BIEN - BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK
BIEN was founded in 1986 and aims to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and to foster informed discussion on this topic throughout Europe.

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BIEN's NewsFlash is mailed electronically every two months to over 1000 subscribers throughout Europe and beyond.
Requests for free subscription and items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes are to be sent to BIEN's secretary: Philippe Van Parijs, UCL, Chaire Hoover, 3 Place Montesquieu, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, <mailto:bien@basicincome.org>.
Owing to some difficulties encountered by our webmaster, our website has not been updated recently, but it will be updated again quite soon: http://www.basicincome.org.
The present NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of James Hughes, Jens-Eberhard Jahn, Jose Noguera, Yannick Vanderborght, Bruno Van der Linden, Karl Widerquist.

CONTENTS
1. Editorial
2. BIEN's 10th Congress (Barcelona, 19-20 September 2004)
   * 2.1. Plenary sessions
   * 2.2. Panels
   * 2.3. Call for papers
   * 2.4. Pre-registration
3. Other events
   * Washington (US), 20-22/2/04: Third Congress of USBIG
   * Bergen (NO), 27/2/04: Basic Income vs Workfare
   * Madrid (ES), 10 & 24/3/04: Las propuestas del ingreso basico
   * Berlin (DE), 16/4/04: Modelle der Grundsicherung
   * Louvain-la-Neuve (BE), 13/5/04: Les syndicats contre l'allocation universelle?
   * Paris (FR), 24/6/04: Le dividende universel
   * Freiberg (DE), 25/6/04: Prospects for a basic income in Germany
4. Glimpses of national debates
   * Belgium: Prime Minister's Party in a coalition with Duchatelet's Basic Income Party
5. Recent publications
   * English: Dowding, De Wispelaere & White eds, Van der Linden, Wright ed.
   * German: Merle
6. About BIEN

1. EDITORIAL

With two new English-language collective volumes on basic income versus basic endowment, and with five meeting on basic income in five months in five different European countries, the discussion on basic income continues unabated through a great many individual initiatives.

Our Barcelona congress will be another opportunity for many people interested in basic income to come together, take stock, discuss, and fill up with renewed energy. The deadline for the call for papers was the 31st of March. If you forgot it, and would still like your proposal to be considered by the scientific committee, please send it immediately to Prof. Jose Noguera.

The Executive Committee
2. TENTH CONGRESS OF THE BASIC INCOME EUROPEAN NETWORK
"The Right to a Basic Income: Egalitarian Democracy"
Barcelona (Spain), 19-20 September 2004
www.redrentabasica.org

The Congress is being held within the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures, as part of the Dialogue on "Human Rights, Emerging Needs and New Opportunities" organised by Catalonia’s Institute of Human Rights (18-21 September 2004). The location is a huge new site developed along the sea, to the East of the Olympic Village, within easy reach of the city centre by public transport. The BIEN congress itself will occupy Sunday the 19th and Monday the 20th of September. The definitive programme will be ready by the end of May 2004.

2.1. PLENARY SESSIONS
Confirmed plenary speakers include Gosta Esping-Andersen, Nancy Fraser, Desmond King, Angelika Krebs, Stuart White, Christine Boutin, Katja Kipping, Ricard Gomà, Eduardo Suplicy, Rubén Lo Vuolo, Ingrid van Niekerk, and Claus Offe, Guy Standing and Philippe Van Parijs as chairs. The possibility of a closing speech by Brazil's President Lula da Silva is still being negotiated. Prominent Catalan and Spanish politicians are being contacted for the opening and closing sessions, including Jordi Sevilla, Spain's new minister for Public Administration, known to be very sympathetic towards basic income.

