

BIEN
BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK
NEWSFLASH 66, April 2012

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, David Casassas, Felix Coeln, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Joerg Drescher, Sandro Gobetti, Stanislas Jourdan, Takeshi Suzuki, Philippe Van Parijs, Karl Widerquist, and Thérèse Davio.*

This NewsFlash can be downloaded as a PDF document on our website

www.basicincome.org

For up-to-date information about basic income, see:

<http://binews.org/>

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1. BIEN Conference 2012 in Munich (DE): website and call for papers

The 14th Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) will take place on September 14 to 16, 2012 in Munich, Germany. **The website is online at: <http://www.bien2012.de/en>**

A Call for Papers, Proposals, and Events has been launched. The deadline for submissions is April 15, 2012.

The debate about an unconditional basic income has attracted public attention in a number of countries in recent years. Financial, debt, and ecological crises are causing growing numbers of people to look for political alternatives to the existing economy and the way income is distributed within it. With the debate entering this crucial phase, the 2012 BIEN Congress will discuss possible pathways and barriers towards establishing and implementing Basic Income. This year, the Network Basic Income Germany (Netzwerk Grundeinkommen Deutschland) is organizing the conference.

The conference will focus on the following questions:

What could a specific roadmap to Basic Income look like, nationally and internationally? What contribution could pilot projects make towards the implementation of Basic Income? Which reforms would need to be prioritized? What barriers need to be overcome, and how?

Is there evidence for broader public support for a basic income? What are current Basic Income debates and social movements focusing on? What political and civil society alliances are possible and potentially productive?

How do Basic Income debates relate to the current financial and debt crisis? Could a Basic Income contribute to combating the effects of this crisis and prevent future crises? What criteria would the concept of Basic Income have to meet to make such a contribution?

How does Basic Income relate to the ecological crisis? How could it contribute to an alternative, more sustainable economy and way of life? Which conceptual design would be most appropriate from that perspective?

Which versions of Basic Income are viable (with respect to the ecological, social and economic crises), affordable, and politically feasible?

What is the normative justification for Basic Income, and what goals does it aim to achieve? How do these goals respond to current economic, environmental and social problems?

The conference aims to present an opportunity for an open, interdisciplinary discussion of the problems and questions surrounding Basic Income. The above questions are not intended to set strict boundaries, but to facilitate open and thematically wide-ranging discussions.

The organizing committee invites all interested groups and individuals, both advocates and critics of Basic Income, to submit abstracts for presentations, workshops, and posters. Subject to constraints on space, film-screenings and readings will also be possible. Proposals of up to 400 words should be submitted in German or English by 15 April 2012 at <http://www.bien2012.de/en>

The conference program will be compiled from all submissions by 15th May 2012. All those who have made a submission will receive a message shortly afterwards. If you have any questions please contact callforpapers@bien2012.de. Further information on the conference fee, accommodation and travel can be found on the website.

2. Basic income studies: New issue

Basic Income Studies (BIS) has announced the publication of a new issue of the journal. The contents of volume 6, issue 2 (October 2011), is below. BIS issues are available via: <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/bis>

Basic Income Studies is the only academic journal devoted entirely to examining basic income.

The issue includes the following articles:

MOSELEY, DANIEL D., "Introduction: What is libertarianism?"

Abstract – This article introduces the special *Basic Income Studies* journal's debate issue on whether libertarians should endorse a universal basic income. The article clarifies some common uses of the term "libertarianism" as it is used by moral and political philosophers. It identifies some important common features of libertarian normative theories.

MOSELEY, DANIEL D. "A Lockean Argument for Basic Income"

Abstract – Libertarians should not reject the goal of establishing a global basic income program. There are strong Lockean considerations that favor such a program. This article explains a conception of equal share left-libertarianism that is supported by the rights of full self-ownership and world ownership. It argues that an appropriately constructed basic income program would be a key institution for promoting those rights.

LAYMAN DANIEL "Locke on Basic Income." This essay was runner-up for the 2011 BIS Essay Prize

Abstract – Perhaps the strongest attempts to derive support for basic income policy from John Locke's political philosophy hinge on Locke's view that the world and its resources were originally owned in common by all persons. This world ownership, many have supposed, gives all persons a natural right to equal shares of resources and thus a right to an equal basic income under conditions (like our own) in which nearly all resources have been appropriated. This reasoning betrays a misunderstanding of Locke's conception of original world ownership and, once this understanding is corrected, it becomes clear that there is no natural right to equal shares of resources, although there is a natural right to sufficient shares. Consequently, although governments must guarantee sufficiency for their citizens, there is no Lockean reason why this guarantee must take the form of a basic income or a scheme of equal and unconditional payments.

BOETTKE, PETER J. AND ADAM MARTIN, "Taking the 'G' out of BIG: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on Basic Income"

Abstract – Basic Income Guarantee proposals aim at, among other objectives, the salutary goal of providing a minimum income floor beneath which individuals cannot fall. We analyze this family of proposals through the lens of comparative political economy, arguing that politics is not an appropriate institutional environment for pursuing the end of an income floor. Once the notion of a guaranteed income is cast in realistic, probabilistic terms, it becomes a live question whether the market or the polity can better secure a Basic Income. Actual markets must be compared to real-world political processes rather than idealized policy proposals in order to ascertain their desirability. Drawing on the extant literature on the failure of political processes to realize the goals of other redistributive programs, we argue that Basic Income proposals likewise ignore politics as practiced and are thus equally subject to critiques both of their means-ends coherence and their vulnerability to political

opportunism.

