

Election statement for BIEN EC “Research Coordinator”

Dear BIEN Members

My name is Jurgen De Wispelaere and I’m currently a Visiting Professor at the Götz Werner Chair of Economic Policy & Constitutional Theory at the University of Freiburg. I’m writing to ask your support for my candidacy for the post of “research coordinator” at the BIEN EC for the next two years.

It has become a bit of a cliché to state that the past decade has seen basic income mushroom in public and policy debates around the world. But that doesn’t make it any less true. Something very similar has been happening in academia, with scholarly research in basic income growing exponentially and basic income now (finally!) regarded as a legitimate area of social science and policy research across many academic disciplines. It also means as a basic income community we are now getting exposed by a much broader range of arguments and evidence than ever before, which helps us better understand the many facets of basic income as an idea, an ideal and a practical policy proposal – which is all to the benefit of promoting basic income itself.

But this recent evolution also poses some challenges for BIEN in relation to the fast-evolving research side of the debate. We are taken seriously as an advocacy and policy partner in the debate. But BIEN must also urgently reposition itself as a serious *research partner* in relation to the growing list of researchers (many of whom we have no direct links with), research institutes and research projects.

While BIEN does not have the capacity to engage in major social research itself, it can play a very useful role as a *basic income research incubator*. This means I think BIEN should start doing three things:

- 1) BIEN must be at the forefront of coordinating (with partners) the establishment of a basic income knowledge repository, a database of updated reliable basic income research accessible in different formats to cater for different audiences
- 2) BIEN should support ongoing and new research projects with key institutional partners, including seeking out funding for large multi-country, multi-year research projects into various aspects of basic income as a social policy.
- 3) BIEN could play a big role in coordinating the still disparate research efforts across different institutions and countries into a closer collaborative research network, including linking more directly with scholars working on basic income who are not directly involved in the basic income community or debate.

In short, in my view, BIEN as an international network of long standing and as the “official” global representative of the basic income community has a big role to play in supporting the next phase of basic income research while also making sure that research continues to inform the advocacy and policy debates (and vice versa).

Why vote for me? I have been involved in basic income research since my first BIEN congress in 1998 (Amsterdam) and have a long track-record of basic income policy research. For example, with Karl Widerquist I was responsible for starting up *Basic Income Studies*, the main scholarly journal of basic income research. I also have a long record of being involved with the basic income debate more generally and BIEN specifically. I co-organised not just one but two

BIEN congresses: Montreal 2014 and Tampere 2018. Since much of my past and ongoing research collaboration is with people from outside the basic income community, I am in a very good position to link into both worlds and help push BIEN anchor itself into the next phase of the scholarly basic income debate.

Vote for me! Thanks 😊