2.2. PANELS
So far, seven panel sessions are completely full. Three are still being finalized. And two have been cancelled, thus freeing some space for individual papers or other panel sessions. The local organisers want to thank the splendid work of the coordinators so far. The completed panel sessions at present are the following:

1) Basic Income and the Right to Work (coord. Philip Harvey).
2) Basic Income and Democratic Republicanism (coord. Daniel Raventós & David Casassas).
3) Basic Income as a Trade Union Policy (coord. Alex Boso & Sergi Raventós).
4) Basic Income as a Policy for Fighting Against Child Labour (coord. Eduardo Calderón).
5) Innovative and Sustainable Financing for Basic Income (coord. Gianluca Busilacchi).
6) From Aspiration to Policy Implementation: Introducing a Basic Income System Category by Category (coord. Sean J. Healy).

2.3. CALL FOR PAPERS
The deadline for sending paper proposals was 31 March. Many have been received, including an exceptionally high number from Southern countries, especially Latin America. Late proposals can still be sent, but very urgently, to the programme co-ordinator jose.noguera@uab.es (title and abstract of max. 100 words in English). Acceptance or refusal of the proposals will be notified as soon as possible, and in any event no later than 31 May. The full version of accepted papers must reach the programme coordinator before 31 July.

2.4. PRE-REGISTRATION
It is already possible to pre-registrant in the Forum Dialogue "Human rights, emerging needs and new developments", within the framework of which the BIEN Congress will be held (along with five more congresses). You will then receive updated information about the Dialogue and the registration procedures and. In order to pre-register, go to www.barcelona2004.org/eng/creativos/dialogos/ficha.cfm?idEvento=185, click on "Pre-registration", fill in the form and send it. More information about the whole Dialogue are also available from this website.
3. OTHER EVENTS

WASHINGTON (US), 20-22 February 2004: 3rd CONGRESS OF USBIG
The third congress of the US Basic Income Guarantee Network took place in Washington, DC at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. It attracted a wide variety of submissions, including from medical doctors, Post Keynesian economists, and homeless advocates.

The first speaker was Philip Wogaman, Bill Clinton's former pastor and the author of Guaranteed Annual Income: The Moral Issues (1968), written when the Nixon administration was toying with the idea of replacing welfare by Milton Friedman's negative income tax. To the question "Is it moral to give people things they haven't earned?", Wogaman replies that we all receive things we haven't earned, from childhood on. People who believe they earned everything they have ignore all the unearned advantages they have received. A basic income is simply an extension of this recognition that we all stand on each other's shoulders.

The climax of the congress was an emotional meeting between Jay Hammond, former governor of Alaska and father of the world's first genuine basic income scheme, and Eduardo Suplicy, member of Brazil's federal senate and father of the world's first national basic income law. Suplicy presented the new law to phase in basic income in Brazil, while Hammond discussed the current effort to increase the size of the Alaska fund a part of a bill to close the state's budget gap.

Recurrent questions throughout the meeting included the question of the relative advantages of an unconditional basic income, of a right to a job provided by the government as an employer of last resort and of a caregiver's credit for care activities; the question of using natural resources (as proposed for Iraq and Nigeria on the Alaska model), land, broadcast spectrum rights, pollution permits or progressive taxation for funding the scheme; and the question of where political support for the scheme would be found.

(Based on accounts by Karl Widerquist for USBIG and James Hughes for cyberdemocracy.net.) For further information, http://www.usbig.net and <mailto:Karl@Widerquist.com>.

BERGEN (NO), 27 February 2004: BASIC INCOME VERSUS WORKFARE
A one-day workshop organised by Nanna Kildal, senior research at the Rokkan Institute and editor of Den nya sociala fragan. Om arbete, inkomst och rättvisa (Göteborg: Daidalos, 2001), with the participation of economists, political scientists and sociologists from the Universities of Oslo and Bergen and other research institutions. Guest speaker Philippe Van Parijs (Université catholique de Louvain) opened the morning session with a talk on "Basic income and Workfare. Two versions of the active social state". The afternoon session started with commentaries by Hilde Bojer (Oslo) and Alexander Cappelen (Oslo).