ZWOLINSKI, MATT, "Classical Liberalism and the Basic Income"

Abstract – This article provides a brief overview of the relationship between libertarian political theory and the Basic Income (BI). It distinguishes between different forms of libertarianism and argues that at least one form, classical liberalism, is compatible with and provides some grounds of support for BI. A classical liberal BI, however, is likely to be much smaller than the sort of BI defended by those on the political left. And there are both contingent-empirical and principled-moral reasons for doubting that the classical liberal case for BI will be ultimately successful.

MUNGER, MICHAEL C. "Basic Income Is Not an Obligation, But It Might Be a Legitimate Choice"

Abstract – A distinction is made between libertarian destinations and libertarian directions. Basic income cannot be part of a truly libertarian state unless it could be accomplished entirely through voluntary donations. But basic income is an important step in a libertarian direction because it improves core values such as self-ownership, liberty, and efficiency of transfers while reducing coercion and increasing procedural fairness. Practical approaches to achieving basic income are compared to proposals by Milton Friedman and Charles Murray.

POWELL, BRIAN K. "Two Libertarian Arguments for Basic Income Proposals"

Abstract – For those familiar only with libertarians on the economic right, it seems obvious that libertarians will oppose basic income proposals. However, there are a variety of ways to argue for basic income proposals from within a "left" or "egalitarian" libertarian framework. In this article I argue that such a framework ought to be preferred to the alternative right-libertarian framework. Then I look at a simple left-libertarian argument for basic income proposals that is inspired by Thomas Paine and Henry George, and at another, more complex, argument offered by Phillipe Van Parijs.

VALLENTYNE, PETER, "Libertarianism and the Justice of a Basic Income"

Abstract – Whether justice requires, or even permits, a basic income depends on two issues: 1. Does justice permit *taxation* to generate revenues for distribution to others? 2. If so, does justice require, or even permit, *equal and unconditional* distribution for some portion of the tax revenues? I claim the following: 1. although all forms of libertarianism reject the nonconsensual taxation of labor and the products of labor, all but radical right-libertarianism allow a kind of wealth taxation for rights over natural resources, and 2. some versions of libertarianism allow the equal and unconditional distribution of such revenues and some do not.

The issue also includes the following book reviews: Pérez, Jose Luis Rey, "Review of Gijs van Donselaar, *The Right to Exploit: Parasitism, Scarcity, Basic Income*"

Vick, Andrea, "Review of Doris Schroeder, *Work Incentives and Welfare Provision: The 'Pathological' Theory of Unemployment*"

3. EVENTS

PAST EVENTS

* **ROME (IT)**, 24 November 2011: Precarity and guaranteed income

A public meeting about “Precarity and guaranteed income” was held in Rome on 24th of November 2011. It was organized by Confederazione Generale Italia Lavoro (the Italian general confederation of work) of the Lazio region. Participants included Tina Bali (Secretary of CGIL Roma and Lazio), Sandro Gobetti (Bin Italy) and Michele Raitano (La Sapienza University, Rome) took part at the meeting. Meeting Coordinator was Martha Bonafoni (Director of Radio Popolare Roma). The meeting started at 5 pm and took place at the Detour Urban Oasis, Via Urbana 107 Rome.

The discussion focused on Precarity condition and the need for a guaranteed income in Italy within a broader context such as the European social model. The connection between precarity and guaranteed income has become a focal point in the debate especially for Italy, a country where more than 2.5 million young people are out of work and without any kind of income support.

More information (in Italian) about the meeting is online at:

http://www.bin-italia.org/informa.php?ID_NEWS=313

- From USBIG

* **PISA (IT)**, 26 November 2011: Welfare and guaranteed income

An organization called Tilt Camp held a public meeting, entitled “Welfare and guaranteed income for tomorrow’s Italy,” in Pisa from 3 to 6pm on Saturday 26th of November. Speakers included: Giulio Marcon (Sbilanciamoci), Luca Santini (BIN Italy), Arturo di Corinto (journalist), Claudia Pratelli (Il nostro tempo è adesso. La vita non aspetta), Roberto Ciccarelli (Manifesto), Maria La Porta (Sportello Donna), Vincenzo Bavaro (labor law, University of Bari), Ylenia Daniello (Million Marijuana March), Michele DePalma (FIOM CGIL), Lorenzo Misuraca (Ass. DaSud), Jacopo Pisacreta (Experience-Lab), Valentina Meconi (Fabbrica di Nichi – Fermo). This event is part of a three-day meeting called “Money makes you happy.”

More info in Italian and a link to the “Tilt camp” meeting is online at:

http://www.bin-italia.org/informa.php?ID_NEWS=314

- From Basic Income Network Italia

* **TOKYO (JP)**, 28 January 2012: Basic income and the crisis

This conference took place at the *Maison Franco-japonaise* in Tokyo. Two speakers dealt with the issue of the potential of a basic income in times of economic crisis, and in the aftermath of the March 2011 earthquake in Japan. Yannick Vanderborght (Professor of Political Science at Louvain University and Facultes Saint-Louis, Brussels, Belgium) gave a talk entitled ‘Le revenu d’existence: une réponse adéquate aux crises et catastrophes?’. Fumio Iida (Professor of Political Theory at Kobe University, Japan) talked about “Basic income: a Japanese version?”. The conference was organized by Thierry Ribault (CNRS, Institut français de recherche sur le Japon, Maison franco-japonaise Tokyo), in cooperation with Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Scientific Research A, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Project Title: A Comparative Analysis of the Needs-Participation Oriented Welfare Systems in the Era of Aging Society. Chief Investigator: Yutaka Tejima, Professor of Medical Law, GraduateSchool of Law, Kobe University).

