

## **The basic income debate in Germany and some basic reflections**

Ronald Blaschke, Germany (Berlin / Dresden, Seoul Januar 2010)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends of the basic income,

It is a great honour for me to be able to take part in this conference and to speak to you today.

In the following I would like to give a brief overview of the basic income debate in Germany over the past 30 years and of some of the basic questions raised and answers given in that debate.

I will first list the political actors in the basic income debate in Germany and briefly outline their positions on a basic income. Secondly, I will explain contradictory approaches to a basic income on the basis of select, specific characteristics which are used to substantiate and structure basic income or similar transfers that are being discussed in Germany. Finally, against this backdrop, I will address some fundamental questions the basic income debate needs to answer.

### **1. Background and political actors in the basic income debate in Germany**

Calls for a basic income were first heard in Germany in 1982 and came from *independent unemployed workers' groups*. They rejected forced wage employment and wanted to use a basic income that is sufficient to secure a livelihood and permits social participation<sup>1</sup> (referred to as *Existenzgeld* in German, or subsistence allowance) to live a self-determined life and to be able to organise their activities themselves. They criticised the disenfranchisement and coercion caused by wage employment, as well as the state's interference in education and culture. Instead, they wanted self-organised education and culture, the ability to engage in political activity free of existential fear for one's livelihood and self-organised production in solidarity economies. Their fight for a subsistence allowance for everyone was accompanied by other demands: a minimum wage and a reduction in working hours for those in wage employment, free use of public

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<sup>1</sup> i.e. unconditional basic income strong (UBI strong)

infrastructures, gender equity when it comes to the distribution of wage labour and reproductive work, and the appropriation of the conditions and means of production. The *trade union-oriented unemployed workers' groups*, by contrast, merely pursued policies that were within the bounds of a society based on paid employment: a reduction in working hours for those in paid employment, poverty-resistant financial safeguards for those without paid employment, and the creation of paid employment.

There were many publications in Germany in the 1980s that dealt with the basic income issue. This was due, among other things, to the realisation that neither the labour market nor labour market-based, wage employment-centred social security systems could secure a livelihood for everyone. These publications also criticised repressive welfare state systems and the exploitation of the 'Third World', the environment and women.

*Ecoliberals* and academics discussed the idea of a basic income from different perspectives – the catchwords being poverty reduction, ecology, freedom from state nannyism and radical reformism. Ecoliberals rejected both the industrial capitalist economy and an accompanying social policy characterised by a paternalistic welfare state. They called for individual power of disposal over means of production so that they could be used on an individual basis or in collective solidarity subsistence economies. Industrial mass production was to be largely decentralised in favour of ecological modes of production, and reproductive work was to be recognised as being of equal value. The industrialised nations' exploitation of the Third World would have to be stopped, so that production could be tailored to meet the interests of the Third World countries and not those of the rich countries. What all these political approaches had in common was that they called for a basic income that guaranteed individual financial security and independence from ecologically damaging wage employment and paternalistic, repressive social policies.

By contrast, *trade unions* in Germany were only discussing models of a minimum income guarantee at that time that was linked to conditions and means testing and supplemented the traditional social insurance systems which no longer provided protection against poverty by means of a minimum income guarantee. They expressed no fundamental eco-social criticism of the economic and social system.

After German reunification, the basic income debate continued only in academic circles, in independent unemployed workers' groups, and in anthroposophical and Catholic groups. The alternative Greens had become an accepted part of the political scene in

Germany and hence debated only social policy-based minimum income guarantees.<sup>2</sup> Both the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) as it was then called debated basic income from the same vantage point as the trade unions. Indeed, they at least discussed a wider definition of work that included wage and salary employment, family and care work (reproductive work) and civic involvement. A minimum income guarantee, which was only to comprise a material minimum income guarantee for those without paid employment and people on a low income, was also to ensure that these types of activities safeguarded a livelihood. The PDS was also already discussing a minimum income guarantee that at least rejected forced wage and salary employment, although they still retained the principle of means testing.

The large-scale subsistence allowance conference organised in 1999 by political actors from the independent unemployed workers' movement and the precarious workers' movement did not herald a social breakthrough in the basic income debate in Germany. It must be said, though, that an unconditional basic income remains an integral part of the basic political demands in the independent unemployed workers' movement.

