

## **The Basic Income Earth Network's Definition of Basic Income since the GA 2016.**

This is a transcript of the text that was on the BIEN website since the GA in 2016.

'A **basic income** is a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement.

That is, basic income has the following **five characteristics**:

1. **Periodic**: it is paid at regular intervals (for example every month), not as a one-off grant.
2. **Cash payment**: it is paid in an appropriate medium of exchange, allowing those who receive it to decide what they spend it on. It is not, therefore, paid either in kind (such as food or services) or in vouchers dedicated to a specific use.
3. **Individual**: it is paid on an individual basis – and not, for instance, to households.
4. **Universal**: it is paid to all, without means test.
5. **Unconditional**: it is paid without a requirement to work or to demonstrate willingness-to-work.

A wide variety of Basic Income proposals are circulating today. They differ along many other dimensions, including in the amounts of the Basic Income, the source of funding, the nature and size of reductions in other transfers that might accompany it, and so on.

BIEN is a charitable organization dedicated to taking an educational role, and therefore, it cannot endorse any particular proposal; it is open to people and affiliates who favour very different proposal or who take information roles themselves.

A Basic Income that is stable in size and frequency and high enough to be, in combination with other social services, part of a policy strategy to eliminate material poverty and enable the social and cultural participation of every individual is often called a “full Basic Income”, and a lower one is often called a “partial Basic Income”. However, the definitions of “full” and “partial” are highly controversial, and BIEN has not attempted to define them officially.

Some short-term proposals currently focus on the so-called “partial Basic Income”. Such a scheme would not be full substitute for other redistributive measures, but would provide a low – and slowly increasing – basis to which other incomes, including the remaining social security benefits and means-tested guaranteed income supplements, could be added. Some supporters see this as a path toward a full Basic Income; others prefer the strategy of pushing for a full Basic Income from the start; and perhaps some favour only a partial Basic Income.

Many reasons have all been invoked in Basic Income's favour, including liberty and equality, efficiency and community, common ownership of the Earth and equal

sharing in the benefits of technical progress, the flexibility of the labour market and the dignity of the poor, the fight against inhumane working conditions, against the desertification of the countryside and against interregional inequalities, the viability of cooperatives and the promotion of adult education, autonomy from bosses, husbands and bureaucrats.

The inability to tackle unemployment with conventional means has, in the last decade or so, become a major reason for the idea being taken seriously throughout Europe by a growing number of scholars and organisations. Social policy and economic policy can no longer be conceived separately, and Basic Income is increasingly viewed as the only viable way of reconciling two of their respective central objectives: poverty relief and full employment.

Grassroots activism for Basic Income has increased greatly since 2010. In addition, many prominent European social scientists have now come out in favour of it – among them several Nobel Laureates in economics. In a few countries some major politicians, including from parties in government, are also beginning to stick their necks out in support of it. At the same time, the relevant literature – on the economic, ethical, political and legal aspects – is gradually expanding and those promoting the idea, or just interested in it, in various European countries and across the world have started organizing into active networks. Yet the proposal also receives strong political resistance in most countries.'