Further information (in French and Japanese) at <http://www.mfj.gr.jp/agenda/2012/01/28/>
Address: 3-9-25, Ebisu, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0013

* **NAMUR (BE)**, 17 March 2012: Basic income and solidarity

At the initiative of several green movements, this event (among other things) included a projection of “Basic Income”, the documentary by Daniel Häni et Enno Schmidt, and a debate between basic income supporter Philippe Defeyt (former leader of the green party Ecolo) and basic income critic Bernard Friot (French sociologist and expert in issues of social protection). This event took place in Namur, Belgium on March 17, 2012 between 2:30PM and 10PM. Location: Faculté de médecine, Place du Palais de Justice, 5000 Namur.

Further information:

http://objecteursdecroissance.be/IMG/pdf/revenu_de_base_mpsc_leger_2_.pdf

Or contact: Michèle Gilkinet <michele.gilkinet@base.be>

* **PARIS (FR)**, 31 March 2012: The right to a basic income

On March 31, 2012, a collective called POURS (“Pour un revenu social” – “for a social income”) organized a large conference on basic income as a guaranteed right to existence.

Details : 9h30-18h, 31 March 2012, La Maison de l’Arbre – 9, rue François Debergue – 93100 Montreuil (Métro 9- Croix de Chavaux).

See also www.pourunrevenusocial.org

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

* **MAASTRICHT (NL)**, 17 April 2012: Basic Income as a sustainable solution for our planet

This event will take place within the framework of the “Science Cafe”, a platform for panel discussions taking place at the Selxys bookstore in Maastricht. It provides a link between students, scholars, the academic world and the reality of people’s life. In the 2 hour evening discussion, the audience will be invited to ask questions and to interact with the panelists. Five guests are going to discuss Basic Income in its sustainable dimension – as a solution to the to the problems our world is facing due to the unsustainable governance in the environmental as well as the social realm.

Guest speakers include:

Felix Coeln, chairperson of Kölner Initiative Grundeinkommen (Köln, Germany), who shall look at the core philosophical idea of separating income from working for a livelihood.

The German activist Bernd Hildebrandt, who will approach the topic with from the bottom-up perspective, following the idea of “empowering” the least well off in society.

The Italian philosopher Emanuele Murra (currently at the Hoover Chair, Louvain university) will look at the link existing between material conditions and freedom, claiming that some economical right has to be considered as fundamental right.

Adrian de Grootruiz, an economics professor from Nijmegen, will incorporate the economic dimension in the debate.

Rene Gabriels, a Dutch philosopher, will have a critical look at the idea.

The event will take place on Tuesday 17 April, 20h00 at the Selxysz Bookshop, Dominikanerkerkstraat 1, Maastricht.

For further information:

<http://www.sg.unimaas.nl/programma.asp?action=detail&id=777&lang=en>

* **TORONTO (CA)**, 3-5 May 2012: Eleventh North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress, Call for papers

USBIG announces that the Basic Income Canada Network has released the tentative schedule for the Eleventh Annual North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress: "Putting Equality Back on The Agenda: Basic Income and Other Approaches to Economic Security for All." The conference will take place at the University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, May 3-5, 2012.

While Canada, the United States, and many other OECD countries have grown increasingly unequal in recent years, equality has not been on the political agenda. Yet evidence shows that income inequality is accompanied by a range of significant negative consequences. Putting Equality Back on the Agenda will examine this growing trend of inequality and consider the option of a basic income to reduce economic disparity. More than 50 researchers, activists, and political practitioners will present research on the economic, political, sociological, and philosophical issues of poverty, inequality, and basic income.

Featured speakers include:

- Richard Wilkinson, Professor Emeritus of Social Epidemiology at the University of Nottingham Medical School and co-author of *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*;
- Charles Karelis, Research Professor of Philosophy at The George Washington University and Author of *The Persistence of Poverty: Why the Economics of the Well-Off Can't Help the Poor*;
- Erik Olin Wright, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin - Madison, author of *Envisioning Real Utopias*, and *American Society: How it Actually Works*;
- Armine Yalnizyan, Senior Economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;
- John Rook, Chair of the National Council of Welfare and CEO of Potential Place Society;
- Evelyn Forget, Professor, University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, author of a major forthcoming study on Mincome (the Manitoba minimum income experiment);
- Simon Lewchuk, Centre for Public Justice;
- Senator Art Eggleton, Former Mayor of Toronto;
- Trish Hennessey, Director of Strategic Issues for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; and
- Dan Meades, Director, Vibrant Communities Calgary.

The North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress is a joint Conference of the U.S. and Canadian Basic Income Guarantee Networks. It takes place in Canada and the United States on alternating years. The registration deadline is April 15, 2012. The registration fee is: \$150 for Private, Corporate, University, and Government Registration, \$90 for Not-for-Profit Registration, \$40 for Low income, students, and seniors.

The entire schedule is online at: <http://biencanada.ca/content/11th-north-american-basic-income-guarantee-congress-schedule>.

Registration, hotel, and venue information and an overview of the Congress are online at: <http://biencanada.ca/content/11th-north-american-basic-income-guarantee-congress-registration-now-open>

* **BELFAST (UK)**, 6-8 June 2012: 23rd EFC Annual General Assembly and Conference

The 2012 European Foundation Centre conference will hold a session entitled, "Justice through unconditional basic income? A debate on European Social Policy"

The conference website describes the session as follows:

The social question and the issue of solidarity are among the core issues of the European agenda. The European Commission has focused its Europe 2020 strategy almost exclusively on them and a whole civil society movement on equality and social justice has emerged during the last couple of years throughout the continent. The session will deal with the issue of an unconditional basic income as a possible perspective on European social policy. Should every citizen get the amount of 700 Euro a month with few or no conditions attached? Is that simply utopia? Or is it a real European idea that could lead to the abolishment of other official political welfare systems? And if the unconditional basic income is not the solution for inequality and injustice that exists throughout Europe, what other strategies do we have to improve the economic perspectives of European citizens and explicitly the young generation? Which answers and solutions can we provide in order to achieve social justice, taking into account the historical youth unemployment and the sovereign debt that the young generation will inherit? And what is the role of foundations, i.e. the third sector, in all this?