For further information: "Nanna Kildal" <Nanna.Kildal@rokkan.uib.no>.

MADRID (ES), 10 & 24 March 2004: LAS PROPUESTAS DEL INGRESO BASICO
A two-part seminar organised by the Financial and Tax law section of the Faculty of Law of Madrid's Jesuit University (Universidad Comillas), with the participation of Evaristo Palomar Maldonado, Leopoldo Gonzalo González, José Luis Rey Pérez, and Javier Alonso Madrigal, all from the Law Faculty of Comillas University.

For further information: "Jose Luis Rey Perez" <jlrey@der.upco.es>.

BERLIN, 16 April 2004: MODELLE DER GRUNDSICHERUNG
The first of a series of seminars on alternative social policy organised by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (linked to the PDS, itself heir to the East-German communist party), with a special interest in basic security/ basis income models.

For further information: brangsch@rosalux.de or "Kipping, Katja" <Katja.Kipping@slt.sachsen.de>

LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE, 13 May 2004: LES SYNDICATS CONTRE L'ALLOCATION UNIVERSELLE?
A workshop (in French) on the problematic relationship between basic income and the Trade Union movement, with the participation of Sabine Wernerus, author of a thesis on the subject at
the Open Faculty of Louvain University, Jean-Pierre Thorel, Swiss Trade Unionist and former Chairman of Switzerland's Economic and Social Council, Thierry Bodson, regional secretary of Belgium's socialist Trade Union Federation (FGTB) and Paul Palsterman, senior researcher at Belgium's Christian Trade Union Federation (CSC). The workshop is organised by Yannick Vanderborgh, researcher at the Chaire Hoover and author of a doctoral thesis on the political feasibility of basic income.

Registration: Free of charge but required, no later than 6 May 2004, with Thérèse Davio, Chaire Hoover, +32 10 473951 (davio@etes.ucl.ac.be).

PARIS, 24 June 2004: LE DIVIDENDE UNIVERSEL
A conference on the "universal dividend", organised at the Assemblée nationale by Christine Boutin, the French deputy and chair of the Forum des Républicains sociaux (a component of Jacques Chirac's right-of-centre presidential majority) who authored in 2003 a report advocating the introduction of a universal basic income. A background paper for this conference is available (Le Dividende Universel: conjuguer le respect des personnes et la croissance économique. Paris, Forum des Républicains sociaux, 2004, 30p.). It advocates the introduction of a monthly basic income of Euro 300 in France. It refers to several normative and pragmatic arguments, and deals with key objections (work ethic, reciprocity...). The document also includes a short scenario for the concrete implementation of the "universal dividend".

For further information: Lucy Nairac <l.nairac@frs-online.org>

FREIBERG (DE), 25 June 2004: PROSPECTS FOR BASIC INCOME IN GERMANY
An expert meeting, followed by a public panel, on basic income in the context of Germany's present social policy debate is being planned in the mining town of Freiberg in former East Germany, with a view to developing a German basic income network.

For further information: Ronald Blaschke and Jens-Eberhard Jahn <jahnjepw@freenet.de>

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

BELGIUM: Prime Minister's Party in a coalition with Duchatelet's Basic Income Party
The Flemish Liberal Party of ruling Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (VLD) has decided to form an electoral coalition with VIVANT, a small party whose political platform is partly devoted to a defense of an unconditional monthly basic income of EUR 540. VIVANT was started in 1997 by high-tech businessman and life-member of BIEN Roland Duchâtelet. In national (1999, 2003) and local (2000) elections, it attracted between 1 and 2% of the votes. The VLD-VIVANT cartel is running for the regional and European elections of 13 June 2004 in Flanders (Flemish-speaking) and Brussels (bilingual).