The political debate gained more momentum after the social philosopher André Gorz provided the justification for a basic income in his book "Work Between Misery and Utopia", a German translation of which was published in 2000. André Gorz linked the real developments in the world of work (subjectivisation, dislimitation and the increasingly precarious nature of work, the advance of knowledge-based and skills-based production) to a fundamental criticism of wage employment. From that he derived the need for an unconditional basic income (UBI strong), the right to move independently between different types of activity and pursuit (paid employment, community-based, cultural and artistic activities, education, etc.) and the expansion of public infrastructures for free and common pursuits. His declared aim was to see society develop from a society of work towards a free society of culture.

Intellectual and political resistance in Germany was stirred up with the triumphant success of neoliberal labour-market and social policies that were tied to "activation" and full employment strategies and following the ensuing announcement by the governing

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<sup>2</sup> See Ronald Blaschke: *Grundeinkommen versus Grundsicherung* (Basic Income vs. Minimum Income Guarantee), Berlin/Dresden, January 2010, for the difference between minimum income guarantees and basic income, between partial basic income (PBI) and unconditional basic income strong (UBI strong).

coalition of Social Democrats and Greens in the first few years of the 21st century that it would be launching various projects to dismantle the welfare state. On the one hand, this was based on arguments that were reminiscent of the traditional labour-market and social policy of the 1960s and 1970s, on the other hand various political actors revived the idea of a basic income. Those opposed to the idea of a basic income also reiterated and underscored their positions.

1. In December 2003, an initiative called *Freiheit statt Vollbeschäftigung*, Freedom Not Full Employment, published its theses on a basic income. The group criticised the fact that sticking to the goal of full employment was anachronistic and had unsocial consequences. Instead, the academics involved in the initiative called for a basic income and thus more freedom so that all citizens could live a self-determined life.
2. The *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen*, the German Basic Income Network, was founded on 9 July 2004, the day the *Länder*, or federal states in Germany, agreed in the Bundesrat to include the long-term unemployed in the repressive and stigmatising minimum income guarantee system (income support). Michael Opielka, a university professor, Wolfram Otto and Ronald Blaschke, both activists in the unemployed workers' movement, Katja Kipping, deputy chair of what was then the PDS, and Birgit Zenker, chair of the Catholic employers' movement in Germany, were involved in founding this initiative. They were also the network's first spokespeople. *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* had more than 50 founding members: academics, politicians from the green and the left-wing party spectrum, and activists from social movements. As of 31 December 2009, five-and-a-half years after it was founded, *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* had 2,551 individual members and 74 member organisations and initiatives, an advisory council, a funding association and a council consisting of ten members. *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* is a member of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), an international organisation founded in 1986.<sup>3</sup>

*Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* has set itself the task of promoting a debate on basic income across parties, beliefs and theories, and of promoting the introduction of a

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<sup>3</sup> BIEN was initially called the Basic Income European Network but then expanded the scope of its activities to the global level.

UBI strong. The *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* is not committed to any particular model or any particular reasoning or explanation for a basic income. Consensus has been reached on the following four criteria for a basic income that is to be available to everyone: it should secure a livelihood and participation; there should be an individually guaranteed legal right to it; there should be no means testing; and no forced labour or other service in return (UBI strong). At its general meeting in December 2008, *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* incorporated the following passage into its statutes – also against the backdrop of basic income-style concepts (partial basic income) that aim to speed up the dismantling of the welfare state: "A basic income aims to contribute to eradicating poverty and social want, to increasing personal freedoms and to making lasting improvements to each individual's opportunities for development and the social and cultural situation of the community."

*Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* has organised numerous seminars, workshops and campaigns. It holds many meetings with politicians, academics, entrepreneurs and with representatives of charities, trade unions and social movements. Special mention should be made here of the three German-language basic income conferences (held in Vienna, Austria in 2005, in Basle, Switzerland in 2007 and in Berlin, Germany in 2008) that were organised in cooperation with the Swiss and Austrian basic income networks as well as with the Attac organisations from these three countries. In September 2008, they jointly organised the annual International Basic Income Week, with hundreds of activities and events in the three countries. This year's Basic Income Week will take place from 20 to 26 September. The cooperation that exists between *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* and various NGOs was made manifest on the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 2008. Together with development, environmental and women's organisations and social movements, they drew up and published a declaration on safeguarding unconditional participatory rights. Basic income played a key role in the declaration.

*Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* has since published several online and print documents dealing with FAQs and the history of the basic income debate, as well as various comparisons of models for a basic income in Germany.

