

BIEN
BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK
NEWSFLASH Volume 25, no. 67 Autumn 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.

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/>

CONTENTS

1. [Editorial: New editor at BIEN NewsFlash](#)
2. [Glimpses of the national debates](#)
3. [Publications](#)
4. [Recent Events](#)
5. [Upcoming events](#)
6. [Videos](#)
7. [WRITERS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for BI News, the BIEN NewsFlash, and affiliate newsletters](#)
8. [New Links](#)
9. [About the Basic Income Earth Network](#)

1. Editorial: New editor at BIEN NewsFlash

With this issue, I am taking over as the third editor of BIEN's NewsFlash. What is now the NewsFlash began in 1988 as *Basic Income: Newsletter of the Basic Income European Network*. It was a hardcopy newsletter, meaning that copies of it were actually printed out on paper and put into an envelope, to which postage was fixed so that it could be physically carried to its recipients. The original editor was Philippe Van Parijs. In January 2000, after editing 33 issues of the newsletter, Van Parijs oversaw the transition from print to fully electronic format, along with this change came the name change to, *The BIEN NewsFlash*.

Van Parijs edited 28 more issues after the newsletter became the NewsFlash. After a total of 51 issues over 16 years, he finally turned the NewsFlash over to Yannick Vanderborght in September 2004. In 2010, Yannick Vanderborght (with help from several of BIEN's affiliate newsletters) oversaw the expansion of the NewsFlash with the creation of the Basic Income News Website (BInews.org). With the creation of BI News, news stories are not only sent out electronically by email, but they are also posted promptly on the internet so that people can get

news on basic income regularly. Vanderborcht edited 38 issues of the *NewsFlash* over eight years, and stepped down from his position as editor in September 2012.

At that time, BIEN's General Assembly elected me to take over as News Editor. My name might be familiar to readers of the *NewsFlash* because I have been editor of the USBIG Newsletter since January 2000. As USBIG Newsletter editor, I have regularly contributed stories to the *NewsFlash*, and I have co-edited BI News. My editorship involves a further integration of BI News, the *NewsFlash*, and at least some of BIEN's affiliate newsletters. The USBIG Newsletter will now become the US National edition of the *NewsFlash*, including some overlapping content and national content likely to be of interest only to U.S. readers. Other affiliates of BIEN might begin producing their own national editions of the *NewsFlash* as early as next year. The BIEN NewsFlash will focus on international news and local stories that are likely to be of interest to readers in many different countries. The affiliate edition(s) will focus on national and regional news while including whatever stories from the international edition are most likely to be of interest to people in that country.

The new editorship and integration will likely come along with a new and evolving format. The *NewsFlash* is now written largely by a team of volunteers, after having been a one-person operation for more than two decades. I am not sure exactly what changes and in store, but I look forward to seeing what happens next.

-Karl Widerquist, Quick Bites Café, Doha Qatar, November 2012

2. Glimpses of the national debates

ALASKA, UNITED STATES: This year's dividend is the smallest since 2005

[USBIG – November 2012]

Alaska distributed its yearly Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) on October 4, 2012. The amount was disappointing, only \$878—down from last year's dividend of \$1,174 and the smallest dividend since 2005. The 2012 dividend was only the second dividend in the last 20 years to be below \$900, and it is well below the all-time highest dividend of \$2,069 in 2008 (\$3269 including a one-time supplement the state added to the 2008 dividend).

The PFD is a sort of a yearly, variable basic income, given to all U.S. citizens (men, women, and children) who fill out a form showing that they meet the state's residency requirement for eligibility. This year nearly 650,000 Alaskans received the dividend. It is financed by the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF), which is a sovereign wealth fund owned by the state and financed in turn by the accumulated savings from the state's oil exports. The dividend varies considerably from year-to-year because the amount is calculated from a complex formula averaging the last five years of returns to the fund. The dividend is down this year because of the poor performance of international stock and bond markets over the last five years.

For more recent stories on Alaska's PFD, see the following stories:

“This year's dividend is the smallest since 2005”

Karl Widerquist, *Alaska Dividend Blog*, November 26, 2012
<http://usbig.net/alaskablog/2012/11/this-year%E2%80%99s-dividend-is-the-smallest-since-2005/>

“Alaskans to get \$878 in yearly oil wealth payout”
By Rachel D'Oro Associated Press, September 18, 2012
<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/amount-annual-alaska-dividend-be-announced>

“Smaller Alaska dividend check likely to disappoint ... for good reason”
Carey Restino, *Bristol Bay Times*, Sep 20, 2012
<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/smaller-alaska-dividend-check-likely-disappoint-good-reason>

“Dividend set: Alaskans shouldn't forget fund's purpose”
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Editorial Sep 18, 2012
http://newsminer.com/view/full_story/20186798/article-Dividend-set--Alaskans-shouldn%E2%80%99t-forget-fund%E2%80%99s-purpose?instance=home_opinion_editorial

“2012 Permanent Fund Dividend is \$878”
SIT News Ketchikan, Alaska, September 18, 2012
http://www.sitnews.us/0912News/091812/091812_pfd.html

“Permanent Fund Dividend Lowest Since 2005”
Russ Slaten, *Your Alaska Link*, Sep 19, 2012
<http://www.youralaskalink.com/news/Permanent-Fund-Dividend-Lowest-Since-2005-170382336.html>

“With Alaska's higher costs, dividends won't go far”
Mark Thiessen, *Associated Press*, Sep 18, 2012
<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-09-18/with-alaskas-higher-costs-dividends-wont-go-far>

“PFDs still good for business, but not like the glory days”
Jeff Richardson, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, Sep 19, 2012
<http://newsminer.com/bookmark/20198521-PFDs-still-good-for-business-but-not-like-the-glory-days>

“Happy Socialist Money Grab Day, Alaska!”
Jeanne Devon, *the Mudflats*, September 19, 2012
<http://www.themudflats.net/?p=33271>

“By the numbers: Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend”
Eric Christopher Adams, *The Alaska Dispatch*, Sep 18, 2012
<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/numbers-alaska-permanent-fund-dividend>

“Alaskans donate \$2.2 million from PFDs using Pick.Click.Give.”
Alaska Dispatch, Oct 06, 2012
<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/alaskans-donate-22-million-pfds-using-pickclickgive>

“Count the ways Alaskans spend their \$878 Permanent Fund check”

Alaska Dispatch, Oct 05, 2012

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/count-ways-alaskans-spend-their-878-permanent-fund-check>

“It's time to cut state spending: The numbers show future has arrived”

Bradford Keithley, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, Oct 07, 2012

http://newsminer.com/view/full_story/20385563/article-It-s-time-to-cut-state-spending--The-numbers-show-future-has-arrived?instance=home_opinion_community_perspectives

PFD program generates record amount for Alaska nonprofits

Anchorage Daily News, October 5, 2012

<http://www.adn.com/2012/10/05/2652015/pfd-program-generates-record-amount.html>

BELGIUM, FINLAND, AND SLOVENIA: BIEN officially recognizes three new affiliate networks

[BIEN - September 27, 2012]

During its general assembly of September 16th, 2012, the Basic Income Earth Network officially recognized three new affiliate networks. BIEN now has no less than 20 affiliates. The three new BIEN national networks are all located in Europe:

Belgium: <http://basicincome.be/> (available in Dutch, French, German, and English)

Finland: <http://perustulo.org/>

Slovenia: contact address is valerija_korosec@yahoo.com (see also the programme of a conference to be organized in Ljubljana on October 11-12, 2012: <http://www.inovum.si/ubi/en>)

The BIEN General assembly was held within the framework of BIEN's 14th international conference in Munich, Germany.

CANADA: Green Party Leader Endorses Basic Income

[Jenna van Draanen - BICN - November 2012]

Elizabeth May, the leader of the Green Party in Canada and an MP in British Columbia recently endorsed basic income. The endorsement of a “Guaranteed Livable Income” came through a press release on October 17, the United Nations (UN) International Day for the Eradication of

Poverty. May's press release reminds her audience that the Green Party is the only political party in Canada to advocate for a basic income as a means to eradicate poverty. The endorsement occurring on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is an apt response to the UN resolution for all member states to create and implement concrete strategies to eliminate poverty.