More information about the conference is online at:

<http://www.efc.be/AgaConference/Pages/2012SessionDescriptions.aspx>

- From USBIG

* **MUNICH (DE)**, 14-16 September 2012: 14th Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN)

See section 1 above, and the Conference website at <http://www.bien2012.de/en>

See also Section 4 below, "Citizens Income Trust offers bursaries for attendees of the BIEN Congress in Munich"

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

* **EUROPEAN UNION: Call for Contributions: Basic Income Research Project**

[*Felix Coeln for Basic income news (http://binews.org/), February 2012*]

Pertti Koistinen (Professor of Work and Labor Market Policies) from the UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE, Finland announces a call for contributions to the project. To find out the feasibility of basic income as a social policy reform and an alternative to the failure of prevailing social security systems to prevent working age population from poverty and safeguard the basic social rights for all citizens Koistinen and fellow organizers look for cooperation and volunteers throughout Europe.

For further information: <http://www.transform-network.net/en/home/article/basic-income-research-project-call-for-contributors.html>

* **FINLAND: Launch of a basic income citizens' initiative**

Finland's basic income network has just launched a campaign for a citizens' initiative for a universal basic income on March 28th, 2012, in Helsinki. The Citizens' Initiative Act came into force in Finland at the beginning of March 2012, but since appropriate online service for collecting signatures is still missing, only preliminary supporters are being gathered. Citizens' initiatives can be sent for parliamentary handling if they are signed by 50,000 people. The citizens' initiative claims for a basic income which corresponds to the minimum level of current basic social security benefits, to be granted on an individual basis to all adult

permanent residents in Finland. The initiative was drafted by a working group of people from different political parties and NGO's. Due to this initiative and other campaigns, basic income has recently become a hot topic in the Finnish media and political activism.

Basic income network Finland: <http://perustulo.org/>

A newspaper article (in English) on this initiative:

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Lack+of+appropriate+online+services+waters+down+new+Citizens%E2%80%99+Initiative+Act+/1329103710144>

*** FRANCE: A parliamentary mission about basic income mandated by Nicolas Sarkozy?**

[Stanislas Jourdan for Basic income news (http://binews.org/), February 2012]

French politician Christine Boutin withdraw her candidacy for the next presidential election, and announced on the French television TF1 that she reached an agreement with the candidate Nicolas Sarkozy. The president of the Christian-Democrat Party explained that recent speeches of the president Nicolas Sarkozy proved he defends the same values as her such as family, marriage, work, and religious roots of Europe. All in all: Conservative values. As a contrast, Christine Boutin is a long-time supporter of basic income and is very committed in the fight against poverty.

Yet in 2011, Boutin made clear she would support Sarkozy under three conditions, including the basic income (see BI News). Indeed, she said on TF1 that the agreement finally reached with Nicolas Sarkozy included a deal about the basic income. Apparently, Sarkozy would mandate her to pilot a parliamentary commission to examine the proposal, and would play "an important role" in the election campaign.

Does Nicolas Sarkozy actually support basic income? This remains unclear. At first sight, after all the measures taken against unemployment rights and social welfare by the government during his presidency, this seems very unlikely. But ironically, the general feeling in France is that Sarkozy is "capable of everything to stay in power". As Boutin said on TF1: "The basic income is a proposal currently discussed very seriously in Germany, and is perfectly fundable". Could these arguments convince Nicolas Sarkozy? In a recent speech, the president was highly criticized for referring too much to the German model.

Nicolas Sarkozy and Christine Boutin met several times lately. According to sources familiar with Christine Boutin, the negotiations were running positively for her. Christine Boutin advocates for a basic income of 400 euros per adult per month, and 200 per children, regardless of means. In her proposal, the basic income would substitute for several current social grants the French system offers, and would be conditioned upon the completion of compulsory national service, military or civilian. Boutin's proposal is considered "very low" by basic income supporters in France. In a recent study, Marc de Basquiat proved 400 euros is, on average, the amount every French citizen already earns from the welfare system. However, in a way, this would make the basic income "visible" behind the complex French social model, not to mention it would simplify it and make it much more understandable.

Links to stories on this issue:

Christine Boutin's announcement is on video at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tWRG3-ABag>

The earlier BI News article on this issue: <http://binews.org/2012/01/france-presidential->

[candidate-from-christian-democrat-party-negotiates-for-big/](#)

Christine Boutin's proposal is online here: <http://boutin2012.fr/2011/12/15/le-revenu-de-base>

Marc de Basquiat's paper is online at:

<http://www.allocationuniverselle.com/doc/R%E9ductionTh%E8seAU2012-02-07Basquiat.pdf>

*** GERMANY: Film project – The BIG Change**

Unconditional Basic Income and Real Democracy lay the foundation for a society, in which we will live together in a free and creative way. The exceptional film project THE BIG CHANGE focuses on the spirit of the times producing an exciting political thriller. Designed as a non-profit-project, the future audience participates in the feature film, is a substantial part of it and will be able to view the film as a free download after completion. The new way of cooperating is finding its way into the film business and opens the way to a balanced society. System change on many levels – be part of it!

THE BIG CHANGE – the idea for this feature film existed long before it became a world-wide public movement. Till Schmerbeck [Resist! Intern Rebellion| Aufstand der Praktikanten] produces a political thriller after a screenplay by writer and director Peter Benkowitz.

