubstantiated views expressed by some white commercial farmers". In this harsh reply to Nepru, the BIG coalition also states the following: "We welcome an honest and serious debate about the introduction of the BIG in Namibia. However, we cannot tolerate ideologically-driven propaganda that chooses to ignore scientific evidence. NEPRU's misleading and incorrect comments on the actual results of the BIG in Otjivero-Omitara, has exposed NEPRU's position as unethical and extremely biased favouring the rich and powerful while trampling on the poor. We wonder if NEPRU has published its dismal BIG comments due to a lack of skills and knowledge, due to its own political agenda, or simply to force themselves onto the debate and thereby secure financial resources for future work. In any event, NEPRU acted to the detriment of the people in Otjivero-Omitara and the project as a whole. (...) NEPRU aligns itself with some conservative white farmers, certain elements in the German Embassy and the discredited neo-liberal Bretton Woods Institutions in a calculated attempt to discredit this initiative. This constitutes a subversion of the national interest. NEPRU has rather discredited itself and is hence unable to contribute constructively to the BIG debate. The only decent thing left to do, is for NEPRU to apologise to the people of Otjivero-Omitara and the Namibian public in general. The BIG deserves an honest debate in terms of its proven ability to reduce poverty significantly."

In a reaction to this Press Release published in *The Namibian* (Nov. 4, 2008), the author of Nepru's review, Rigmar Osterkamp, said while he still stood by his report, the discussion did prompt him to revise a number of its suggestions. "I don't see any reason to draw back on my report. I am simply looking at the BIG from a critical standpoint as an economist, and it is just difficult to believe that everything is so very positive. It seems a bit exaggerated. But I am not at all against the BIG," he said. "I think I threw some water in their wine, and they didn't particularly like that" Osterkamp argued.

For further information:

NEPRU's review on the BIG pilot project can be downloaded at <http://www.nepru.org.na/>

BIG Coalition website: <http://www.bignam.org/>

The Namibian Story :

<http://www.namibian.com.na/2008/November/national/083895CC96.html>

*** UNITED STATES: BASIC INCOME DEBATED IN WEST VIRGINIA**

During his electoral campaign, Jesse Johnson, the candidate for the environmentalist *Mountain Party* (an affiliate of the Green Party) for Governor of West Virginia (USA) advocated the idea of a citizen's dividend. While supporting underground coal mining and a "new coal economy", he argued that part of the natural resources should be redistributed as a dividend to all. According to *The Charleston Gazette* (October 19, 2008), Johnson "would like to see the emergence of a citizen's dividend, a policy based upon the principle that the natural world is the common property of everyone and that each person should receive regular payments from revenue raised through the leasing or selling of those natural resources". The election took place on November 4, 2008, and incumbent Governor Joe Manchin (Democratic Party) was reelected by a large margin. Jesse Johnson got 4,5% of the vote.

For further information:

Charleston Gazette article : <http://sundaygazette.com/News/200810180378>

West Virginia Mountain Party : <http://www.mtparty.org/>

*** UNITED STATES: ALASKA BASIC INCOME LARGEST IN ITS HISTORY**

USBIG reports that this year every Alaska resident will receive an unconditional basic income of \$3,269. That payment works out to \$16,345 for a family of five. This figure is nearly double last year's payout of \$1,654 per person and it far exceeds the largest payment that Alaskans have ever received, \$1,964 in the year 2000. More than \$600,000 Alaskans will receive the basic income. This year's Alaska basic income is composed of two parts. One part is the regular Alaska Permanent Fund (APF) Dividend, which is paid to Alaskans every year from their share in past state oil revenues that have been invested in diversified assets. The payout from this investment was already the highest in the APF's history, \$2,069. This summer (the-then-not-nationally-known) governor Sarah Palin pushed through a measure to add an additional one-time energy rebate of \$1200. The reasons for the energy rebate are that recent high oil prices have given the state government a large revenue windfall, but they have also hurt average Alaskans who consume more fuel than most Americans. Faced with an enormous budget surplus and a difficult year for residents, the supplement to the dividend was popular in the legislature and with ordinary Alaskans.

Prospects for future dividends do not look as good. The APF's portfolio has suffered in the current financial crisis. These losses will begin to affect the dividend only next year. Oil prices have dropped so that there is less likely to be money or motivation for a second resource rebate next year.