More about her remarks can be found online at:

<http://www.canadianprogressiveworld.com/2012/10/18/elizabeth-may-calls-for-a-guaranteed-livable-income-in-canada/>

INDIA: Basic Income Pilot Project Finds Positive Results

[USBIG – September 2012]

Over more than a year, India's Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) with support from UNICEF has been conducting a cash transfer pilot project in rural villages. They have just released some of their preliminary findings, and results are extremely encouraging. The study was conducted in 20 rural villages in India. Adult residents of 8 of those villages received a cash transfer of 200 Rupees (about US\$3.75) per month. Children received 100 Rupees. Residents of the other 12 villages were observed as a "control group" as in a medical trial. The money was distributed unconditionally. Residents were told they could do whatever they wanted with the money.

Positive results were found in terms of nutrition, health, education, housing and infrastructure, and economic activity. The researchers found that the cash transfer group spent significantly more on eggs, meat, and fish than the control group. Researchers found a positive impact on health and access to medical treatment. The most visible impact of the study was on educational attainment. Researchers found increased spending on school-related items such as school uniforms, school fees, shoes for school, books, school supplies, and private tuition. School attendance in the cash transfer villages shot up, three times the level of the control villages. Performance in school improved significantly relative to control villages. There was increased investment in housing, such as the installation of in-door plumbing. Twice the number of cash transfer households started new activity over the study period as those in non-cash transfer villages.

SEWA has released a video explain the results and including interviews with participants in the study. This video explains the results of the Indian basic income pilot project. It includes interviews with participants in the study.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItkZ5b-C3Nw&feature=youtu.be>

See also the story in the video section below.

NAMIBIA: United Nations special rapporteur calls for implementation of BIG

[USBIG – October 2012]

According to *the Namibian*, the United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Magdalena Sepulveda, has called on the Namibian government “to put aside prejudices against the poor and implement the Basic Income Grant (BIG) as soon as possible.” A rapporteur is “a person appointed by an organization to report on the proceedings of its meetings.” The Namibian reports that Sepulveda arrived in Namibia on October 1, and toured several regions where she met with government officials, civil society organizations and communities living in poverty.

For more info go to:

[http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=102841&no_cache=1](http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=102841&no_cache=1)

THE NETHERLANDS: Elections 2012 - No entrance to Basis Income

[Robin Ketelaars – Vereniging Basisinkomen (the Netherlands) – September 2012]

The elections of September 12, 2012 in the Netherlands were characterized by many debates in the media: radio, television, magazines and newspapers. The elections resulted in 21,176 votes for parties endorsing an Unconditional Basic Income (UBI - OBI in Dutch), but these parties didn't get any seats in parliament.

Reporting in the election paid little attention to UBI as an issue. Stories and interviews focused on the party leaders of the major parties and some of the smaller parties in the parliament. A few new parties that seek more substantial innovations (such as direct democracy, digital civil rights and an unconditional basic income) were sparsely covered. Of course, every political party received free airtime on public broadcasting, but that was it. The polls taken in advance of the elections only concerned the established parties. The newcomers received no attention.

SWITZERLAND: International Labour Organization reaffirms interest in BIG

[Citizens Income Trust – September 2012]

On the 30th May 2012 the General Conference of the International Labour Organization reaffirmed that the right to social security is a human right and recommended that member countries should ‘establish and maintain ... social protection floors ... Schemes providing such benefits may include universal benefit schemes, social insurance schemes, social assistance schemes, negative income tax schemes,’

For more information see: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_183326.pdf

3. Publications

English

News from Basic Income Studies

[USBIG – November 2012]

The next issue of Basic Income Studies (BIS) will be available soon. This academic, peer-reviewed journal has been in a period of transition. The new publisher is De Gruyter, which acquired BIS earlier this year from Berkeley Electronic Press. The editing of the journal is being passed from Karl Widerquist and Jurgen De Wispelaeare to Louise Haagh (University of York, UK) and James Mulvale (University of Regina, Canada).

The past issues of BIS continue to be accessible at no cost at <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/bis> (by pressing on "read content" button).

If you are involved in scholarly work on Basic Income, and would like to reach a broad audience of academics from many disciplines as well as policy experts and advocates, please consider submitting your manuscript to BIS.

Three publications agree giving money directly to the people beats quantitative easing

[USBIG – November 2012]

Brown, Ellen, "Why QE3 Won't Jump-Start the Economy—and What Would," *Web of Debt*, September 21, 2012; reprinted by *Truth Dig* Sep 22, 2012.

http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/why_qe3_wont_jumpstart_the_economyand_what_would_20120922//

<http://www.resourceinvestor.com/2012/09/20/for-qe-ben-should-have-tried-the-helicopter>

Kaletsy, Anatole, "How about quantitative easing for the people?" *Reuters Opinion*, August 1, 2012

<http://blogs.reuters.com/anatole-kaletsy/2012/08/01/how-about-quantitative-easing-for-the-people/>

Hutchinson, Martin, "For QE, Ben Should Have Tried the Helicopter," *Resource Investor*, September 20, 2012

<http://www.resourceinvestor.com/2012/09/20/for-qe-ben-should-have-tried-the-helicopter>

Three recent U.S. editorials have argued that Quantitative Easing would be more effective and more equitable if the money was given directly to the people in the form of a basic income—if only a temporary one. Martin Hutchinson discusses the Fed's goal of buying \$40 billion dollars

worth of debt each month for as many months as it takes. He argues that for only \$31 billion dollars per month the Fed could send a \$100 check to each of the 310 million US citizens. Anatole Kaletsky argues that \$2 trillion (the amount the Fed spent on Quantitative Easing in 2009) could finance a cash dividend of “\$6,500 for every man, woman and child, or \$26,000 for a family of four.” All three agree this would be a superior anti-recession policy than Quantitative Easing, which directly benefits bankers and has a lesser effect on overall economic activity.

Adam, Stuart and James Browne, *Reforming Council Tax Benefit*

[Citizens Income Trust – September 2012]

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has published a report, *Reforming Council Tax Benefit*, which reviews the Government’s plan to localise Council Tax Benefit: ‘Universal Credit is intended to simplify the benefit system by reducing the number of different benefits that claimants and administrators must contend with. Keeping council tax support (the means-tested benefit with the largest number of recipients) separate – and indeed allowing it to vary across the country – severely undermines this simplification. Universal Credit is also intended to rationalise work incentives by replacing a jumble of overlapping means tests with a single one, ensuring that overall effective tax rates cannot rise too high. Again, separate means tests for council tax support could undermine this, with the potential to reintroduce some of the extremely weak work incentives that Universal Credit was supposed to eliminate. It is difficult to think of reasons why the government’s original plan to integrate CTB into Universal Credit was inferior to what is now being proposed’ (pp.8-9). ‘Achieving coherence between council tax rebates and Universal Credit is complex. The need to make the new rebates fit with Universal Credit makes local authorities’ task of designing schemes, already a difficult challenge given the tight timescale, into a truly formidable one. There is nothing in the Universal Credit system that will make it straightforward to identify those who should be passported onto a full council tax rebate. That could make running a council tax rebate scheme based closely on the current system extremely challenging for local authorities ... the advantages of localisation seem to be strongly outweighed by the disadvantages, particularly in the context of the welcome introduction of Universal Credit’. (p.107)

Adam, Stuart and James Browne, *Reforming Council Tax Benefit*, The Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2012

www.ifs.org.uk/publications/6183

Blaschke, Ronald, “From the Idea of a basic income to the political movement in Europe”

[USBIG – November 2012]

According to the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, this paper has the following content: Short history of the idea of a basic income in Europe and the US; The idea of a basic income becomes the political call of a wide, but politically differently coined movement in Germany; The European Basic Income Movement; Market liberal and emancipatory approaches to reasoning for and design of a basic income; Occupation, welfare state and radical democratisation of

society and economy; Public goods, infrastructure and services; Redistribution; Gender equality; Reduction in use of natural resources; and Global Social Rights.

Ronald Blaschke, "From the Idea of a basic income to the political movement in Europe," *The Rosa Luxembourg Foundation Papers*, August 2012

Information about the paper is online at:

<http://www.rosalux.de/publication/38626/from-the-idea-of-a-basic-income-to-the-political-movement-in-europe.html>

The paper is online at: [Papers_Basic-Income_Blaschke-2012pdf.pdf](#)

Broadbent, Ed. "What kind of Canada do we want?"

[BICN - Jenna van Draanen - October 2012]

Ed Broadbent, the former leader of Canada's New Democratic Party and the founder of the Broadbent Institute, recently wrote an opinion piece in the *Toronto Star* in response to a host of austerity policies that are being implemented across Canada. Broadbent wants to stimulate a national discussion on extreme income inequality and potential ways to address it.

