

Postulate

requesting a study on the feasibility and desirability of a pilot scheme in view of the unconditional basic income (UBI)

The unconditional basic income (UBI) is to allocate to each resident a sum sufficient to cover its basic needs, regardless of income and fortune, unconditionally and without control of the use of the money by the beneficiary. The UBI replace most forms of subsidies and current social assistance (RI, AVS, extended benefits, scholarships, family allowances, subsidy LAMal premiums, etc.).

The UBI made for several years studied and experiences internationally. It follows from the experiments including Canada, India and Namibia that the UBI increases the security and independence of beneficiaries, and generally leads to a reduction in crime, improved public health and stimulation of 'entrepreneurship'. The reports of these studies can be found on the website of the International Association BIEN (Basic Income Earth Network, www.basicincome.org).

Despite the encouraging results of these experiments, the UBI has never been fully implemented in any country. The generalization of this system would imply broad political support, and an implementation strategy for solving the problems plausibly funding and the transition between the existing social security system and the new system based on the UBI. These conditions have been made in the state nowhere. However, the concept of the UBI is defended by a growing number of economists and specialists in social insurance, who see an adequate response to the instability of the global economy, increasing income gaps between rich and poor and the chronic crisis of the welfare system in most countries. In Switzerland, supporters of the UBI, organized under the aegis of the Swiss branch of BIEN, did lead a popular initiative October 4, 2013 with 126,000 valid signatures. This initiative will probably be submitted to a vote of the people and the cantons in 2016.

In Europe, most recently, the new Finnish government scored the UBI in its program and prepares a draft to be submitted to Parliament soon. In the Netherlands, some thirty towns prepare pilots. One appears to be the most advanced city of Utrecht, where experience could begin in 2016, subject to approval of the national authority. Its objective is to simplify the rules and requirements currently in force with regard to social benefits. The experiment should be conducted in partnership with the University of Utrecht. The key question will be what are the conditions that support or otherwise discourage the efforts of people receiving social assistance for access to paid employment.

Like all pioneering projects, the UBI will be realized only if local initiatives are paving the way, show that it is feasible and fears about its supposed negative effects are unfounded. That is why we wish, through this postulate, that the City of Lausanne plays its role as a pioneer in common social policy and should set up a similar experience to that of Utrecht, adapted to the social protection system in force Switzerland and the Canton of Vaud. This experience could not implement a full UBI, but should allow at least check one of the central postulates of UBI, that persons benefiting the UBI did not enjoy his unconditional to do nothing, but that 'On the contrary' they take charge, become more independent and effective in the search of an employment, in the exercise of a socially useful activity or the creation of a company.

Such an experiment requires the development of a methodology to compare the results of an unconditional and without control regime to those of the current regime. Following the example of Utrecht, the city of Lausanne should draw on the resources of the University of Lausanne, which could make this project an axis of social science research. The results should not be measured only in terms of employment but also in terms of health, autonomy, social integration and civic participation. This involves exchanging information with universities and public authorities that have already explored that area.

Such experience evidently supposes, like all pilots, a system of specific authorities, in this case those of the authorities that finance most social benefits or the Canton and the Confederation. But it is not clear a priori why the authorities would refuse permission, since the experience should not involve any additional financial burden for them.

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