For more information about this year's record-high Alaska basic income go to:

Alaska PFD Division: <https://www.pfd.state.ak.us/>

A video of Governor Palin saying "the oil companies don't own the resources"

<http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/347/index.html>

An opinion article about the fund's investment strategy:

<http://newsminer.com/news/2008/sep/07/alaska-permanent-fund-more-dividend/?opinion>

“Special session yields energy relief deal”

<http://www.kodiakdailymirror.com/?pid=19&id=6542>

An opinion piece speculating that employers might reduce wages in response to the APF:

<http://www.adn.com/money/story/496364.html>

“A Conservative Voice for Alaskans” opinion opposing the energy rebate:

http://www.voiceofthetimes.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1628&Itemid=9

\$2 BILLION: Boost to Alaska economy is a bit overwhelming:

<http://www.adn.com/news/alaska/story/488420.html>

Lawmakers dole out \$1,200 energy relief rebate:

<http://www.ktuu.com/Global/story.asp?S=8809330>

Resource Rebate, AGIA Top Special Session Accomplishments

http://www.sitnews.us/0808news/080908/080908_special_session.html

*** UNITED STATES: NEW INCOME SECURITY INSTITUTE**

Usbig reports that in order to support research and educate people about basic income, a new organization is being formed in Washington DC. *The Income Security Institute*, like USBIG, will promote all versions of basic income. The Institute will be nonpartisan and nonprofit. The institute invites everyone to participate. Within the next few weeks, the website will go up at www.IncomeSecurityForAll.org. The site will include blogs, and places to post papers and articles. The institute will also sponsor and publish research, often in conjunction with universities and other organizations.

Research projects, papers and articles are welcomed by the Income Security Institute. The Institute is also looking for financial contributions. Funds are needed immediately for legal fees and web site construction.

For further information: Steven Shafarman, steve@CitizenPolicies.org, 202-319-9279.

5. PUBLICATIONS

*** DUTCH**

Vereniging basisinkomen (2008), *Nieuwbrief basisinkomen 51*, October 2008, 32p.

Among other things, this new issue of the Newsletter of the Dutch basic income association includes a detailed report (with some pictures) of the 2008 BIEN Congress in Dublin, as well as a stimulating interview of Alexander de Roo and Paul Freriks. De Roo, a former EU-MP for the Dutch green party *Groenlinks* (GreenLeft), has been one of the most prominent advocates of basic income in the Netherlands. He was also a member of BIEN executive committee for many years. Paul Freriks is the head of a smaller Dutch green party, *De Groenen* (The Greens), which has included basic income in its electoral platform. In the course of the interview, both de Roo and Freriks explain why they still defend basic income, in spite of the political obstacles to such an idea in the current Dutch context.

Website: www.basisinkomen.nl

*** GERMAN**

WORSCHER, Susann (2008), 'Soziale Sicherheit neu denken. Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen und bedarfsorientierte Grundsicherung aus feministischer Sicht', *Policy Paper Henrich Böll Stiftung*, Gunda Werner Institut für Feminismus und Geschlechterdemokratie, 52p., ISBN: 978-3-927760-89-9.

A detailed discussion of basic income in the German Context, from a Feminist perspective. Available online at <http://www.boell.de/wirtschaftsoziales/wirtschaft-soziales-2568.html>

***ENGLISH**

HARTZOCK, Alana (2008), *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*, Institute for Economic Democracy, August 2008, ISBN-13: 9781933567044, 368pp.

The *Earth Belongs to Everyone* by Alanna Hartzok, co-director of Earth Rights Institute, sets forth the vision and policy foundation for no less than a new form of democracy -- "earth rights democracy." Following an introduction containing glimpses of the author's fascinating journey through life, this compilation of her articles and essays describes how to establish political-economic systems based on the human right to the planet as a birthright. Her main point is that earth rights democracy is an essential ethical basis necessary to secure other economic human rights and to create a world of peace and plenty for all. She places this core perspective into an integrated local-to-global framework that balances the need for global cooperation with the necessity for building demilitarized, decentralized, and sustainable local-based economies. Many of the essays discuss basic income (under the name Citizens Dividend). This book will be the subject of a panel at the Eighth Congress of the USBIG Network in New York, February 2009.

- From USBIG Newsletter

WIDERQUIST, Karl (2008), 'The Physical Basis of Voluntary Trade', *Human Rights Review*, Online First, August 30, 2008.