In terms of solutions, he points to Canadians' willingness to pay higher taxes to protect social programs and calls on the government to take leadership on reducing inequality. Broadbent includes among the ways to address inequality: upgrading income security and federal support programs, a progressive taxation system, and transfers to the provinces. The piece also advocates for the promotion of jobs, investment in early childhood and post-secondary education, and protective employment legislation.

Notably, he says we should "seriously debate the concept of a Guaranteed Basic Income that ensures a minimum level of economic security for all" and points out that we already have such a system for seniors through the Guaranteed Income Supplement. This article concludes by calling on Canadians to use collective will to demand the major changes to current social and economic arrangements that will rebalance priorities in a way that works for Canada.

Broadbent, Ed. "What kind of Canada do we want?" *Toronto Star*. October 8, 2012.

<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/1267780--what-kind-of-canada-do-we-want>

Caputo, Richard K. (editor) *Basic Income Guarantee and Politics: International Experiences and Perspectives on the Viability of Income Guarantee*, Palgrave Macmillan, August 2012

[USBIG – November 2012]

According to the publisher, "This exciting and timely collection brings together international and national scholars and advocates to provide historical overviews of efforts to pass basic income guarantee legislation in their respective countries and/or across regions of the globe.

Contributing authors address specific substantive issues such as: who were the main people and groups involved in support of or against such legislative efforts; what were the main reasons for the success or failure of BIG-related initiatives to date; and what the prospects are for the future. Countries discussed include Australia, Finland, Germany, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, the UK, and the US." The publisher also quotes Greg Marston, who writes, "This book integrates careful research, political theory and practical insights in a way that no other volume on the idea of a basic income guarantee has yet done. Through engaging and thoughtful presentation of wide ranging national case studies, readers will learn a great deal about the global state of play. In an age of growing economic insecurity, the book provides a timely reminder of the possibilities income guarantee schemes offer for improving social wellbeing."

For more information go to:

<http://us.macmillan.com/basicincomeguaranteeandpolitics/RichardKCaputo>

Citizens Income Trust (UK), *The Citizen's Income Newsletter*, Issue 3 for 2012

[Citizens Income Trust – September 2012]

The latest edition of the Citizens Income Newsletter contains an editorial, the research note: "A Citizen's Income scheme's winners and losers" by Malcolm Torry, a review essay: "The message of James Robertson's Future Money" by Conall Boyle," book reviews, a viewpoint: "Why Austerity is the Wrong Answer to Debt" by Geoff Crocker, and more.

Citizens Income Trust (UK), *The Citizen's Income Newsletter*, Issue 3 for 2012.
<http://www.citizensincome.org/>

Dearlove, Cameron, "Consider guaranteed annual income to reduce poverty"

[USBIG – November 2012]

This article argues that basic income is a bold solution that could not only reduce but actually eliminate poverty.

Dearlove, Cameron, "Consider guaranteed annual income to reduce poverty," *The Record*, 19 October 2012
<http://www.therecord.com/opinion/columns/article/819662--consider-guaranteed-annual-income-to-reduce-poverty>

Dorling, Danny, *The no-nonsense guide to equality*

[BIEN Ireland - September 19, 2012]

This new book by Danny Dorling (University of Sheffield) includes an 8-pages discussion of

basic income in the British context. Dorling seems to be very supportive of the idea, including at EU-level: “Imagine how much money would be saved”, he writes, “if a basic income one day replaced all the numerous different benefit and taxation systems existing across the whole of the European Union. How else could Europe ever have a unified system of social security to go with its free movement of labor?” (p.160).

Dorling, Danny, *The no-nonsense guide to equality*, Oxford: New Internationalist. 2012
<http://www.dannydorling.org/books/equality/Homepage.html>

Ernst, Kelly, “Poverty reduction strategies are wrong-headed”

[USBIG – November 2012]

This article argues that a form of basic income guarantee would work better than Canada’s current poverty-reduction strategies.

Ernst, Kelly, “Poverty reduction strategies are wrong-headed,” *The Record*, 23 October 2012
<http://www.therecord.com/opinion/columns/article/821876--poverty-reduction-strategies-are-wrong-headed>

Garcia, Marito and Charity M. T. Moore. *The Cash Dividend: The rise of cash transfer programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*

[CIT - October 10, 2012]

The World Bank has published a report, “The Cash Dividend: The rise of cash transfer programs in Sub-Saharan Africa,” by Marito Garcia and Charity M. T. Moore. The authors conclude: ‘Much can already be learned from Sub-Saharan Africa’s experience with cash transfer programs. Evaluations of unconditional programs have found significant impacts on household food consumption (for instance, Miller, Tsoka, and Mchinji Evaluation Team 2007 for Malawi’s Social Cash Transfer Program; Soares and Teixeira 2010 for Mozambique’s Food Subsidy Program); nonfood consumption (for instance, RHVP 2009 for Zambia’s Social Cash Transfer); and children’s nutrition and education (including Agüero, Carter, and Woolard 2007 and Williams 2007 for South Africa’s Child Support Grant). A recent experimental evaluation found that a program for adolescent girls conditioned on their school attendance improved enrollment, attendance, and test scores in Malawi. Unconditional transfers in the same program decreased early marriage and pregnancy among girls who had already dropped out of school.’ (p.8).

Garcia, Marito and Charity M. T. Moore. *The Cash Dividend: The rise of cash transfer programs in Sub-Saharan Africa*, The World Bank 2012.
<http://bit.ly/ct4SSA>

Hirsch, Donald. Does the tax and benefit system create a ‘couple penalty’?

[Citizens Income Trust – September 2012]

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has published a new report, *Does the tax and benefit system create a ‘couple penalty’?* 'The use of the MIS [Minimum Income Standard] scale, which uses research into minimum living costs to show greater economies of living in a couple than the official equivalence scales, suggests that separation penalties are larger and couple penalties smaller than those scales would suggest. Indeed, it shows no case of significant couple penalty other than in the scenario where the absent parent is able to live cheaply in social housing. Moreover, even the official scale used by the Government (the OECD scale) does not show a clear-cut economic advantage for families on low earnings to split up. In the single earner cases shown here, it shows a couple penalty in one scenario, a separation penalty in three scenarios and no difference in the other three. On the other hand, for a couple with two earners, it shows a substantial couple penalty in all but one of the five scenarios looked at here. So an in-work couple penalty can be identified for a particular group of couples on a particular set of assumptions.' (p.29).

Hirsch, Donald. *Does the tax and benefit system create a ‘couple penalty’?* The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 18 June 2012
www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tax-and-benefit-couple-penalty

Jordan, Bill, “An income of one’s own: the citizen’s income”

[USBIG – Nov 2012]

In an obvious reference to Virginia Woolf, author Bill Jordan argues that the current economic crisis provides a great opportunity for basic income because there is now widespread recognition that the whole tax and benefit system is malfunctioning

Jordan, Bill, “An income of one’s own: the citizen’s income,” *Red Pepper* October 2012
<http://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-income-of-ones-own-the-citizens-income/>

Katada, Kaori, “Gender Perspectives on Basic Income”

[USBIG – November 2012]

This special issue explores new ways of looking at the nature of labor and society beginning with the topic of Basic Income. The newsletter interviews Katada about how she thinks this concept opens up new horizons for society. Kaori Katada is an Assistant Professor, Saitama Prefectural University in Japan and coeditor of the book *Beshikku inkamu to jenda* [Basic Income and Gender] (Gendai shokan, 2011).

Katada, Kaori, “Gender Perspectives on Basic Income” *Center for Gender Studies Newsletter*,

September 15, 2012.
http://web.icu.ac.jp/cgs_e/2012/09/nl015-p12e.html

Leibermann, Sascha, "Prospects of an Unconditional Basic Income"

[USBIG – Oct 2012]

In this article, Sascha Leibermann calls the idea of a basic income, "simple and powerful, challenging and disturbing." He introduces the idea, considers common objections to it, and discusses why it has such a difficult time getting onto the political agenda even though many of the common objects to it are unrealistic. Dr. Sascha Liebermann holds a PhD in Sociology. He is Assistant Professor at Ruhr-University Bochum, Visiting Fellow at ETH Zurich (Switzerland); Founding member of "Freedom not Full Employment" (www.freiheitstattvollbeschaeftigung.de) (in 2003), a group of German citizens arguing for an Unconditional Basic Income.