100% free of government funding and government requirements

100% free of political ploys

100% non-profit

100% free download

The film creates awareness, supports a new way of thinking and the active participation in a socially just society. The volatile topic of distribution of power in our democracy, the forceful keeping of outdated structures from the last century – there are many reasons to question our system. We show a way to change it.

More Information and how to participate: www.THE-BIG-CHANGE.com

*** IRAN: Basic income might become means-tested**

[Hamid Tabatabai, for USBIG January 2012]

Iran has had a nationwide basic income in place for the past year. It was introduced in the autumn of 2010 to replace inefficient subsidies of fuel and other commodities that had been in place for decades. The basic income was designed to cushion the blow of increased prices.

After a year of operation, the government is finding it necessary to lower the cost of the basic income and is considering means testing as one option. The plan would make the highest income-earners ineligible for the transfer. The number under consideration is 10 million people, or about 14 percent of the 74 million who currently receive the transfer.

The initial transfer amount (per person) was set much too high relative to the money saved from the elimination of subsidies, although understandable from a social and (short-term) political standpoint. That mismatch wreaked havoc with the finances of the program since nearly all of the net revenues generated from price increases went to households in transfers when their share was supposed to be 50 percent according to the Targeting Subsidies Law of January 2010. The other 50 percent was supposed to be divided between government spending and the business sector, which also suffered when the fuel subsidies were eliminated. The business sector got little of the 30 percent share allocated to them, and the government got none of the 20 percent share it had been allocated for improvement of infrastructure.

There is another problem that means testing might address. Whatever the level of funds available for transfer to households, there is a tradeoff between coverage and the amount of the transfer per person. If the rich are getting it, the lower income people will have less. That is the real dilemma now. The idea is to exclude some of the better off so that the amount of the transfer can be raised for the rest. Additional revenues are also expected from further cuts in subsidies in the second stage of the reform that is slated to begin in a few months.

The initial plan is to ask higher income earners to opt out voluntarily. Households with income above a couple of thousand dollars a month (a fairly large amount of money in Iran) will receive a letter from the government urging them to withdraw from the program voluntarily. No one knows how the recipients will respond. If enough of them agree to withdraw, the matter will have been settled. If not, the government will have to decide how to proceed. The sad fact of the matter is that at the moment the funds going to the rich are entirely at the expense of those with lower income.

For further information:

<http://www.bepress.com/bis/vol6/iss1/art3>

<http://presstv.com/detail/220308.html>

<http://www.dolat.ir/NSite/FullStory/News/?Serv=0&Id=209885>

*** NEW ZEALAND: Treasury produces a report on "a Guaranteed Minimum Income"**

[Felix Coeln for Basic income news (<http://binews.org/>), February 2012]

The Welfare Working Group requested Treasury to model a specific Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) scheme for New Zealand. As a result Treasury published an assessment for a universal and unconditional payment of \$300 per week to all individuals aged 16 years and over, extra to those families with children. Treasury concludes that tax and equity implications of a New Zealand-specific GMI scheme would lead to:

More equal distribution of income; Removal of disincentive for beneficiaries to undertake part-time work; Poverty reduction; Possible improvement in labor market outcomes in some areas: more employee flexibility; encouragement of unpaid work; additional employee bargaining power; encouragement of entrepreneurial activity; and reduction in the opportunity cost of full time training or education; lower administrative, management and operating costs.

For further information:

<http://ips.ac.nz/WelfareWorkingGroup/Downloads/Working%20papers/Treasury-A-Guaranteed-Minimum-Income-for-New-Zealand%20.PDF>

Ben Wallace's response to GMI:

<http://www.oursystem.info/2011/11/gmi-response-to-treasurys-economic.html>

*** SPAIN: General strike and basic income**

On March 29, 2012, a general strike was organized in Spain. At this occasion, Daniel Raventós and Julie Wark published a short document in which they link the demands of Spanish workers to the idea of a basic income. The authors ask: "Would it be madness, in these times, to propose that every member of the population should have his or her material existence guaranteed by means of a completely unconditional cash transfer? By a basic income?"

The full English version is available at:

<http://www.nodo50.org/redrentabasica/textos/index.php?x=967>

This paper was also published at:

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/daniel-raventos-julie-wark/general-strike-in-kingdom-of-spain-political-economy-and-basic-income>

*** SWITZERLAND: Petition Drive For A Referendum On A Basic Income**

[*Felix Coeln for Basic income news (http://binews.org/), February 2012*]

On April 21st, 2012 Switzerland is starting a petition for a referendum on a basic income with a big party in Zurich. The referendum would establish the following principles in the constitution: the confederation installs a basic income; the basic income allows the whole population a dignified life and full participation; the law lays down funding and amount of the basic income. The petition needs 100,000 signatures to bring the referendum to a vote. The initiative follows the national motto: Unus pro omnibus – omnes pro uno (all for one and one for all).

For further information : <http://bedingungslos.ch/> (only in German – translations in French and Italian are going to be added)

*** UNITED KINGDOM: Citizen's Income Trust Quoted in the Huffington-Post**

[*USBIG – February 2012*]

An article by Mike Morgan-Giles that appeared in the Huffington Post on February 13 quotes from the Citizen's Income Trust. On a list of 10 proposals the British opposition Labour Party should put into a credible alternative budget, Mogan-Giles writes: "3. Putting more money in people's pockets: The Citizen's Income Trust advocates paying everyone an unconditional 'Citizens Income', which would provide greater financial security and save around £10 billion per year. Increasing the Personal Allowance to £12,000 per year would put an extra £800 in the pockets of working people and the Adam Smith Institute believes that this will cost an extra £15 billion. The potentially cost-neutral move to a lower rate of VAT is part of Labour's five point plan, and this will increase economic activity as well as helping the lowest paid, who spend a higher proportion of their wages."

