

## **What is a Basic Income?**

A basic income is an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement. It is a form of minimum income guarantee that differs from those that now exist in various European countries in three important ways:

- it is being paid to individuals rather than households;
- it is paid irrespective of any income from other sources;
- it is paid without requiring the performance of any work or the willingness to accept a job if offered.

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, have all been invoked in its favour.

But it is the inability to tackle unemployment with conventional means that has led in the last decade or so to the idea being taken seriously throughout Europe by a growing number of scholars and organizations. 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.

There is a wide variety of proposals around. They differ according to the amounts involved, the source of funding, the nature and size of the reductions in other transfers, and along many other dimensions. As far as short-term proposals are concerned, however, the current discussion is focusing increasingly on so-called partial basic income schemes which would not be full substitutes for present guaranteed income schemes 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.

Many prominent European social scientists have now come out in favour of basic income – among them two 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 an active network.

### **Presentation points**

- Money should be a Tool, not a purpose.
- What do we believe a Basic Income will do?
  - Make extreme poverty a thing of the past
  - Emancipate workers, artists, volunteers.
- 2 example proposals for financing a Basic Income
  - VAT 19% for an income of 200Euro per European Citizen
  - Quantitative easing for the people, not the banks
- Reactions to proposal from Politicians
  - Some believe people will not work if there is a basic income.
  - Some progressive parties have incorporated in their proposals
- What does practice tell us?
  - People do not stop working but they might change profession or hours of work if they have a family
  - Anxiety related illness become fewer

If you have any question, do not hesitate to ask. The speaker speaks fluent English.