

Abolish income poverty at last!
Develop Minimum Income as Unconditional Basic Income!

*Letter from UBI-EI (Unconditional Basic Income – European Initiative)
to Members of European Parliament, dated: 12th of September, 2022*

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Call to Members of the European Parliament,

By Unconditional Basic Income – European Initiative (UBI-EI)

Brussels, 12th of September, 2022

1.	We ask the Members of the European Parliament to work towards to ensure that the European Commission takes resolutions, papers and statements of the European Parliament and the European Commission seriously and that their fundamental statements are reflected in the European Commission's proposal for a recommendation on minimum income.
2.	We call on the Members of the European Parliament to make sure that the introduction of Unconditional Basic Incomes and steps towards an Unconditional Basic Income in every EU Member State will be a part of the European Commission's proposal for a recommendation on minimum income.
3.	We expect that the members of the European Parliament will evaluate the European Commission's proposal on the minimum income politically and, if necessary, will work to ensure that the principled statements contained in the above resolutions, papers and statements are reflected in specific regulations on an adequate minimum income and in proposals for the establishment of Unconditional Basic Incomes in all member states.

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Excerpt from the **Manifesto of Ventotene**

"The almost unlimited potentiality of mass production of goods of prime necessity through modern technology, allow everyone to be guaranteed, at relatively low social cost, food, lodging, clothing and that minimum of comfort needed to preserve a sense of human dignity.

Human solidarity turned towards those who succumb in the economic battle ought not, therefore, be shown with same humiliating forms of charity that produce the very same evils it vainly attempts to remedy.

Rather it must take a series of measures which unconditionally guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone, without lessening the stimulus to work and to save.

In this situation, no one would any longer be forced by misery to accept unfair work contracts."

Known as the "["Manifesto of Ventotene"](#)", it was written mainly by the anti-fascist [Altiero Spinelli](#) in 1941 while in political captivity. Later, Spinelli was a member of the European Commission and the European Parliament. He is considered one of the founding fathers of the EU. In the writing "["For a Free and United Europe. Project of a Manifesto"](#)", as it was actually called, the ideal of European federalism and European integration was outlined. The main building of the European Parliament is named after Altiero Spinelli.

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Dear Members of European Parliament,

in the third quarter of 2022, the European Commission intends to present a proposal for a European Council Recommendation on rules for adequate minimum income in the EU (see [here](#)).

In recent years, the European Parliament and the European Commission have adopted and published resolutions, papers and statements on adequate minimum income and basic income (see annex).

1. Fundamental statements in the above-mentioned resolutions, papers and statements (see annex)

1.1 Amount of minimum income

By default, the amount of the national minimum income has to ensure an income that is above the relative poverty line (above at-risk-of-poverty threshold of 60% of national median equalised net income). This level of the respective national minimum income is to be checked with suitable reference budgets (basket of goods and services and others) with regard to the actual safeguarding of the sufficient means of income to ensure material existence and enable participation in society, if necessary, adjusted upwards.

1.2. Eligibility on minimum income: concerning person

There is an individualised right to a poverty-preventing minimum income. It is individually guaranteed.

1.3. Eligibility regarding to income and wealth of a person

In the understanding of the EU bodies the minimum income is means-tested. But: Means-tested social transfers have a stigmatising character and provoke concealed poverty (non take up). Empirical evidence for several EU-countries suggests that non-take-up of existing means-tested

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social benefits is a widespread problem in the EU (see for example [here](#)): Existing means-tested social transfer systems does not achieve in many cases these persons, who have an entitlement of social transfers, and exclude many persons from the social system - due to the means-testing social transfer system. Therefore means-tested social systems are not suitable for effective poverty protection. That is the background for the statement from Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, on his visit to the European Union (25 November 2020 to 29 January 2021): “Guaranteeing entitlements that parents and children may claim before independent bodies can significantly reduce the rates of non-take-up, which is largely attributable to the stigmatisation and shame experienced by people in poverty; universal guarantees, rather than means-tested support schemes, also have proven to be more effective. [...] In attempting to assuage political fears of chronic dependency on social assistance, such conditionalities may end up leading to higher rates of non take-up and to worsening the poverty trap. Minimum income schemes should uphold the principles of universality and equality in protection that are at the core of any system of guaranteed income.” (see [Olivier De Schutter, 2021](#))

1.4. Eligibility on minimum income: without forced labour or service in return

Forced or compulsory labour is defined as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.” (see [ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930, No. 29, Article 2](#)) Any reduction or denial of the minimum income because of refusal of labor or services in return is a penalty. Taking up labor or service in return under threat of punishment is not voluntary (see [Max Kern, 2008](#); lawyer at the International Labour Office from 1966 to 2002, was for many years head of the Forced Labour Section of the Standards Department, the secretariat of the supervisory bodies of the ILO for verifying the compliance of member states with international standards). A minimum income scheme must not violate the ILO Forced Labour Convention, which is binding under international law, must not also reduce or deny the minimum income in the case of failure to take up labor or a service in return. Furthermore: Any reduction or denial of the minimum income for a person violates the human right to social security and would plunge the person

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concerned into poverty and expose him or her to social exclusion. Human rights are unconditional rights!

We ask the Members of the European Parliament to work towards to ensure that the European Commission takes resolutions, papers and statements of the European Parliament and the European Commission seriously and that their fundamental statements are reflected in the European Commission's proposal for a recommendation on minimum income.

2. Unconditional Basic Income as a minimum income for everyone

UBI-EI (Unconditional Basic Income – European Initiative) is an initiative composed of UBI advocates from different European countries, who contributed to the design, initiation and execution of the two separate ECI ([European Citizens' Initiatives](#)) Campaigns for UBI, held in 2013-2014 and 2020-2022.

The goal of our UBI-EI is the introduction of Unconditional Basic Incomes in every country in Europe and the world. *UBI (Unconditional Basic Income) is the sum of money paid regularly, unconditionally and universally to all individuals, high enough to ensure their material existence and participation in society. UBI is a step towards an emancipatory welfare system.*

The call for introduction of Unconditional Basic Incomes in the EU was supported by around 300 000 EU citizens under the European Citizens' Initiative Unconditional Basic Income (see [ECI Start Unconditional Basic Incomes throughout the EU](#)).

Furthermore: on the Online-Plattform of the Conference on the Future of Europe was “one of the most frequently suggested mechanisms to make Europe more inclusive and socially fair is guaranteeing an Unconditional Basic Income throughout the EU“. (see [Final Report Platform, May 2022, p. 44](#))

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An Unconditional Basic Income is

- **a type of minimum income, which secures the means of income to ensure material existence and participation in society and eliminate income poverty.**
- **an individually guaranteed type of minimum income.**
- **an universal type of minimum income. Not only stigmatising and non take up of social transfers would be effective combated, also the income poverty and the social exclusion, which is caused by income poverty.**
- **an unconditional type of minimum income. Not only the income poverty and the social exclusion, which is caused by income poverty, would be combated, also forced labour.**

These are the reasons, why we demand – in reference to the resolutions, papers and statements from the European Parliament and European Commission (see annex) – to develop the minimum income as a basic income: regularly paid to each person, unconditionally, universally, individually and in amount which is high enough to ensure material existence, enable participation in society and eliminate income poverty.

These are the reasons why we call the Members of the European Parliament to strive that the introduction of Unconditional Basic Incomes in their countries and steps towards an Unconditional Basic Income in every EU Member State will be a part of the European Commission's proposal for a recommendation on minimum income.

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