

**European Citizens' Initiative**  
**(TEU: Art. 11, Para 4; TFEU: Art. 24, Para 1)**

**Title of the ECI**

Unconditional Basic Income

**Subject matter**

Gain support for the introduction of a universal, individual, unconditional basic income to ensure a life in dignity and participation in society within all member states of the EU.

**Objectives**

The European Commission is requested by the signatories to use all its existing means and possibilities to speed up the introduction of an Unconditional Basic Income. It needs a legal rights act in order to achieve the aims of the EU, to combat social exclusion and discrimination, and to promote social justice and social protection, offering each person unconditionally secured material existence, together with full participation in society.

**Relevant Provisions of the Treaties**

(Please see attachment)

Treaty on European Union (TEU): Article 2, Article 3 (3)

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU): Article 5 (3), Article 151, Article 153 (1), Article 156

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union: Article 1, Article 2 (1), Article 5 (2), Article 6, Article 8 (1), Article 15 (1), Article 34 (1), (2) and (3)

**Contact details of the members of the Citizens' Committee**

1. Belgium
2. Denmark
3. Germany
4. France
5. Great Britain
6. Italy
7. Ireland
8. Luxembourg
9. Netherlands
10. Austria
11. Poland
12. Slovenia

13. Slovakia

14. Spain

In addition, members of the European Parliament can participate in the Citizens' Committee.

### **Sources of support and funding**

A free online-collection system will be provided by the EU-Commission. All activities related to supporting the ECI are based on volunteering.

## **ANNEX**

The persons presenting the proposal for our ECI are citizens out of 14 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom), different in their cultures, languages, social interests and political and religious / philosophical background, but sharing the common view presented here.

The Unconditional Basic Income does not replace the welfare state but does complete and transform the same from a compensatory into an emancipatory welfare state.

The emancipatory Unconditional Basic Income is defined by the following four criteria: **universal, individual, unconditional, high enough to ensure an existence in dignity and participation in society.**

**Universal:** In principle every person, irrespective of age, descent, place of residence, profession etc. will be entitled to receive this allocation. Thus we claim a European-wide, guaranteed, unconditional basic income.

**Individual:** Every woman, every man, every child has the right to a basic income on an individual basis, and definitely not on a couple or household basis. The Unconditional Basic Income will be independent of their circumstances: of marital status, cohabitation or household configuration, or of the income or property of other household or family members. This is the only way to ensure privacy and to prevent control over other individuals. It enables individuals to make their own decisions.

**Unconditional:** We regard basic income as a human right which shall not depend on any preconditions, whether an obligation to take paid employment, to be involved in community service, or to behave according to traditional gender roles. Nor will it be subject to income, savings or property limits.

**High enough:** The amount should provide for a decent standard of living, which meets society's social and cultural standards in the country concerned. It should prevent material poverty and provide the opportunity to participate in society. This means that the net income should, at a minimum, be at the poverty-risk level according to EU standards, which corresponds to 60% of the so-called national median net equivalent income. Especially in countries where the majority have low incomes, and therefore median income is low, an alternative benchmark (e.g. a basket of goods) should be used to determine the amount of the basic income, to guarantee a life in dignity, material security and full participation in society.

As a result of current employment patterns and inadequate income maintenance systems (conditional, means-tested, not high enough), we regard the introduction of the Unconditional Basic Income essential in order to guarantee fundamental rights, especially a life in dignity, as set forth in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, if the Charter shall have relevance.

Above all, the Unconditional Basic Income will help to prevent poverty and grant more freedom to each individual, to determine his or her own life, and strengthen the participation of all in society.

The Unconditional Basic Income will help to avoid social divisions, debates based on envy and abuse and their consequences, as well as superfluous costly, repressive and exclusive controlling and inspection bureaucracy. As a transfer payment free of discrimination and stigmatization, the Unconditional Basic Income prevents hidden poverty.

The Unconditional Basic Income brings about social freedom, helps citizens to identify with the European Union and ensures their political rights. It supports the realisation of fundamental rights. "The dignity of the human person is not only a fundamental right in itself but constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights." (official explanation on article 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union).