Leibermann, Sascha, "Prospects of an Unconditional Basic Income," *Club of Amsterdam Journal*, June 2012, Issue 150
<http://www.clubofamsterdam.com/contentimages/journal/print%20journal/print%200150%20Journal%20July%202012.htm>

Lind, Michael, "Thank you, Milton Friedman"

[USBIG – 2012]

This article shows how "conservatives' economic hero" helped make the case for a form of basic income guarantee.

Lind, Michael, "Thank you, Milton Friedman," Salon.com Aug 7, 2012
http://www.salon.com/2012/08/07/thank_you_milton_friedman/

Matthews, Dylan "Obama doesn't want to just write welfare recipients checks. But what if we did?"

[USBIG – November 2012]

This opinion piece from the Washington Post favorably discusses basic income in light of Mitt Romney's erroneous statement, "Under Obama's plan, you wouldn't have to work. You wouldn't have to train for a job. They just send you your welfare check." The author discusses some of the history of BIG, including the "Tax Cut for the Rest of Us" bill, which was authored by two members of the USBIG Network. The author concludes, "All of which is to say that while Mitt Romney mocks the idea of just sending checks to fight poverty, the idea has an impressive intellectual pedigree, including among conservatives. Perhaps we should give just

writing checks a shot.”

Matthews, Dylan “Obama doesn’t want to just write welfare recipients checks. But what if we did?” *The Washington Post*, August 8, 2012

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/ezra-klein/wp/2012/08/08/obama-doesnt-want-to-just-write-welfare-recipients-checks-but-what-if-we-did/>

Quiggin, “the Golden Age”

[BI News – October 2012]

This article reviews Keynes’s 1930 prediction that economic growth would so make possible the 15-hour workweek. The author, John Quiggin, argues that the failure of the prediction to come true happened not because of a failure of economic growth but because of policy decisions that have concentrated the gains of economic growth on people at the top of the income distribution. As a part of the solution, he argue for a guaranteed minimum income (another word for a basic income guarantee). John Quiggin is a professor of economics and the University of Queensland in Australia. He is the author of *Zombie Economics*.

Quiggin, John. “The Golden Age: The 15-hour working week predicted by Keynes may soon be within our grasp—but are we ready for freedom from toil?” *Aeon*, 27 September 2012

<http://www.aeonmagazine.com/living-together/john-quiggin-keynesian-utopiav1/>

Reilly, Amanda, “Time, Work and Law: a New Zealand Perspective”

[BIEN – October 2012]

ABSTRACT: New Zealand is popularly perceived as a laid back place where individuals might choose to live to enjoy a slower paced life style. However the reality is that New Zealanders work some of the longest days and the most hours per annum in the OECD. In this article it is argued that existing legal mechanisms for limiting work time are rooted in increasingly obsolete work patterns premised on strong unions and a workforce of permanent full time employees who are supported by an unpaid female workforce who carry the burden of reproductive care work. However, in New Zealand, as elsewhere, these legal mechanisms have been undermined by de-unionization, the emergence of precarious work, and the growing numbers of women in the workforce. Consequently the ability of workers to limit their work time has been significantly compromised. In the final part of the article it is suggested that a Guaranteed Basic Income could, given the changing nature of work, be a more effective and flexible mechanism for controlling working time than current law.

Amanda Reilly is a lecturer at the School of Accounting and Commercial Law, Victoria University of Wellington.

Reilly, Amanda, “Time, Work and Law: a New Zealand Perspective”
New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations 37(1)152-160

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1927024

Sandler, Mike “Citizen’s Dividends: Basic Income from your Share of the Commons”

[Aynur Bashirova – BIEN – October 2012]

In this article published in the Huffington Post, Mike Sandler argues that if we change the way money enters the economy (it enters as debt owned to private banks), government of the United States will be able to create Citizen’s Dividend and reduce the number of bankruptcies. The author comes to this idea based on the Ned Act proposed by Dennis Kucinich to abolish Federal Reserve, fractional reserve banking, prohibit compound interest, and give 25% of money created to the states. According to him, this will help budget deficits and help government to save money to give to every citizen of the United States in the form of the Universal Citizen’s Dividend. Sandler argues that this new way of handling economy will allow government to have enough money to give to actual people who will spend it into circulation. This, in turn, will create demand, so that employers will start hiring people again.

Sandler, Mike “Citizen’s Dividends: Basic Income from your Share of the Commons,”
Huffington Post, October 3, 2012
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-sandler/citizens-dividends-basic-_b_1936182.html?utm_hp_ref=business

Sheahan, Allan, *Basic Income Guarantee: Your Right to Economic Security*, Palgrave

Macmillan, July 2012

[USBIG – November 2012]

According to the publisher, “A Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) is the unconditional government-ensured guarantee that all citizens will have enough income to meet their basic needs without a work requirement. Significant questions include: Why should we adopt a BIG? Can the U.S. afford it? Why don't the current welfare programs work? Why not guarantee everyone a job? Would anyone work if his or her income were guaranteed? Has a BIG ever been tested? This book answers these questions and many more in simple, easy-to-understand language.” The publisher also quotes U.S. Senator George McGovern, writing, "This book is a great idea - brilliantly stated. Some may think it's ultra-liberal, as they did when I proposed a similar idea in 1972. I see it as true conservatism - the right of income for all Americans sufficient for food, shelter, and basic necessities. Or, what Jefferson referred to as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

For more information go to: <http://us.macmillan.com/basicincomeguarantee/AllanSheahan>

Torry, Malcolm “Research note: A Citizen’s Income scheme’s winners and losers”

[USBIG – September 2012]

Here we use computer simulation from survey data to estimate the outcomes for a genuine Citizen’s Income scheme: an unconditional and nonwithdrawable benefit for every citizen. The aim of the exercise was to test a variety of schemes. The study finds that by making a small number of changes to the present system in the United Kingdom, it is possible to establish a genuine Citizen’s Income scheme. Malcolm Torry is the director of the Citizens Income Trust (BIEN’s UK affiliate) and a parish priest and industrial chaplain for the Church of England.

Torry, Malcolm “Research note: A Citizen’s Income scheme’s winners and losers.” *The Citizen’s Income Newsletter*, Issue 3 for 2012

<http://www.citizensincome.org/>

Welch, Mary Agnes “An End to the Perpetual Welfare Trap: Guaranteed Incomes Debated.”

[Aynur Bashirova – BI News – September 2012]

In the article published in Winnipeg Free Press, Mary Agnes Welch argues that an experiment done in Dauphin province of Canada around 40 years ago regarding the experiment of unconditional basic income was a success and should be reapplied. The topic was discussed in a conference hosted by Winnipeg Harvest at University of Manitoba. The experiment provided an unconditional basic income guarantee to every low-income person in Dauphin whether or not they were eligible to receive welfare. The results of the Dauphin experiment showed an improvement in health, a lower high school dropout rate, and people did not stop working just because they were receiving a guaranteed income. The experiment was stopped because the government lost interest in it. Welch further informs that the city of Dauphin is interested in having the experiment again. However, it does not fit the new strategy of the government that follows the policy of moving people back to work.

Welch, M. A. “An End to the Perpetual War Trap: Guaranteed Incomes Debated.” *Winnipeg Free Press*, August 22, 2012

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/an-end-to-the-perpetual-welfare-trap-167004295.html>.

Widerquist, Karl and Michael W. Howard (editors) *Exporting the Alaska Model: Adapting the*

Permanent Fund Dividend for Reform around the World, Palgrave-MacMillan, 2012

[USBIG – November 2012]

According to the publisher: “very year, every Alaskan gets paid. They receive a small dividend financed by returns on a fund created from the state’s resource revenues – what the authors have

called the 'Alaska model.' This timely book examines how the model can be adapted for use elsewhere, examining issues of implementation and showing that this model can be employed even in resource-poor areas in the industrialized and in the industrializing world.” The publisher also quotes Guy Standing, writing "The Alaska Permanent Fund has reached its 30th anniversary and is one of the world's unsung innovations in social and economic policy. It offers a route to income redistribution and prompts realistic thoughts of more ambitious schemes to provide universal basic income security. This book is an important contribution to what should be a much more widespread debate about the Fund's role and potential." This book is the sequel to *Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend: Examining its Suitability as a Model*, co-edited by Karl Widerquist and Michael W. Howard (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2012).