3. Shortly after *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* was founded, namely on 4 December 2004, the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR), adopted its key points in favour of basic income (UBI strong). The DBJR is a network of 65 national and regional youth organisations in Germany.
4. *Attac Deutschland* already adopted the priority issue of "enough for everyone" back in 2003. Its core ideas were that everyone has the right to participate in social life and wealth, and that sufficient material resources was available for everyone on the earth. The Attac working group *Genug für alle*, Enough for Everyone, developed the thesis that unconditional participatory rights must be realised through a minimum wage and a basic income (UBI strong). The working group's priorities are a human rights-based justification of a basic income and criticism of primary forms of participation by means of wage and salary employment.
5. In 2005, *Götz Werner*, the then managing director of *dm*, a German drugstore chain, generated a lot of media attention when he publicised his ideas on basic income. His ideas were prompted by the concept of social threefolding first put forward by Rudolf Steiner and of the anthroposophical idea of mankind. Götz Werner is the only one in the basic income movement to advocate abolishing all taxes in favour of increasing value added tax and introducing a substitutive basic income, that is a basic income that completely replaces a wage income up to the basic income threshold. Switching to a value added tax system would relieve wage employment of its labour costs.
6. At its conference in October 2007, the Catholic Workers' Movement of Germany (KAB), adopted a resolution calling for a basic income. Its concept is based on the idea of an activity society in which various forms of activity (paid employment, house and family work, civic involvement) are recognised as being of equal value. This approach to a basic income is linked to calls for a minimum wage, a reduction in working hours, the expansion of infrastructures in, for example, the education sector and partial exemption from fees for these infrastructures. The KAB also mounted a campaign to launch a Europe-wide basic income debate.

7. One can say that the basic income debate has gained a foothold in all *political parties* represented in the German Bundestag (apart from the Free Democratic Party, FDP<sup>4</sup>). Various suggestions have been put forward by well-known politicians and there are quite strong initiatives within the Greens and the Left Party. The basic income debate is gaining in importance within the SPD. As for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the former Minister-President of one *Land* (federal state) has advocated a citizens' allowance – an unconditional but very low transfer that would also replace many other social security benefits.
  
8. More and more initiatives that are emerging in the *Protestant and the Catholic church* endorse a basic income. Supporters of both denominations regard a basic income as a means of promoting the emergence of an activity society that recognises the fact that paid employment is not the only or primary force to achieve participation in society and individual development or for the performance of necessary and beneficial activities.

These groups focus on the ethical-theological approach to a basic income. In the Catholic groups' interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity, a basic income provides the material basis for a subsidiary and self-responsible economic and social system at the individual and the microsocial level. Protestant groups interpret the doctrine of justification in terms of the concept of a basic income: Man is justified before God in regard to services and therefore has a right to an unconditional minimum income guarantee.

9. *Charities and trade unions* are increasingly willing to discuss basic income as a sociopolitical alternative that creates more freedom, justice and solidarity. It must, however, be said that the approach adopted by the management levels of charities and trade unions in particular is still generally oriented to traditional labour and social policies. Trade union leaders cannot give up the primacy of wage and salary employment when it comes to the basic structure of the social system. The leaders of charities are to a large extent committed to traditional wage employment-based social insurance systems and welfare and minimum income guarantee systems. These traditional approaches are to no small degree a result of traditional values

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<sup>4</sup> The party pursues mainly liberal market policies.

and the interest in maintaining the balance of power in the political system in Germany. One must also bear in mind that, after World War II, trade unions and charities had an important role to play in Germany's corporatistic political system, and that they still do so today.

10. *Employers' associations* basically reject the idea of a basic income. They, like trade union leaders, are afraid they will lose their power to influence the structure of society – after all, the idea of a basic income is based on a much broader foundation of economic, social, civic and political rights than a society based on wage and salary employment in which the trade unions and employers' associations are the key political powers.
11. Countless *academic* studies have dealt with various aspects of a basic income, that is economic, legal, political, ethical, social, welfare state and cultural aspects. Various commissions for the future in Germany believe that a basic income is worth discussing in connection with political social structuring.
12. Many smaller *alternative* groups that basically adopt an alternative lifestyle and focus on production in a subsistence economy discuss an adequate basic income as a necessary component of a new concept of society that permits personal freedom from environmentally damaging, market-based production and consumption.
13. The idea of a basic income is meeting with increasing approval in the *culture and art scene* for two reasons: Firstly, the livelihoods of artists and those working in the arts are generally precarious. From their perspective, a basic income would guarantee a basic livelihood which is free of fear and does not depend on customers' goodwill and influence, especially since artistic production (like knowledge-based production) cannot be forced into the rigid structures of wage and salary employment and its social security systems. Secondly, artists and those working in the arts are sensitive to changes in society and efforts to create more personal freedom, more solidarity and humanity. A basic income is understood as an instrument for promoting these efforts.