In a joint interview with the weekly magazine Humo (16 March 2004), Verhofstadt and Duchâtelet discuss some of the VIVANT proposals. While Duchâtelet stresses the advantages of his version of basisinkomen (basic income), Verhofstadt recalls that the Flemish liberals were already advocating a negative income tax in the early eighties. Even though he does not explicitly endorse the VIVANT basic income scenario, he argues that some of the reforms which were implemented since 1999 by his two governments, in particular the refundable tax credit for the low-paid, are «incremental steps into the right direction ». On the other hand,, the Flemish liberal party’s youth section « Jong VLD » forcefully rejects the idea : « Jong VLD is against an unconditional basic income for all », their chairperson Dewi Van De Vyver wrote, « because it is not means-tested. This would represent a enormous waste of fiscal resources » (De Morgen, 6 February 2004).

More info (in Dutch, French, and English):
http://www.vivant.org
http://www.vld.be
http://www.jongvld.be

5. RECENT PUBLICATIONS
A major contribution to the academic debate on unconditional grants, this collection of essays explores the idea of a «stakeholder society» and related policies from an ethical perspective. In their introductory chapter, the editors distinguish (at least) four different types of stakeholder policy: universal basic income, universal basic capital, targeted asset-building, and universal asset-building. The bulk of the book addresses the challenge of competing normative principles underpinning such proposals. These principles include the entitlement argument (each individual has a right to an equal share of scarce external assets, such as natural resources or job assets), the idea that stakeholding represents an emancipatory strategy (the "individual freedom" argument), that it promotes equality of opportunity, democratic participation, and even efficiency. The volume provides much food for thought in confronting these various lines of argument, and discussing crucial objections. It is divided into two main parts. The first ones charts various stakeholder proposals and tackles the main arguments in favor of them. The second part then takes a critical look at these policies and at the very ideal of stakeholding. It closes with a chapter by Bruce Ackerman, co-author (with A. Alstott) of The Stakeholder Society (Yale U.P., 1999). Royalties will be donated to the UK Citizen’s Income Trust. The other authors are Jurgen De Wispelaere (London School of Economics), Keith Dowding (London School of Economics), Cécile Fabre (London School of Economics), Andrew Gamble (University of Sheffield), Robert Goodin (Australian National University), Gavin Kelly (Institute for Public Policy Research UK), Julian Le Grand (London School of Economics), David Nissan (was research fellow, Fabian Society), Carole Pateman (UCLA), Will Paxton (Institute for Public Policy Research UK), Robert van der Veen (University of Amsterdam), Gijs van Donselaar (University of Amsterdam) and Stuart White (University of Oxford)
more equal power within class relations can be achieved” (p.85), and is therefore superior to a basic capital. Carole Pateman also argues that a basic income is to be preferred, because it represents a democratic right which can be compared to universal suffrage: “citizenship and the suffrage are for life, and a basic income is a right that also exists over a citizen’s lifetime, whereas a capital grant is a one-off payment at the beginning of adulthood.” (p.94). Barbara R. Bergmann is more cautious: she argues that people on the left, especially in the US, should give priority to the development of a generous Swedish-like welfare state before embarking onto a basic income. The final chapter by Edward N. Wolff considers behavioral responses to the stakeholding scheme.

GERMAN
The final essay in this Festschrift in honour of Tübingen political philosopher Ottfried Höffe consists in a philosophical discussion of basic income by his assistant and Fichte specialist Jean-Christophe Merle. More specifically, it provides a sophisticated critique of various aspects of Philippe Van Parijs’s justification basic income, as articulated in Real Freedom for All (Oxford, 1995). Here is the punchline: "The fundamental mistake in Van Parijs's model of a just society, however original and fascinating it may be, is that it tries to do without a genuine discussion of the global context in which principles of justice need to be applied. Unfortunately, global distributive justice has little to do with gardening or with a behaviour code for Malibu surfers."

6. ABOUT BIEN
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BIEN'S LIFE MEMBERS

Link to http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/BIEN/Join.htm to find out how to become a Life Member of BIEN. Essentially, it amounts to send EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK (IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussel, Belgium

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