For more information go to: <http://us.macmillan.com/book.aspx?isbn=9781137006592>

Yglesias, Matthew, “How To Win The War On Poverty: Recognize That Redistribution Works,”

Slate Sept. 15, 2012

[USBIG – November 2012]

Matthew Yglesias, *Slate's* business and economics correspondent, discusses the basic income guarantee as a more cost-effective solution to poverty than many current strategies, which he sees as attempts to use public services as a roundabout mechanism of income redistribution. Hence the fiasco of Amtrak's money-losing food services line.

Yglesias, Matthew, “How To Win The War On Poverty: Recognize That Redistribution Works,”
Slate Sept. 15, 2012

http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2012/09/15/tax_and_transfer_win_the_war_on_poverty_with_redistribution_.html

BI News Opinion pieces

BI News has published the following six opinion pieces since October 1. They're all online at:
<http://binews.org/category/opinion/>.

OPINION: A Popular Legislative Initiative for a Guaranteed Citizenship Income in Spain
Red Renta Básica • November 12, 2012

OPINION: Paul Ryan explains simple policy that would end poverty, but does not support it
By Timothy Roscoe Carter • November 5, 2012

OPINION: Assessment of the Dutch Elections 2012, No entrance to Basic Income
By Robin Ketelaars • October 29, 2012

OPINION: Why Austerity is the Wrong Answer to Debt: A Call for a New Paradigm
By Geoff Crocker · October 15, 2012

OPINION: Funding Citizen's Income by Seigniorage: The message of Future Money from James Robertson
By Conall Boyle · October 8, 2012

OPINION: Personal reflections on the 14th congress of the Basic Income Earth Network
By Philippe Van Parijs · October 1, 2012

Blogs on BIG

[USBIG – November 2012]

Several blogs are currently discussing the basic income guarantee

RiseUpEconomics: We Need to Re-work Work
<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/09/10/1129978/-We-Need-to-Re-work-Work>

The Zeitgeist Movement Official Blog: "Basic Income - An immediate step in the transition"
<http://blog.thezeitgeistmovement.com/blog/dario-wurmd/basic-income-immediate-step-transition>

Joshua Miller, "Another Badly-Aimed Attack on the Basic Income Guarantee from Crooked Timber," August 9, 2012
<http://www.anotherpanacea.com/2012/08/another-badly-aimed-attack-on-the-basic-income-guarantee-from-crooked-timber/>

The Digital Journal's blog: "How Practicable Is Basic Income Today?"
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/blog/18677>

The Heteconomist blog: "Greece, Basic Income and the European Left"
<http://heteconomist.com/?p=6128>

The Progress Report: "Local Equity & Citizen Dividends Proposed: Put Toll Concession Fees In a Permanent Fund For All"
<http://www.progress.org/2012/tollroad.htm>

French

Ryckaert, Pierre-Yves, “Revenu de base... utopie ou nécessité?”

[BIEN - September 2012]

This opinion piece is published on the website of the French-speaking RTBF, the Belgian Public Broadcast. Its author, Pierre-Yves Ryckaert, is one of the founders of the Belgian basic income network, which was recently recognized by BIEN (September 2012). In this piece, Ryckaert briefly summarizes some of the core arguments in favour of a basic income.

Ryckaert, Pierre-Yves (2012), “Revenu de base... utopie ou nécessité?” *RTBF* September 2012

http://www.rtb.be/info/opinions/detail_revenu-de-base-utopie-ou-necessite?id=7845325

See also, Belgium’s basic income network: <http://basicincome.be/>

Murra, Emanuele (2012), “Basic income, libertà e sviluppo per i paesi del Sud del mondo. Il caso del villaggio di Otjivero-Omitara”

[BIEN - October 25, 2012]

Starting from Amartya Sen’s ideas about freedom and development, the article discusses the idea of basic income and its potential to promote both development and protective security. The theoretical analysis is connected with the empirical data of the first project that monitored the effects of basic income on a real community, the village of Otjivero-Omitara in Namibia.

Murra, Emanuele (2012), ‘Basic income, libertà e sviluppo per i paesi del Sud del mondo. Il caso del villaggio di Otjivero-Omitara’ (Basic Income, freedom and development to Southern Countries. The case of the village of Otjivero-Omitara) in M. Signore, L. Cuccurachi (eds.), *Libertà democratiche e Sviluppo*, Pensa Multimedia, Lecce 2012, pp. 177-186.

A pdf copy is available here:

http://unisalento.academia.edu/EmanueleMurra/Papers/1894398/Basic_income_liberta_e_sviluppo_per_i_paesi_del_Sud_del_mondo._Il_caso_del_villaggio_di_Otjivero-Omitara

German

Werner, Götz W. et al., *Das Grundeinkommen: Würdigung – Wertungen – Wege*

[BIEN - October 26, 2012]

The book comprises 25 contributions to the basic income debate, representing different scientific

perspectives and an artist's essay. All the essays are devoted to the idea of improving social and personal welfare.

The authors are convinced that the implementation of a basic income could in both quantitative and qualitative terms - contribute immensely to solve major social problems of our time such as unemployment, poverty, violation of human dignity, and the unequal distribution of income. Today's labour markets draw a distorted picture of the exchange of supply and demand for work. The book presents means and options of turning today's labour markets into well-functioning markets within a regulatory framework based on a social market economy. According to the editors the economic impact and degree of socio-political innovation of the basic income equals Bismarck's reforms of social legalisation by the end of the 19th century. Therefore, the cover picture draws the comparison between the Copernican Turn in the 15th century and socio-political turn in the 21st.

Full references: Werner, Götz W., Eichhorn, Wolfgang & Friedrich, Lothar (eds.) (2012), *Das Grundeinkommen: Würdigung – Wertungen – Wege*, Karlsruhe: KIT Scientific Publishing. <http://www.ksp.kit.edu/>

Italian

BIN Italia, Reddito minimo garantito, un progetto necessario possibile

[BIN Italy - October 30, 2012]

A large number of associations, grassroots organisations, social activists and committees have launched a campaign to propose a popular initiative bill on guaranteed minimum income in Italy. A new book (entitled *Reddito minimo garantito, un progetto necessario possibile* [Guaranteed Minimum Income, a feasible and necessary project]), that is the result of a research carried out by BIN Italia and funded by Provincia di Roma, aims at making its contribution to such campaign. As a matter of fact, the research looks at the experiences of guaranteed minimum income in force in many European countries, it tells about the experimentation of implementing a guaranteed minimum income in some Italian regions, and finally it suggests a possible way to implement a national law on guaranteed minimum income in Italy by making suggestions and proposals, giving insights, and providing analyses.

The current situation is that Italy, along with Greece, is the only European country not to have any universal safety net in case of unemployment or work transition. In the midst of the hardest crisis since World War II to the present, of a political and economic impasse whose end is hard to see, it now emerges with strength and determination the need to redefine the very idea of Welfare.

Figures produced and released by the Italian National Statistics and Research Agencies tell about a country that is on the brink of social disaster, a social 'default' that is increasingly showing the

need for a new redistributive policy, and therefore, the importance of implementing a guaranteed minimum income, as also many European Resolutions demand.

The book is in Italian and has been produced by a team of researchers including Giuseppe Allegri, Giuseppe Bronzini, Sabrina Del Pico, Sandro Gobetti, Saturnino Salvagni, Luca Santini, Rachele Serino. The book *Reddito minimo garantito, un progetto necessario possibile* will be available in all major bookstores in Italy from October 25.

Reddito minimo garantito, un progetto necessario possibile [Guaranteed Minimum Income, a feasible and necessary project], Publisher: Edizioni Gruppo Abele. Release date: October 25th 2012

<http://www.bin-italia.org/>

4. Recent Events

Libramont, Belgium, October-November 2012: Three conferences on basic income

[BIEN - October 10, 2012]

The Mouvement Ouvrier Chrétien (a Christian-democratic organization) in the province of Luxembourg (Belgium) organizes no less than three conferences on basic income in October-November 2012, were held in Libramont. During the first one (October 18, 2012), Yannick Vanderborght presented the main features of the basic income debate. The second one (November 8, 2012) was devoted to basic income activism, with a presentation by Christina Lambrecht from BIEN-Belgium. Finally, the last conference (November 22, 2012) was introduced by basic income-skeptic Paul Palsterman, a lawyer within Belgium's main trade union CSC.