It can be said that the basic income debate in Germany is highly diversified. There is a broad and multilayered spectrum of approaches to the issue of basic income, political intentions and concrete basic income models. One can likewise say that established organisations on Germany's corporatistic political scene are sceptical of a basic income or even reject it – despite the fact that the grassroots of these organisations are increasingly willing to think about and discuss the issue.

## **2. Contradictory approaches to substantiating and structuring basic income and similar transfers that are being discussed in Germany**

I would like to divide the basic income debate in Germany into two basic approaches to substantiating and structuring basic income *in their purest forms*: the liberal market approach and the democratic humanist approach. I draw this distinction of the two approaches "in their purest form" because concrete approaches to substantiating and structuring basic income do in fact overlap and produce hybrids in certain areas. The division I have chosen is based on two contrasting 20th-century proponents of unconditional transfers: Milton Friedman, a free-market economic scientist, and Erich Fromm, a democratic humanist and socialist. We will be commemorating Erich Fromm's 110th birthday and the 30th anniversary of his death this year. In the following, I will use select, concrete features of these approaches to a basic income and similar transfers as a point of reference along this dividing line.

### **Aim and amount of transfers**

In the basic liberal market approach to substantiating and structuring basic income, a basic income or basic income-style transfer means that people can be used more flexibly on the labour market (wage and salary employment). Unconditional transfers offer people a low-level means of safeguarding their livelihood or rather survival on condition that minimum standards of labour and social law, such as protection against dismissal, minimum and collectively agreed wages, and social insurance systems that guarantee a standard of living, are dismantled. Taking this approach, the preferred amount of the unconditional transfer is well below the poverty threshold according to the European standard for Germany (800 to 1,000 euros net per month plus health and long-term care insurance). This approach thus does not fulfil the fourth criterion (securing a livelihood and participation) as defined in Germany by, for example, *Netzwerk Grundeinkommen* for the amount of the basic income. Many of the hopes in regard to gaining more freedom

that are placed in a basic income when it takes the form of a partial, that is low basic income, must be described as vain hopes. In the liberal market view, these low-level transfers (partial basic income) are also justified in that low-wage sectors of the labour market are to be expanded or opened up. The function of a basic income-style transfer is to have low-wage businesses and low-wage sectors subsidised through taxes, that is by the state. The aim is to make wage and salary employment cheaper in order to expand it – a classic commodification strategy. The transfer, the name given to this view of mankind and this ethical norm, acts as a "stepping stone into the labour market". Contrary to the oft-professed liberal market principles, state interventions are thereby not restricted, but used as a stepping stone into the free market. Liberal market ideas on forced wage and salary employment are similar: Low, partial basic incomes are to replace coercive socio-administrative mechanisms, for example penalties such as a reduction in basic social security benefits. The stepping stone thus becomes the stick to the carrot of wage and salary employment – albeit more subtle and unbureaucratic in nature, a transfer that does not secure a livelihood or participation (partial basic income).

Democratic humanist approaches to substantiating and structuring basic income, by contrast, regard a basic income as a means of giving people more self-determined flexibility in regard to their own biography and life choices and in regard to various forms of social participation and activity – and in equal measure for both sexes. Based on this liberal justification, a basic income would be an adequate transfer that secures a livelihood and social participation (UBI strong), and replaces bureaucratic and paternalistic standards but does not abolish high social standards in regard to wage and salary employment. However, this system in actual fact firstly makes it possible to say no to wage and salary employment, secondly enables people to themselves choose how to combine various forms of participation and activity over the course of their life and in everyday life, and thirdly permits financially secured democratic participation in public life, including in the internal and external business affairs of a company. These three justifications and the corresponding basic income system are characteristic of democratic humanist approaches, which are based on wide-ranging social and individual de-commodification. They are therefore also attractive to waged workers and trade unions. Other political demands like better minimum social standards in wage and salary employment, the expansion of means of participation for people and the promotion of corresponding civic and civil society infrastructures are characteristic of democratic humanist approaches to a basic income. In the academic world in Germany, this broad-based approach to a basic income is discussed in connection with the debate on a

democratic welfare state. The democratic welfare state regards free citizens living in solidarity as the goal of transformative and emancipatory approaches. The democratic welfare state therefore in essence casts off commodifying and paternalistic structures. It promotes a liberal democracy in which everyone can participate in the *res publica* without fear of losing their livelihood and free from fundamental financial dependence. The connection between monetary transfers and public goods, infrastructures and services in Germany is also discussed in connection with this theory.