The introduction of the Unconditional Basic Income and possible introductory steps are within the respective areas of responsibility of the members of the European Union.

As there are different ways of financing this Unconditional Basic Income, we do not suggest any specific one in this ECI, except that the coordination could be shared between the EU and the Member States.

## Attachment

### Treaty on European Union (TEU)

„Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union“ 2010/C83/01 (30<sup>th</sup> March 2010)

#### Article 2

*The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.*

#### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The Unconditional Basic Income as defined by its four criteria realizes all of the values listed above. It provides material security and full participation in society without conditions – combined with equality of all individuals.

#### Article 3

***3. The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance.***

***It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.***

*It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States.*

*It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.*

#### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

An Unconditional Basic Income, supporting the reduction and redistribution of working hours, will facilitate a new form of full employment. The Unconditional Basic Income combats the social exclusion and discrimination, inherent in the current income maintenance systems.

We believe that there is a need for a legal rights act of the EU to implement an Unconditional Basic Income to achieve the goals of the EU as to attain full employment, combat social exclusion and discrimination and support social justice and social protection (Art. 3 Para 3 TEU). Also in order to support the rights of children, solidarity between generations and between Member States, we take the initiative and ask the EU-Commission to present a legal rights act for an Unconditional Basic Income within the framework of its authorization in the area of social policy (Art. 151 ff TFEU) preserving the rights of the Member States.

### **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)**

„Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union“ 2010/C83/01 (30<sup>th</sup> March 2010)

#### **Article 5**

#### ***(3) The Union may take initiatives to ensure coordination of Member States' social policies.***

##### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The social policies of the Member States can be coordinated in order to combat social dumping. The common measure for all would be the introduction of the Unconditional Basic Income according to the four defined criteria. The responsibility for adapting the existing national social system to the Unconditional Basic Income lies with the Member States.

#### **Article 151**

*The Union and the Member States, having in mind fundamental social rights such as those set out in the European Social Charter signed at Turin on 18 October 1961 and in the 1989 Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, shall have as their objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, so as to make possible their harmonisation while the improvement is being maintained, proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment and the combating of exclusion.*

*To this end the Union and the Member States shall implement measures which take account of the diverse forms of national practices, in particular in the field of contractual relations, and the need to maintain the competitiveness of the Union's economy.*

*They believe that such a development will ensue not only from the functioning of the internal market, which will favour the harmonisation of social systems, but also from the procedures provided for in the Treaties and from the approximation of provisions laid down by law, regulation or*

*administrative action.*

#### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

An Unconditional Basic Income, supporting the reduction and redistribution of working hours, will facilitate a new form of full employment, with extra workplaces. This choice of more workplaces strengthens the countervailing power of employees in negotiating improvements in their working and living conditions. The Unconditional Basic Income offers social security, free of discrimination and stigmatisation. The actual implementation of the Unconditional Basic Income lies in the hands of the Member States taking into account their current national practices.

The “**European Social Charter**” of 1961 was revised in 1999. Article 30 is quoted below:

#### **Article 30 - *The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion***

*With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the Parties undertake:*

- a. to take measures within the framework of an overall and co-ordinated approach to promote the effective access of persons who live or risk living in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, as well as their families, to, in particular, employment, housing, training, education, culture and social and medical assistance;*
- b. to review these measures with a view to their adaptation if necessary.*

#### **Article 153**

*1. With a view to achieving the objectives of Article 151, the Union shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields:*

*(c) social security and social protection of workers;*

*(j) the combating of social exclusion;*

*(k) the modernisation of social protection systems without prejudice to point (c).*

#### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The Unconditional Basic Income would be an important measure in order to achieve the goals of the European Social Charter, Article 30 a, over and above the compensatory functions offered by the current income maintenance systems – giving real access to social and cultural participation in society. The TEU, Article 3 (3) again confirms these goals.

Concerning the “adaptation of measures” according to Article 151 TFEU/European Social Charter Article 30 b the Unconditional Basic Income does not protect only a part of society against poverty and social exclusion. It establishes social cohesion between **all** individuals, instead of increasing inequality between poor and rich, as now.