For further information: vquinet.moclux@gmail.com

Palma de Mallorca, Spain, 16-17 November 2012: 12th Symposium of Red Renta Basica

[Red Renta Básica - November 7, 2012]

The proposal for a universal basic income, namely an unconditional allowance to the whole population, first appeared several decades ago. The world-wide organisation, the Basic Income Earth Network consisting of 20 organisations from as many states, including the Kingdom of Spain, has been working in support of basic income for 26 years now. The basic income network (www.redrentabasica.org), the section of the Kingdom of Spain which was founded in 2001, is holding its Twelfth Symposium in the cultural centre Can Alcover, in the city of Palma de Mallorca, on 16 and 17 November. The symposium is organised by the Ateneu Pere Mascaró.

Does it make sense to talk about a basic income in a situation of economic crisis affecting ever greater numbers of people around the world, including the badly hit Kingdom of Spain? As some authors have argued, a basic income is even more desirable in an economic crisis than in boom times. More importantly, a considerable range of political organisations and some widely supported social movements, have begun to take an interest in basic income and, understanding what it represents, are incorporating it in their programmes. To give just one example, in the last elections in Galicia and the Basque Autonomous Community, at least three parties included it in their agendas: Bildu and EQUO Berdeak, in the Basque community, and the newly formed Anova, which performed successfully in the Galician elections, all champion the proposal in their programmes in different ways.

Moreover, the very large 15-M protest movement added basic income to its claims on its first anniversary in May this year. One of the big differences with regard to the founding programmes drawn up by the movement's various assemblies in May 2011, was the condensation of its demands into just five points: 1) not one euro more to bail out the banks; 2) quality education and public health; 3) rejection of job insecurity and the "reforms"; 4) adequate, guaranteed housing; and, last but not least, 5) universal basic income.

For further details, please visit: www.redrentabasica.org

Castel Madama, Italy, 13th November 2012: The Right to Work and the Right to Basic Income

[BIN-Italia – November 2012]

A conference entitled "The Right to Work and the Right to Basic Income" has been held at the Council Chamber in the City Hall of Castel Madama, a municipality in the Province of Rome, Italy, on the 13th November 2012. The event included a series of speeches given by spokespersons of grassroots social organisations, members of unions and political parties. The Conference represented an occasion to release figures and statistical data on job losses, job cuts and workers' resignation to finding a new job. Also, it included the screening of the video entitled *Se potessi avere... [If I could have...]* which highlights stories and accounts by unemployed, precarious workers and workers on redundancy payment in the municipality of Castel Madama.

The speakers included **Maria Pia Pizzolante** who is a spokesperson of TILT - a grassroots social organisation – **Sandro Gobetti** who is the coordinator of BIN Italia, **Canio Calitri** who is the General Secretary of the union FIOM-CGIL Lazio, and **Paolo Cento** who is a member of the political party SEL - Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (Left Ecology Freedom). The presence of organisations with different political background ensured a balanced conference where advocates for workers' rights and proponents of basic income could share their views. The event has been organised by the political party SEL (Left Ecology Freedom)

For more information go to: <http://www.bin-italia.org/>

Spoletto, Italy, 10th November 2012: Talk about Guaranteed Income

[BIN-Italia – November 2012]

The political and cultural association Umbrialeft has organised a meeting entitled “Talk about Guaranteed Minimum Income” that was held on the 10th November 2012 in Spoleto, Italy. The meeting was attended by Sandro Gobetti, coordinator of BIN Italia and Alessandra Massari who is the coordinator of the political party SEL - Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (Left Ecology Freedom) in Spoleto. The event has been coordinated by Stefano Vinti.

For more information go to:

<http://www.bin-italia.org/>

Malmö, Sweden, 31 October 2012: A basic income will do away with unemployment

[Simon Birnbaum – BIEN – November 2012]

This event is presented as a two-hour meeting with brief lectures, movie clips, and open discussion about basic income as an alternative to today's "activation industry", and its "discrimination of the sick and the unemployed". The event was organized by the Malmö branches of SALO (Sveriges anställningslösas landsorganisation), and the basic income group (Basinkomstgruppen) of Malmö.

For more information (in Swedish) about this and future BI events in Sweden, see:

<http://www.facebook.com/events/389060534496761/?fref=ts>

Website of BI network in Sweden: <http://basinkomst.nu>

Website of SALO: <http://www.anstallningslos.se/>

Lausanne, Switzerland, 26 October 2012: Basic income and the Left

[BIEN - October 24, 2012]

This debate is organized by the left-wing monthly “Pages de gauche”, which has published a special issue on basic income in the Summer of 2012. Guest speakers include Bernard Friot (Université Paris X), Gabriel Barta (one of the proponents of a “popular initiative” in favour of basic income), Romain Felli (Pages de gauche) and Yannick Vanderborght (FUSL Brussels and Louvain University).

Website: <http://www.pagesdegauche.ch/>

Fermo, Italy, 19th October 2012: Books Presentation about Guaranteed Income

[BIN Italy - October 18, 2012]

A book presentation about guaranteed income was held on Friday 19th of October at the

Bookstore Ferlinghetti in Fermo (Italy). The event will start at 7pm. There will be two books presentation: *Il reddito di cittadinanza* by Giuseppe Bronzini and *Reddito minimo garantito, un progetto necessario possibile* by BIN Italia. Both books are published by Edizioni Gruppo Abele. The author Giuseppe Bronzini will be attending the event. The books presentation will be followed by a debate. During the event there will be a stall to collect signatures for the campaign to propose a popular initiative bill on guaranteed minimum income in Italy.

For more information go to: <http://www.bin-italia.org/>

Rome, Italy, 15th October 2012: Kick off of the week of initiatives in favour of Guaranteed

Income

[BIN Italy - November 1, 2012]

A debate on guaranteed income and the proposal of a popular initiative bill on guaranteed income in Italy will be held on Monday 15th October 2012 at Centro Antidispersione in Andria. The debate will be attended by Luca Santini (chairman of BIN Italia) and Nicola Fratoianni (Councillor for Youth Policies in Puglia region). During the event it will be possible to sign the petition for the popular initiative bill.

For more information go to: <http://www.bin-italia.org/>

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 11-12, October 2012, “European Liberal Forum: Universal Basic Income:

For a new social contract in Europe”

The international conference “Universal basic income: for new social contract in Europe” brought together leading theoreticians on UBI and social welfare state, as well as their main opponents, to offer an open window for an international discussion and sharing of global experience on this topic in Slovenia. Feature speakers include, Philippe Van Parijs, author of *Real Freedom for All*, Joze Mencinger, a Professor at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana, Guy Standing, author of *The Precariat*, and Klaus Sambor, Secretary General of the European Sustainable Development NGO.

For more information, go to: <http://www.inovum.si/ubi/>.

See also the video section in this newsletter for several videos from this event

Leuven, Belgium 24 September 2012: Lunch seminar on Brazilian pilot project ReCivitas

[BIEN - September 20, 2012]

The HIVA (Research Institute for Work and Society) at Leuven University (Belgium) organized a lunch seminar with Bruna Augusta Pereira & Marcus Bracaglion dos Santos, founders of the

basic income pilot project ReCivitas. It was held on 24 september 2012 at noon in Conferentiezaal HIVA (Parkstraat 47, 3000 Leuven).
ReCivitas website: <http://www.recivitas.org/>

Munich, Germany, 14-16 September 2012, the 14th BIEN Congress

The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) held its 14th international Congress in Munich, Germany on September 14-16, 2012. The following reflections by Philippe Van Parijs provides a good overview of the Congress.

“Personal reflections on the 14th congress of the Basic Income Earth Network”

By Philippe Van Parijs · October 1, 2012

What did I learn from this splendidly organized gathering of academic and activists from over thirty countries? As usual, many things. About people and about things. About facts and about dreams. I discovered, for example, that Götz Werner was perhaps even better at reciting Goethe than Eduardo Suplicy at singing Dylan. I also admired how much progress had been made in the sophistication of the study of small-scale basic income experiments. Long gone is the time when all that seemed to be needed was to hand out some cash and enthusiastically report that all recipients were delighted to get it and that at least some made laudable use of it. Serious assessments of the effects of duly specified basic income schemes require control groups of similarly situated communities who do not receive anything, or who receive the same total amount but distributed according to different rules. And even the best assessment of this sort cannot claim to tell us what a real-life basic income scheme would bring about, if only because the funding side tends to be left out, or because of the recipients’ awareness that the experiment is limited in time, or because the political packaging of a real-life reform is most likely to affect individual responses. Nonetheless, these experiments are instructive in all sorts of ways and are well worth the hard work they require: conducting laborious interviews and processing recalcitrant statistics, sometimes even in flooded villages, as reported by Guy Standing, with water above the waist and the laptop above the water.