The article can be found online at:

Labour Can Enhance Economic Credibility With an Alternative Budget

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/mike-morgangiles/miliband-labour-economy-credibility-with-an-alternative-budget_b_1271859.html

*** UNITED KINGDOM: Citizens Income Trust offers bursaries for attendees of the BIEN Congress in Munich**

[*USBIG – February 2012*]

According to the Citizen's Income Newsletter, the Citizen's Income Trust is offering up to three bursaries of £500 each to Congress participants who live in the United Kingdom and/or are staff members or students at UK universities, to enable them to give papers at the Congress. The bursaries will be awarded to those whose papers have been accepted for presentation at the Congress and who, in the view of the Citizen's Income Trust's trustees, have submitted the best abstracts and draft papers to the Trust. The paper should be on philosophical, political, economic or social aspects of moving towards a Citizen's Income. Draft papers, including an abstract, should be submitted by the 31st January 2012. Please submit your abstract and draft paper to the Director, Dr. Malcolm Torry, Email: info@citizensincome.org; website: www.citizensincome.org.

*** UNITED STATES :** Legislative proposals would increase the size of the Alaska Permanent Fund and Dividend
[USBIG – February 2012]

Several proposals being floated in the Alaska legislature right now would increase the size of the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF) and therefore the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD). The PFD is Alaska's small Basic Income. The state saves a portion of its oil revenue in the APF, which is invested in stocks, bonds, real estate, and other assets all over the world. Each year it pays a dividend, the PFD, to every Alaska resident. The APF is currently at about US\$40 billion; it produces dividends averaging about US\$1,350 per person per year over the last 20 years. It grows slowly each year with new oil revenue and reinvestments, and it fluctuates considerably with international financial markets.

Proposals now in the state legislature could boost the size of the fund and dividend. The most ambitious proposal comes from Mike Doogan (a Democrat in the Alaska House of Representatives). He proposes depositing almost all of the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) into the APF. The CBR is a fund, like the APF, but unlike the APF, its returns are not dedicated to any particular use. As the name implies, it was created as a reserve for the state budget. It is now worth over US\$11 billion. Doogan's bill would transfer US\$10 billion from that fund into the APF, increasing its value by 25 percent from US\$40 to US\$50 billion. It would therefore increase the PFD by 25 percent as well. If returns average what they have for the last 20 years, this move would increase the dividend from about US\$1,350 to near US\$1,700 per person per year on average.

In a commentary in the Alaska Dispatch, Doogan admits that the bill has little chance under the current makeup of the State House. The minority Democrats in the Finance Committee have all endorsed the bill, but none of the majority Republicans have signed on. Doogan argues they should because more long-term savings is what Alaska needs now.

According to Becky Bohrer of the Associated Press, State Senator Johnny Ellis (a Democrat from Anchorage) has made a less-ambitious proposal to move US\$2 billion from the CBR into the Permanent Fund. Another bill would not increase savings but would distribute more money directly to the people in the short term. According to another Bohrer article, a bill proposed by Sen. Joe Thomas (a Democrat from Fairbanks) would "provide every adult recipient of an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend this fall with a voucher for 250 gallons of heating oil, an equivalent amount of natural gas, or 1,500 kilowatt-hours of electricity." Alaskans who don't directly pay for any of those would receive a voucher for their landlord or US\$250 in cash.

The current increase of attention to saving more or boosting the PFD probably comes from a combination of factors. Alaska has been largely spared from the current economic recession. According to Alex DeMarban, the state government has a large budget surplus, and Alaska is one of only two states that has more jobs now than before the recession began in late 2008. However, Alaskans are increasingly aware that their current position is temporary. Their prosperity comes almost entirely from a thriving oil industry and high oil prices, which have so far made up for steadily declining oil production.

Alaska has successfully saved a considerable amount of money. Quoting figures from Commonwealth North, Alex DeMarban writes, "Alaska's net worth in state-owned enterprises

and financial investments totaled US\$66 billion in 2011 ... Put another way, the state-owned wealth comes to US\$93,000 for every man, woman and child in Alaska, or about US\$279,000 for the average family of three. And that figure doesn't count the mind-boggling reserves of oil, gas, gold and other treasures waiting to be tapped." According to SIT News (also citing the study by Commonwealth North), "Commonwealth North's review indicates an individual Alaskan's share of the state financial treasure has gone up to \$92,821 per person from \$80,747 per person in 2010."

These figures are extremely impressive in comparison to many other states struggling with budget deficits, but they are unimpressive compared to some other oil-producing regions. Norway, which has exported similar amounts of oil as Alaska, has a Sovereign Wealth Fund of US\$560 billion dollars. Alaska's oil production appears to be declining more rapidly than Norway's. It can and should do much more to save.

Links:

Representative Mike Doogan's commentary, "Brother, can you spare \$10 billion?" (the Alaska Dispatch, February 5, 2012), is online at:

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/brother-can-you-spare-10-billion>

Becky Bohrer's article, "Alaska lawmakers to weigh how much to save" (from the Associated Press, January 16, 2012), is online at

<http://www.adn.com/2012/01/16/2266155/alaska-lawmakers-to-weigh-how.html>

Alex DeMarban's article, "Bill would use state savings to boost Permanent Fund checks" (Alaska Dispatch January 8, 2012), is online:

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/bill-would-use-state-savings-boost-permanent-fund-checks>

Alex DeMarban's article, "Alaska wallows in wealth while recession-riddled states suffer" (Alaska Dispatch January 31, 2012), is online:

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/alaska-wallows-wealth-while-recession-riddled-states-suffer>

Becky Bohrer's article, "Bill would help Alaskans with energy costs," (from the Associated Press, February 17, 2012), is online at:

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9SVFR102.htm>

An editorial, "State savings? Good idea," in the Alaska Daily News (January 7, 2012) supporting the savings bills is online at:

<http://www.adn.com/2012/01/07/2251624/our-view-state-savings-good-idea.html>

SitNews article (January 31, 2012), "Alaskan's share of monetary assets owned by state in 2011 was \$92,821 per person," is online at:

http://www.sitnews.us/0112News/013112/013112_commonwealth.html

A PowerPoint presentation from Commonwealth North is online at:

<http://www.commonwealthnorth.org/index.cfm?section=About&page=What's-New&viewpost=2&ContentId=802>

Commonwealth North's website is:

<http://www.commonwealthnorth.org>

Recent articles on how the fund's investments are doing are online at:

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/permanent-fund-rebounds-remains-red-fy2012>

http://newsminer.com/view/full_story/17305532/article-Strong-quarter-allows-Alaska-

<http://www.ktva.com/home/outbound-xml-feeds/PFD-Fund-Will-Remain-Negative-138179329.html>

*** UNITED STATES: Socialist Party USA Candidate Alexander Calls for a Basic Income Guaranteed (BIG)**

[Felix Coeln for Basic income news (<http://binews.org/>), February 2012]

Stewart Alexander, the nominee of the Socialist Party USA (SPUSA) for President of the United States, is calling for a Basic Income Guaranteed (BIG) for everyone 20 years of age and over. He supports a BIG that will help meet the basic needs of the unemployed, the poor, the elderly, college students, the homeless, the basic needs of veterans, single parents, and the disabled. Alexander has supported the concept of BIG for more than two decades and his program is the way the concept is understood internationally. Under Alexander's BIG Plan, an individual would qualify for the guaranteed income at the age of 20 and would receive a basic minimum income indefinitely adjusted to inflation.

For further information:

<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2011/12/16/18702851.php>

5. PUBLICATIONS

<i>ENGLISH</i>

BIRNBAUM, Simon (2011), 'Should surfers be ostracized? Basic income, liberal neutrality, and the work ethos', *Politics, Philosophy, Economics*, November 2011, vol. 10, no. 4, 396-419. See: <http://ppe.sagepub.com/content/10/4/396.abstract>

Neutralists have argued that there is something illiberal about linking access to gift-like resources to work requirements. The central liberal motivation for basic income is to provide greater freedom to choose between different ways of life, including options attaching great importance to non-market activities and disposable time. As argued by Philippe Van Parijs, even those spending their days surfing should be fed. This article by Simon Birnbaum (Department of Political Science, Stockholm University) examines Van Parijs' dual commitment to a 'real libertarian' justification of basic income and the public enforcement of a strong work ethos, which serves to boost the volume of work at a given rate of taxation. It is argued (contra Van Parijs) that this alliance faces the neutrality objection: the work ethos will largely offset the liberal gains of unconditionality by radically restricting the set of permissible options available. A relaxed, non-obligatory ethos might avoid this implication. This view, however, is vulnerable to the structural exploitation objection: feasibility is achieved only because some choose to do necessary tasks to which most people have the same aversion. In light of these objections, the article examines whether there is a morally untainted feasibility path consistent with liberal objectives.

BIRNBAUM, Simon (2012), *Basic Income Reconsidered. Social Justice, Liberalism, and the Demands of Equality*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan ("Exploring the basic income guarantee" series).

The idea of guaranteeing every member of society an unconditional basic income is one of the most innovative and powerful proposals for countering our growing economic inequalities and to sustainably prevent poverty. But would this be a just thing to do? In the last few decades, debates on the ethics and economics of basic income have become increasingly sophisticated and diverse. *Basic Income Reconsidered* provides an up-to-date assessment of these arguments, and works out a novel contribution based on the justification of

unconditional universalism. Simon Birnbaum (Stockholm University, Sweden) studies the basic income proposal, and its main rivals, through the lens of John Rawls' theory of justice and defends a radical-liberal interpretation of Rawls' conception. It is radical in the sense that it demands far-reaching equalization of opportunities. It is, at the same time, liberal by insisting that people must be left free to use their resource shares for a much wider range of purposes and life plans than those typically accessible through existing welfare states. According to Philippe Van Parijs, Birnbaum's new book is "one of the most insightful and comprehensive treatments so far of the ethical foundations of radical welfare reform".

For further information, see the publisher's page at:

<http://us.macmillan.com/basicincomereconsidered/SimonBirnbaum>

WIDERQUIST Karl, & HOWARD, Michael W. (2012), *Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend Examining its Suitability as a Model*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan ('Exploring the basic income guarantee' series).

Discussing the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF) and Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) as a model both for resource policy and for social policy, contributors explore whether other states, nations, or regions would benefit from an Alaskan-style dividend. Many other jurisdictions could create similar funds and dividends, but most of them under-tax resources, giving resources away to corporations who sell them back to the people. *Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend* looks back at the success of the APF and PFD, and it looks forward (using theory and empirical investigation) to see how the Alaska model can be of use in other places and how the model might be altered and improved.

Publisher's page: <http://us.macmillan.com/book.aspx?isbn=9780230112070>

JAPANESE

MIYAMOTO, Taro (ed.) (2010), 'Activation or basic income. Principles of welfare reform', *Academia Juris Booklet* (Hokkaido University), issue 30.

This special issue of the journal *Academia Juris Booklet* (in Japanese) is edited by Prof. Miyamoto Taro (Faculty of Law, Hokkaido University), one of Japan's leading expert in social security reform. It includes one paper by Yannick Vanderborght (Louvain University and Facultés Saint-Louis Brussels) entitled 'Universal Basic Income and the Tensions of Welfare State Reform'; and one paper by Jorgen Goul Andersen (Aalborg University) entitled 'Evolution of activation policies in Denmark'. Both papers are in Japanese. In his introduction, Prof. Miyamoto stresses the fact that basic income and activation policies are not incompatible, and argues that both approaches could contribute to a more inclusive social security system.