Also in this respect the Unconditional Basic Income is the far better alternative to the current income maintenance systems. It would be a necessary part of the modernisation (Article 153 TFEU) in regard to social protection systems. With a proposal for a legal rights act, the Commission would assist the supplementary function of the Union concerning the activities of the Member States in the fields mentioned above.

## **Article 156**

*With a view to achieving the objectives of Article 151 TFEU and without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties, the Commission shall encourage cooperation between the Member States and facilitate the coordination of their action in all social policy fields under this Chapter, particularly in matters relating to:*

- *employment,*
- *labour law and working conditions,*
- *basic and advanced vocational training,*
- *social security,*
- *.....*

## **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**

„Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union“ 2010/C83/01 (30<sup>th</sup> March 2010)

## **Article 1**

*Human dignity*

*Human dignity is inviolable.*

*It must be respected and protected.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The dignity of the individual must include the opportunity of living freely and responsibly within society. The Unconditional Basic Income grants freedom to each individual and a life in responsibility by removing existential and administrative constraints as well as exclusion from social life.

## **Article 2**

*Right to life (1)*

*Everyone has the right to life.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

This human right to life is undisputed. Within our present economic system, life depends on obtaining material existence through funds. Of course, one could also obtain this using vouchers. The users of such vouchers would be discriminated against compared with individuals who are free to decide how to use their finances from different sources of income. The legal right to a Unconditional Basic Income transfer payment ensures a dignified life with the opportunity to participate in society, and also fulfills the right to a life of justice, free from discrimination.

## **Article 5**

### *Prohibition of slavery and forced labour*

*(2) No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

Hard labour according to the International Labour Organisation: ‚Every kind of labour or service which is obtained from a person by coercion by making it a punishable offence and for which the person is not available voluntarily.‘ (IAO, Übereinkommen über Zwangs- oder Pflichtarbeit, 1930, Nr. 29).

The withdrawal of means-tested benefits, which form part of many current income maintenance systems, is punitive to the recipient. This will not occur with Unconditional Basic Income.

## **Article 6**

### *Right to liberty and security*

*Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The Unconditional Basic Income supports the free choice of personal life-style, the arrangement of one’s social relations and whether to engage in social and economic cooperation. With freedom comes responsibility in solidarity. In addition to the protection provided by the current social insurance systems and social services, the UBI is the best guarantee of financial security during times of illness and unemployment.

## **Article 8**

### *Protection of personal data*

*(1) Everyone has the right to the protection of personal data concerning him or her.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

In contrast to current income maintenance systems, the Unconditional Basic Income transfer payment requires only a few personal details, which should make it easier to protect them. In addition, it will end the



intrusion and interference by social administration systems into the private spheres of one's personal life.

## **Article 15**

*Freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work*

*1. Everyone has the right to engage in work and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

The Unconditional Basic Income transfer payment makes it easier to practise a freely chosen, or at least acceptable, occupation. Under many current income maintenance systems, the need for material goods and services in order to survive, together with various administrative constraints, restricts one's freedom of choice of occupation and forces one to accept unsuitable paid work.

## **Article 34**

*Social security and social assistance*

*(1) The Union recognises and respects the entitlement to social security benefits and social services providing protection in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency or old age, and in the case of loss of employment, in accordance with the rules laid down by Union law and national laws and practices.*

*(2) Everyone residing and moving legally within the European Union is entitled to social security benefits and social advantages in accordance with Union law and national laws and practices.*

*(3) In order to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognises and respects the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the rules laid down by Union law and national laws and practices.*

### Reasons for Unconditional Basic Income:

An Unconditional Basic Income is the best method of fulfilling the fundamental right to financial security and social support, in addition to each country's respective social insurances and social services. Everybody will receive it and therefore no one will be excluded or discriminated against. This is in contrast to the stigmatizing character of many current income maintenance systems, which discourages many potential applicants with legal entitlement from taking up their benefits, and this low take-up increases social exclusion.