Ecological sustainability and basic income: three links

In these brief remarks, however, I shall concentrate on two points that struck me particularly because of they ran through several of the workshops I attended. The first one is the link between basic income and ecological sustainability, which featured was central in many presentations and the subsequent exchanges. On reflection, however, there is not one but there are three such links, logically independent and profoundly different from each other.

The first link is connected to the theme full employment. In good Keynesian fashion, an unconditional basic income is sometimes defended on the ground that it boosts economic growth and thereby employment. Like any other minimum income scheme, it redistributes from the rich, who save more, to the poor, who spend more, and it thereby helps sustain effective demand and business confidence. More often, however, and in contrast to many other schemes, an unconditional basic income is defended instead on the ground that it provides an alternative to

the pursuit of full employment through economic growth: Freiheit statt Vollbeschäftigung. The underlying idea is that we must manage to tackle involuntary unemployment in a way that does not rely on a growth of production that constantly outpaces the growth of productivity, indeed — as discussed in a fascinating session of our congress — in a way that is consistent with de-growth. This way consists in transforming both some involuntary employment and some involuntary unemployment into voluntary unemployment. Or, to put it differently, some people make themselves sick by working too much and must be enabled to work less, while others get sick because of being excluded from work and must be enabled to access the jobs freed by those working too much. There is one simple way of achieving this: an unconditional basic income. This is a conclusion reached in the early eighties by some of the earliest basic income advocates in the context of the first signs of awareness of the “limits to growth”. It is also, fundamentally, the view now held by Baptiste Mylongo and the décroissants. The recognition of the right to idleness is here meant as the supply-side, anti-Keynesian, earth-friendly solution to the problem of unemployment.

The second link passes through the price mechanism. Prices are a handy tool for guiding both consumption and production. They condense in a single figure millions of data about the preferences of consumers and the scarcity of factors of production. But they can go badly wrong because they do not spontaneously incorporate either the damage inflicted on the environment or the right of unborn generations to use their share of the resources of the earth. In order to correct this twofold major defect, some prices must be dramatically increased to reflect so-called negative externalities and to protect the legitimate interests of the unborn. One salient example of this is a carbon tax sufficiently high to keep the total of emissions below the ceiling that should not be exceeded, or equivalently the sale to the highest bidder of carbon emission permits whose total amounts to this ceiling. In either case, the consumers will ultimately pay the price, but something must be done with the huge proceeds. Whether at the world level or at the European level, there is one simple way, both efficient and fair, of distributing them: an unconditional basic income. The logic is fundamentally analogous to the equal distribution of the rent on land advocated in Thomas Paine’s *Agrarian Justice* (1796). Three “eco-bonus” proposals along these lines were proposed at one of our sessions, in greatest detail by Ulrich Schachtschneider.

There is, however, yet another quite distinct link between basic income and ecological sustainability. At its core is the role that will need to be given to trans-national transfers. Those who make this third link may share with the décroissants the view that we in the “North” need to reduce our consumption. But they do not conclude that we need to reduce our working time, because there is no good reason to believe that we should reduce our production as well as our consumption. This sounds paradoxical but is easy to understand. No one visiting, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo can resist the conclusion that achieving a decent standard of living for all inhabitants of the world through local production within a foreseeable future is simply out of the question. This is so because of a combination of sustained demographic growth, deeply dysfunctioning and under-resourced administrative, judiciary and educational systems, and sheer climatic conditions which, in the absence of unaffordable generalized air conditioning, cannot but keep productivity down in quite a large number of countries. To believe that fair trade or the end of exploitation of the “South” by the “North” would enable these countries to get out of trouble is sheer self-serving wishful thinking. The growth of production in poor countries can and will help, of course, but access to a minimally decent living standard for

all within a foreseeable future cannot count on it as its main means. It must also count on a massive dose of one or both of two other means: massive migration to the North and massive transfers to the South.

If the migration of hundreds of millions of Africans to Europe is regarded as undesirable for both the communities they leave and the communities they join, only trans-national transfers are left. And to be sustainable at a high level, such transfers arguably need to be both inter-personal (as opposed to inter-governmental) and universal (as opposed to means-tested), i.e. take the form of something like a universal basic income. As was the case with the first link I mentioned above, sustainability here requires a reduction of consumption in the North and the introduction of a basic income. But in the first case, the basic income was there to help increase the leisure enjoyed in the North, and in the second case to channel wealth to the South. Unlike the former, this latter argument, frankly, has nothing to do with what triggered my interest in basic income thirty years ago. But it is closely related to the argument I used in my contribution to one of the sessions of this congress to explain why the buffering device needed to save the euro needs to take the form of a universal basic income.[1]

Universality and unconditionality: the crucial conjunction

The second point I want to mention emerged particularly clearly from the session that hosted a conversation between Götz Werner, CEO of the large drugstore DM, and Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, member of the Bundestag for the Green Party. A central part of the background of any discussion on social policy in Germany is the dramatic reform of the German welfare state by Gerhard Schröder's red-green government known as Agenda 2010 or Hartz IV (2005). By reducing the duration of unemployment benefits, lowering the average level of social assistance and increasing the pressure on benefit recipients to seek and accept jobs, it is fair to say that the reform has improved the competitiveness of the German economy. But in a free trade area, making one country more competitive means making the other countries less competitive, and if this free trade area is also a single currency area, this means, for these other countries, deficits in the balance of trade, persistent unemployment and a pressure to restore their competitiveness by similarly scaling down their welfare states. For this reason, Hartz IV is no small factor in the current crisis of the Eurozone.[2]

Nonetheless, it is also fair to say that nothing ever happened in Germany that was better than Hartz IV at triggering a lively basic income debate. To understand why, note, first of all, that about half the recipients of the new social assistance scheme officially called Arbeitslosengeld II (but colloquially called "Hartz IV") are at work. The reform massively extended the possibility of the Kombilohn, of low earnings combined with benefits. As such, this is not something basic income supporters should object to, as it is inherent in a universal basic income that it would generalize this possibility. But there is a major difference. Gerard Schröder himself complained that Hartz IV was "misused" by employers, as they used it to get workers into lousy jobs, with harsh conditions, no on-the-job training and no prospects of improvement. This is precisely why basic income supporters find unconditionality so important: a benefit granted to (potential) workers irrespective of whether they are willing to accept a job enhances their bargaining power and enables them to turn down poorly paid jobs of no intrinsic interest.

Put differently, the universality of the basic income — its not being means-tested — is what enables a person to say yes to a low-paid job. Its unconditionality — its not being work-tested — is what enables a person to say no to a low-paid job. Universality without unconditionality is a recipe for exploitation, because of the potential misuse of the Kombilohn by employers. Unconditionality without universality is a recipe for exclusion, because of the trap created by means-tested handouts. Instead, the conjunction of universality and unconditionality — so central to the basic income movement since its inception — is a path to emancipation. How emancipatory it can be will of course depend on its level. As stressed by Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn, however, the emancipatory effect starts being produced even with a level of basic income far below what would be deemed sufficient to live on for one's whole life, even in a city, even on one's own. Even a much lower universal and unconditional basic income broadens life options and thereby empowers its beneficiaries: it can make it realistic, for example, to accept an internship or an apprenticeship, or to combine further education with a part-time job, or to take the risk of becoming self-employed or of starting a cooperative, in situations in which today, in the absence of a basic income, one would be forced to accept a lousy full-time job.

A “partial” basic income, i.e. a low but genuinely universal and unconditional basic income, is therefore one obvious way in which one can move forward. But there are many others, more or less suited to local circumstances, more or less achievable in a particular political context, more or less likely to trigger a sequence of further emancipatory steps rather than unleash a damaging backlash. To move forward, we must dare to be “visionaries”, as emphasized by Götz Werner, while not hesitating to be “opportunists”, as demonstrated by Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn. Guided by our vision of a just society and a just world, we must be on the lookout for political opportunities to get closer to it, without denying the size of the challenges ahead — not least those arising from globalization — and without too much optimism about immediate success. Some good surprises are then bound to come our way...

[1] “No Eurozone without euro-dividend”, downloadable from www.uclouvain.be/8609.