### **Monetary transfers and public goods / infrastructures / services**

Free-market approaches to substantiating and structuring basic income-style transfers discuss the issue of public goods, infrastructures and services either on the sidelines, not at all or in the sense of their commodification and privatisation. In the latter case, access to and the organisation of health care provision, education, culture, mobility and knowledge are to be left to liberal market forces. Those who cannot afford this access on their low basic income-style transfers or only inadequately will lose out. Even an adequate basic income would be quickly used up and fall flat if tertiary education were expensive and prices for local public transport and cultural institutions were increased. Democratic humanist approaches regard a basic income first and foremost as a financial, that is monetary means of enabling unconditional economic, social, cultural and political participation in society. The non-monetary, material aspect of enabling this participation would be largely free or inexpensive access to public goods and services. Secondly, many democratic humanist approaches to a basic income account for and take account of the fact that public goods, infrastructures and services naturally not only have to be paid for out of the market's power of disposal, but also out of the paternalistic state's power of disposal. Suggestions made in connection with the introduction of a basic income range from fundamentally democratic involvement in shaping the various infrastructures and services to various forms of self-administered action. The most radical form of decommodification and liberal organisation of the public realm is put forward in approaches with self-organised goods, infrastructures and services that are produced and offered beyond the bounds of wage and salary employment. An adequate basic income (UBI strong) and universal access to public goods, infrastructures and services is fundable – on condition that monetary and physical resources are redistributed.

## **Unconditional participatory rights and redistribution**

Liberal market justifications and approaches to a basic income draw on the arguments of the low costs, even savings to be made in the national budget. The consequences are thus correspondingly low basic income-style transfers (partial basic income), lower social security benefits over and above this transfer, and the commodification and privatisation of public goods, infrastructures and services. In addition, these approaches generally promote bottom-up redistribution, and it is rather those in higher income brackets who benefit from further tax breaks. The funding approaches for these transfers are drawn up accordingly. Very much in contrast to that, representatives of a democratic humanist approach to a basic income base their arguments on actual developments in Germany, namely that the inequality in regard to income and assets has greatly increased. That means that only the upper tenth of society is increasingly participating in social wealth, the middle and lower classes less and less so. The German "fiscal state" has lost an enormous amount of its power to redistribute wealth. Realising unconditional opportunities for participation for both sexes in the form of a basic income and universally available public goods, infrastructures and services inevitably goes along with a change in the direction when it comes to redistribution – not bottom-up, but top-down – and is thus also fundable. This change in direction can be brought about by simple democratic means, because the overwhelming majority of the population benefits from it, ultimately even the upper income and wealthy classes. In addition, it is argued, realising unconditional participatory rights would in the long term reduce the burden on society on account of the enormous health and security costs that can be attributed to the current inadequate conditions in society. Furthermore, some representatives of the democratic humanist approach argue, in an emerging activity and culture society it would be possible for more necessary activities to be carried out free of charge, needs could thus be satisfied in ways other than the previous market-based and money-based ones. This is also linked to the question of to what extent, in the long run, this money-based redistribution can remain the primary form of redistribution for providing access to resources in order to realise unconditional participatory rights. This question is also all the more pressing and significant against the backdrop of the current financial and economic crisis, which will by no means have been the biggest or the last.