Available online at: <http://www.juris.hokudai.ac.jp/~academia/booklet/booklet30.html>

VAN PARIJS, Philippe (2012), 'Pas d'eurozone viable sans euro-dividende', *Le Monde*, 6 March 2012.

In this opinion piece published by the French daily *Le Monde* (March 6, 2012), Philippe Van Parijs (Louvain University, Hoover Chair) compares the eurozone with the United States. Inspired by the works of Martin Feldstein and others, he argues that the eurozone will only be viable at the price of increased interpersonal solidarity. This solidarity, Van Parijs argues, should take the form of a modest individual income floor funded by VAT, i.e. a so-called "Euro-Dividend".

The piece (in French) is online at:

http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2012/03/06/pas-d-eurozone-viable-sans-euro-dividende_1652164_3232.html

A Dutch version has been published by the Belgian daily *De Morgen*:

<http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/2461/De-Gedachte/article/detail/1400934/2012/02/28/Geen-duurzame-euro-zonder-eurodividend.dhtml>

6. NEW LINKS

OPINION PIECES ON BASIC INCOME NEWS

Basic Income News publishes opinion pieces on a regular basis. See:

<http://binews.org/category/opinion/>

OTHER LINKS

BARON, ALEXANDER, "Who the Dickens was Major Douglas?" *Digital Journal*, January 20, 2012; and "Wanted—600 Million New Jobs." *Digital Journal*, January 25, 2012

[*USBIG – February 2012*]

These two Op-Ed pieces in the online newspaper *Digital Journal*, discuss the life and work of Major Douglas (1879-1952). The author portrays Douglas's proposal for a "national dividend" as an early statement of basic income that could free people from unnecessary labor.

The two articles are online at:

<http://digitaljournal.com/article/317661>

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/318428>

[HETECONOMIST.COM](http://heteconomist.com), "The Transition to a Freer Society: BIG or JG?," *Heteconomist.com: Thoughts from the economic heterodoxy*, December 28, 2011; "Job Or Income Guarantee (JIG)," *Heteconomist.com* December 31, 2011; and "More Jigging – JG vs JIG," *Heteconomist.com*, December 31, 2011.

[*USBIG – February 2012*]

These three blog posts discuss the alternatives of a guaranteed job and a guaranteed income from the standpoint for heterodox, mostly Post Keynesian economic theory. The author concludes that the best policy would be to combine the two, guaranteeing both a job for those who are willing and able and guaranteeing a smaller unconditional income for everyone else. All three posts are followed by a lively discussion.

GREEN PARTY OF CANADA "National News: A New Year's Resolution: A Challenge to the Harper Government" *Northznberkabd*, December 30, 2011.

[Wolfgang Müller – BI News – January 2012]

According to this article the idea of a basic income provides several means for the current Harper Government of Canada to meet their requirements of "reduced government bureaucracy, simplicity, ease of implementation, quick to apply and take effect [and] economic savings." Additionally, it would also directly address poverty and its consequences. The Green Party of Canada, therefore, encourages Harper to implement a Universal Basic Income Program.

<http://www.northumberlandview.ca/index.php?module=news&func=display&sid=12371>

HODGSON, GLEN, "Guaranteed annual income – a Big Idea whose time has yet to arrive" iPolitics, December 20, 2011

[Wolfgang Müller – BI News – January 2012]

This article by Glen Hodgson, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the Conference Board of Canada since 2004, discusses the economic, fiscal and social value of a guaranteed annual income (GAI) for Canada and demands further detailed research on the feasibility of GAI. After introducing GAI as "a minimum level of income for every individual or family in the country, delivered without condition through the existing income tax system" and a brief summary of the history of this concept, Hodgson stresses three main advantages of a GAI:

- 1) Prevention of poverty
- 2) Reducing the so called "welfare wall"
- 3) Reducing health care spending

To support his argument, Hodgson introduces an analysis of the "health and social impacts of the MINCOME experiment" in Canada during the 1970s. This analysis by Evelyn Forget demonstrates evidence of above presented advantages. Hodgson concludes that a GAI is "an appealing 'big idea' whose time has yet to arrive politically" and that "there is no better time than right now to heat up the debate". The article is online at:

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2011/12/20/guaranteed-annual-income-a-big-idea-whose-time-has-yet-to-arrive/>

DOBBY, Christine, "Conference Board makes pitch for guaranteed annual income," The Financial Post (Canada), December 20, 2011.

[USBIG – February 2012]

This economy piece reports and comments on Glenn Hodgson's report, "Guaranteed annual income – a Big Idea whose time has yet to arrive" (see above). It is online at:

<http://business.financialpost.com/2011/12/20/conference-board-makes-pitch-for-guaranteed-annual-income/>

DENISE, PHILLIP, "Who is Richard C. Cook?" Gather, January 23, 2012
COOK, RICHARD C. "Seeing Through the Illusion of Money: From Barter to the Gaia Plan" Gather, January 23, 2012

[USBIG – February 2012]

These two articles appear together on Gather, which calls itself, "the place where millions of people come for fresh perspective on what's happening now." The first article discusses the theories of Richard C. Cook, who advocates a basic income as part of a comprehensive monetary reform. The second is based on a speech Cook gave to the International Reciprocal Trade Association, Puerto Aventuras, Quintana Roo, Mexico, September 20, 2011.

7. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

Co-chairs:

Ingrid VAN NIEKERK ivanniekerk@epri.org.za, Economic Policy Research Institute, Cape Town, South Africa

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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, 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), Ahn Hyo Sang (KR)

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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.

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