This article discusses the conditions under which can we say that people enter the economic system voluntarily. "The Need for an Exit Option" briefly explains the philosophical argument that voluntary interaction requires an exit option—a reasonable alternative to participation in the projects of others. "The Treatment of Effective Forced Labor in Economic and Political Theory" considers the treatment of effectively forced interaction in economic and political theory. "Human Need" discusses theories of human need to determine the capabilities a person requires to have an acceptable exit option. "Capability in Cash, Kind, or Raw Resources" considers what form access to that level of capability should come, concluding that a basic income guarantee is the most effective method to ensure an exit option in a modern, industrial economy.

- From USBIG Newsletter

*** FRENCH**

BRESSON, YOLAND (2008), *Une clémente économie. Au-delà du revenu d'existence*, Paris : L'esprit frappeur, 239p. ISBN : 2-84405-233-9

In this essay, French economist Yoland Bresson analyzes into further details the ethical justifications of his idea of an "existence income", through an exploration of various strains in economic philosophy. His book includes a detailed plan for the implementation of a basic

income in France. The monthly amount, Bresson suggests, should be fixed at an initial €300. The total cost of the scheme would approximate 14.4% of France's GDP.

* SWEDISH

BIRNBAUM, Simon, "Arbete, frihet och den generella välfärdsstaten" [Work, Freedom and the Universal Welfare State], *Tvärsnitt*, 2008 (3), 26-29.

This paper briefly presents some of the central arguments of Birnbaum's recent doctoral thesis, *Just Distribution: Rawlsian Liberalism and the Politics of Basic Income* (Stockholm University), and applies them to policy debates about workfare and the future of the universal welfare state. Defending a maximin-criterion to assess competing welfare state arrangements, the author holds that the life prospects of real freedom, and the social bases of self-respect, are key concerns in a plausible Rawlsian agenda. Basic income is defended as a powerful tool to meet these objectives. The article also provides a short discussion of the objection from reciprocity and suggests a reply combining the case for a broad notion of productive contribution and the irrelevance of reciprocity for some gift-like resources.

An electronic version can be obtained from:

<http://www.vr.se/huvudmeny/tvarsnittnr32008/essaarbetefrihetochdengenerellavalfardsstaten.4.427cb4d511c4bb6e38680003523.html>

Author's address: simon.birnbaum@statsvet.su.se

6. NEW LINKS

* LIBERTARIAN BLOGGER DISCUSSES CITIZEN'S DIVIDEND:

British blogger Mark Wadsworth, a libertarian activist, argues for a Citizen's Dividend with his many readers.

<http://anti-citizen-one.blogspot.com/2008/05/geonomics-geonomics-is.html>

- From USBIG

* GRADUAL INTRODUCTION BASIC INCOME

Richard Lawson proposes that "we should consider the gradual introduction of BI "through the back door" by introducing the "earnings disregard" aspect of BI (the component that allows recipients to work while still receiving benefit, which allows people to break out of the unemployment trap), and applying it to those types of work that are constructive to society and environment. It works like this: first, the government sets up regional tribunals which are competent to judge whether the product and process of any economic group (any concern, from private enterprise to local authority) is beneficial to society and environment. "Process" refers to matters such as the energy efficiency, health & safety and corporate social responsibility policies of the company."

More details on Lawson's plan: <http://www.greenhealth.org.uk/GreenWageSubsidy.htm>

* A GERMAN VIDEO ON BASIC INCOME

"A basic income is possible", according to this video which can be viewed at:

<http://de.youtube.com/watch?v=no01If2ZPGg>

* ONLINE PETITION FOR A NEW MONETARY SYSTEM

This petition includes the following section: "Income security, including a basic income guarantee and a national dividend, should be a primary responsibility of national governments

in the economic sphere. A right to adequate purchasing power should be part of every national constitution".

See: <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/crisis>

* DIVIDEND PAYMENTS IN THE US?

Taking the opportunity of the G-20 Economic Summit, Richard Cook has published a new article online, in which he argues (a.o.) that " Congress could authorize dividend payments to citizens as advocated by the Social Credit movement founded by Major C.H. Douglas of Great Britain decades ago as a means of monetizing the net appreciation of the producing economy. Dividends exceeding \$1,000 a month could be issued from a national dividend account without recourse to taxation or borrowing. Such a concept is related to the Alaska Permanent Fund which paid over \$3,200 to each state resident in 2008 and to the concept of a basic income guarantee advocated by proponents of the negative income tax in years past.

See: <http://www.congresscheck.com/2008/11/17/the-g-20-economic-summit-won%E2%80%99t-change-the-%E2%80%9Cfinancial-crime-scene%E2%80%9D/>

7. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

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

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