### **Unconditional participatory rights and the ecological question**

One aspect of the basic income debate that has not yet been adequately enlarged upon is the ecological question. Free-market approaches to a basic income do not address this issue. Ecoliberals in Germany did in fact include the issue in democratic humanist approaches to a basic income 25 years ago. In the meantime, against the backdrop of the climate and energy crisis, the ecological question has become a more weighty one. That is why a very small number of voices raised in the debate make reference to the fact that unconditional participatory rights and the right to an ecologically intact environment and to sustainable lifestyles and modes of production and consumption cannot be debated separately. I am convinced that simple answers cannot be provided in the context of the debate on basic income: for instance by mentioning that a basic income can be funded by means of consumption taxes on natural resources or to the fact that a basic income will be linked to the payment of an eco-bonus. One can ask the fundamental question of whether adhering to our current lifestyle and modes of production and consumption might give rise to extreme ecological and social upheavals (extreme marketing of essential resources, increasing waves of migration, the epidemic rise of certain diseases) that will enormously reduce the opportunities of realising unconditional participatory rights – and rather in contrast lead to the spread of unsolidary, unequal, divided and civil war-like conditions within societies and between societies. If this assumption is true, the intellectual and political basic income movement must also quickly get involved in an intensive dialogue on the questions associated with sustainable economic, social and ecological social development.

### **Unconditional participatory rights and the question of global social rights**

Globalisation is on everyone's lips. That is in the sense of identifying global cultural, political, economic, ecological and social developments – some of them positive, some of them negative. The negative attitude to globalisation can be derived from the fact that globalisation as a whole has not brought about improvements for man and Nature on all continents, but has led to an increase in violent conflicts, hunger, and the ruthless exploitation of mankind and nature. One conclusion drawn by anti-globalisation NGOs is that the realisation of human rights must amount to more than a mere appeal to the respective states, but must be achieved by means of the concrete, practical appropriation of human rights. That means the actual appropriation of social conditions that secure a living for everyone and that guarantee individual freedom, social security and ecological

sustainability. One basic aspect of this appropriation is the realisation of unconditional participatory rights for everyone. Unconditional participation for everyone in regard to shaping and developing society, it is argued, means they are guaranteed without conditions, for example in monetary form (UBI strong) and/or non-monetary material form (universally accessible public goods, infrastructures, services) – all around the globe. One example of the concrete appropriation of a basic income as a global social right is a guaranteed monetary transfer for everyone wherever they are living – irrespective of nationality, citizenship, sex, age – simply because they are who they are. Against this backdrop, approaches to a basic income that only discuss the possibility of a basic income for certain citizens or nationals must be criticised. Liberal market as well as other proponents of a basic income or similar transfers find it hard to adopt this perspective. Global freedom of movement has already largely been conceded when it comes to capital, trade and the academic world, but not when it comes to people. However, the key to answering justified criticism (for instance in regard to the waves of migration that some are afraid will arise) lies in the approach which includes appropriated, that is asserted global rights for everyone. Freedom of movement of humans as a global political right for everyone (global citizens) is linked to a basic income to which each and every individual is entitled in the country they have their social and cultural roots in, naturally along with all the other rights afforded everyone else in that country. If, therefore, economic, ecological, social, cultural, political and civic human rights were actually realised in every country, freedom of movement would not be coercive, arising on the basis of existential fears and adversity, and by social, cultural and political exclusion or persecution, as is the case on a massive scale today. Thus, fears about the huge waves of migration that are expected would not be entirely allayed. Nevertheless, the debate can take a relaxed attitude to the issue of global freedom of movement. For a basic income debate that is based on this logic, that means it should on no account only work towards realising *only* unconditional participatory rights in the form of monetary transfers *and not only in one country*. A debate on a basic income that is conscious of the universality of its claim must in fact feel obligated to realising a basic income at national and global level *and* to realising all other human rights.

### **3. Fundamental questions that need to be answered in the basic income debate from the point of view of discussions in Germany**

In my opinion, answers must be found over the coming years to the following questions in regard to a basic income:

1. Which concepts of a basic income do indeed guarantee more freedom for people and more unconditional means of social participation for everyone, and which do not?
2. How can we ensure that a basic income gains broad acceptance both among individuals and institutions, whose attitude ranges from sceptical to disapproving, and move forward on introducing a basic income by democratic means?
3. What first steps towards a basic income are possible at global, continental and national level in the short and medium term?
4. Which basic policy approaches should a basic income be linked to in view of the capitalist economic and financial crisis and the environmental and energy crisis?
5. How can the international and national basic income movement meet the complex and global requirements when appropriating global rights for everyone – without neglecting its primary objective, namely to realise a basic income as an important, integral part of these rights?

Ladies and gentlemen,

Friends of the basic income,

I believe that sufficient intellectual and political potential has accumulated in the international and Korean basic income movement to allow these questions to be answered together with others who are fighting for a better world.