[2] See my response to Gerard Schröder's defence of Agenda 2010 on the occasion of his visit to Brussels in April 2012 : “L'Agenda 2010: un modèle pour l'Europe?”, downloadable from www.uclouvain.be/8611

5. Upcoming events

Strasbourg, France, Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd February 2013, Council Of Europe

Conference: Fight against Poverty and Inequalities from a Human Rights, Democracy and

Common Goods Perspective

[BIEN – November 2012]

This conference is part of the Council of Europe's ongoing project on the fight against poverty and inequality. Two members of BIEN's Executive Committee, Yannick Vanderborght and

Louise Haag, have been invited to participate in this project. Both will give plenary speeches at this conference, and basic income will be a major topic of discussion.

For more information go to: <http://rights-poverty.eu/conference/>

Final Call for submissions: NABIG Conference deadline November 30, 2012

[USBIG – November 2012]

Twelfth Annual North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress: Basic Income and Economic Citizenship

Thursday May 9th to Saturday May 11th, 2013

Sheraton Hotel and Towers, New York City

The Twelfth Annual North American Basic Income Congress, *Basic Income and Economic Citizenship*, will take place in New York City on Thursday, May 9th through Saturday, May 11th, 2013. The congress is organized by the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network (USBIG) in cooperation with the Basic Income Canada Network (BICN/RCRG), and will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Economic Association (EEA). Attendees at the North American Basic Income Congress are welcome to attend any of the EEA's events.

Featured speakers include **Carole Pateman**, UCLA and Cardiff University, co-author of *Basic Income Worldwide: Horizons of Reform*; **Sheri Berman**, Barnard College, author of *The Primacy of Politics: Social Democracy and the Making of Europe's Twentieth Century*; **Jurgen De Wispelaere**, McGill University, co-editor of *The Ethics of Stakeholding*; **David Casassas**, University of Barcelona, co-editor of *Basic Income in the Age of Great Inequalities*; **James Riccio**, MDRC, co-author of "Toward Reduced Poverty Across Generations: Early Findings from New York City's Conditional Cash Transfer Program;" **Darrick Hamilton**, The New School, co-author of "Can 'Baby Bonds' Eliminate the Racial Wealth Gap in Putative Post-Racial America?" and **Evelyn Forget**, University of Manitoba, author of "The Town with No Poverty: A history of the North American Guaranteed Annual Income Social Experiments."

All points of view are welcome, and proposals from any discipline are invited. For more information see the call for papers at: www.usbig.net.

Or contact the congress organizer, Almaz Zelleke of USBIG, at azelleke@gmail.com.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: November 30th, 2012

[Donate to the NABIG Congress](#)

The USBIG Network has started a We Pay Campaign for the next North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress. We Pay allows organizations like USBIG to collect money from donors for a cause without a formal structure (which USBIG lacks). The campaign hopes to raise \$2,500 to

pay part of the travel and registration expenses for featured speakers, students, or low-income presenters, and perhaps to host a modest reception during the conference.

You can donate to the We Pay Campaign at:

<https://www.wepay.com/x56f1op/donations/usbig-2013-congress>

Host named for 2014 BIEN Congress

[BIEN – November 2012]

The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) has named the Basic Income Canada Network as the host of the 15th BEIN Congress, which will take place in Ottawa, Ontario in the spring or summer of 2014. Kelly Ernst, of Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership, will chair the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). Other members of the LOC include Jurgen de Wispelaere, Kizzy Paris, Jenna van Draanen, Linda Lalonde, Myron Frankman, Tim Rourke, and Sharon Murphy. The LOC will name a date and a venue for the conference within the next six months and release a call for submissions sometime in 2013. For more information about the organizational efforts that will bring congress into being in a little more than 18 months, contact: Kelly Ernst <kernst@chumir.ca>

6. Videos

Video with results of basic income pilot project in India

USBIG - September 22, 2012

This video explains the results of the Indian basic income pilot project. It includes interviews with participants in the study.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItkZ5b-C3Nw>

Video: Basic Income Visualized

USBIG - October 18, 2012

European Alternatives has posted an attractive animated video presenting reasons for Basic Income on YouTube. In English, with Italian subtitles, it is currently being used to support the Italian campaign for a minimum income. According to European Alternatives, “Anyone is welcome to use and disseminate the video for our common cause.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxBbi3hIXkU>

Video: Milton Friedman discusses NIT

[USBIG – October 2012]

In this 15-minute video Milton Friedman discusses the Negative Income Tax in an interview with William F. Buckley. It's posted on the libertarian/conservative website, "LibertyPen."

<http://libertypenblog.blogspot.com/2012/05/video-milton-friedman-negative-income.html>

Basic Income in Brazil: Video of a session at the BIEN Conference in Munich, September 2012

[BIEN – October 2012]

This video is 90 minutes long. It includes presentations by Senator Eduardo Suplicy and two others. It is posted on the website FirstPost.com.

<http://www.firstpost.com/topic/place/austria-basic-income-and-its-implementation-in-brazil-eduardo-suplicy-video-NLndVviBgmk-138-15.html>

Video: Basic Income in India Presentation on BIEN Congress 2012 in Munich Germany

[BIEN – October 2012]

This 85-minute video is of a session at the 2012 BIEN Congress in Munich. Participants include Renana Jabhvala, Guy Standing, and Shikha Joshi. It was posted on YouTube by Friedel Hans.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6mYSNpcscQ>

Video: Incremental Steps to Basic Income in USA Canada Europe BIEN Grundeinkommen

Congress2012 in Munich Part10

[BIEN – October 2012]

This 75-minute is from a session at the BIEN Congress in Munich in September 2012. Presenters include Almaz Zelleke, BIEN New York, James Mulvale, BIEN Executive Committee Canada and Wouter van Ginneken, Divonne-les-Bains, France. It was posted on YouTube by Friedel Hans.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IKbzInMUnc>

Video: Pathways to a Basic Income Earth Network.

[BIEN – October 2012]

This 90-minute video is from a Session at the BIEN Congress in Munich, Germany on September 14, 2012. Participants include Bruna Augusta Perreira, Luis Henrique da Silva Paiva, Rolf Künnemann, Eduardo Suplicy. It was posted on YouTube by Friedel Hans.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uSb57jHDrA&feature=relmfu>

VideoAttac: YouTube Channel has dozens of videos on BIG

[BIEN – October 2012]

This YouTube channel has dozens of videos on BIG, some in English and some in German.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/videoattac>

Videos: Senator Hugh Segal (Canada)

[BICN – November 2012]

Two videos on Guaranteed Annual (Basic) Income in the Canadian context, featuring Senator Hugh Segal, can be found on the TVO website:

What Do You Think of "Guaranteed Annual Income"? (2 minutes)

<http://theagenda.tvo.org/blog/agenda-blogs/what-do-you-think-guaranteed-annual-income>

Politics Around Poverty (49 minutes):

<http://ww3.tvo.org/video/184975/politics-around-poverty>

7. WRITERS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for BI News, the BIEN NewsFlash, and affiliate newsletters

Volunteers are needed to write for BI News, the BIEN NewsFlash, and the USBIG Newsletter. All of the news you read here is written by a group of volunteers. We need more writers for our team. As a writer you get: byline, feedback on your writing, and a chance to help the global basic income movement. If you're interested, please email Karl@widerquist.com

8. New Links

Basic Income: “Basic Income would cure most of our current economic problems.”

[USBIG – November 2012]

This page on Scoop.it has links to dozens of websites discussing basic income. It’s curated by Bipedal Joe and online at:

<http://www.scoop.it/t/basicincome/>

Citizen-Ownership Democracy: Where citizens get a direct and equal share...

[USBIG – November 2012]

This website has several posts on Basic Income: <http://cod-democracy.blogspot.com/>

9. About the Basic Income Earth Network

Co-chairs:

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

Karl WIDERQUIST Karl@Widerquist.com, Georgetown University, SFS-Qatar

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

www.basicincome.org

MEMBERSHIP

All life members of the Basic Income European Network, many of whom were non-Europeans, have automatically become life members of the Basic Income Earth Network. To join them, just send your name and address (postal and electronic) to Almaz Zelleke <azelleke@gmail.com>, 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.

For a list of members and B(I)Enefactors go to www.basicincome.org.

News on basic income is posted as it happens on BInews.org.

BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1,500 subscribers throughout the world. Requests for free subscription are to be sent to bien@basicincome.org. Items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes and BI News are to be sent to BIEN's News Editor, Karl Widerquist.

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