

# Memorandum

**“The dominant economic model is destabilizing societies. And the planet.**

**It is time for change.” <https://www.earth4all.life/>**

**It is time for a basic income, too!**

**March 2024**

## **Basic income as a necessary component of a socio-ecological transformation and key element for climate justice**

Global warming and the ongoing exploitation and destruction of nature are caused by the prevailing mode of production and life. It disregards nature in its inherent value, uses it as a mere resource. However, this way of production and life also destroys the basis of humankind's existence and impairs the quality of life of many people, present and future generations. A fundamental societal transformation of the way of production and life is therefore necessary for the survival of humankind.

Not only our home planet is being destabilised, but also societies, regions and countries. Socially and ecologically unjust conditions prevail globally, which have denied and continue to deny many people a life in an intact environment and their fair and adequate share of global social and natural wealth, including our children and our children's children. Particularly affected are those who were disadvantaged in the past and are disadvantaged now, and without a real change of course will be even more affected by the ecological consequences and climate change – the countries of the global South and the poorer people who have contributed almost nothing to climate change.

### **Societal transformation, a necessity for survival, as socio-ecological transformation**

A societal transformation that is necessary for survival and that is to lead to a socially and ecologically sustainable way of production and life must, for the reasons mentioned, end up to a socially and ecologically just world and society. Likewise, climate justice demands that

the extent of climate change must be minimised equally for all and that the consequences of climate change be borne by the polluters. Also from this point of view, the design of a socially and ecologically just world and society is a categorical imperative of a socio-ecological transformation: social justice and ecological justice are two sides of the same coin that must be realised simultaneously.

### **A fundamental change in values is necessary**

One cause of the ecologically disastrous production and consumption based on it is a fatal, ultimately profit- and return-oriented growth ideology. According to this narrative of the prevailing politics, poverty and social inequalities should and would be overcome with an increase in the consumption of natural resources and the destruction of nature. However, the overexploitation of nature and its destruction went and goes hand in hand with the economic exploitation of people, the economic exploitation of undue exercise of power over of poorer countries by richer countries, by corporations and their shareholders.

A socio-ecological transformation must be oriented towards the needs of all people as well as towards fundamental ecological requirements – and must stop climate change immediately. Care for people and care for nature belong together. These are sustainable values, not the accumulation of superfluous goods to maintain the prevailing system of production and consumption.

### **Basic income as a necessary component of a socio-ecological transformation and key element for climate justice**

A socio-ecological transformation must – and here we fully agree with the scientists and experts of the latest report to the Club of Rome – enable all people, including future generations, to live in an intact environment and at the same time grant them a socially just share of the wealth of society and nature. For this reason alone, it must be a democratically and sustainably designed transformation.

This perspective leads to the question of how all people can be granted a fair and adequate share of social and natural wealth. We are of the opinion – also in agreement with the scientists and experts of the recent report to the Club of Rome – that a basic income for all

people is a form of this allocation. It must necessarily be accompanied by a radical redistribution of income and wealth from the upper to the lower and middle strata of society. Or as the 238 academics from Europe stated in an open letter: To solve social problems, we do not need further growth. What we need is a fairer distribution of the income and wealth we already have. It is already enough for everyone.

Initially, the basic income can also be co-financed by taxing unecological or climate-damaging production and consumption. The revenues from these taxes are returned to all members of society with the basic income. This not only curbs climate-damaging production, but also redistributes wealth from top to bottom, since it is often the richer classes of the society consume unecologically and are responsible for high climate-damaging emissions. Likewise, a fundamental redistribution into the public budget opens up great scope for public investment in ecologically sustainable production and services, in which all members of society become co-owners: Surpluses from this production would then also be used to co-finance the basic income. The co-ownership of all would also promote the democratic shaping of production and services by all members of society.

In a global perspective, in order to build basic income systems in poorer countries, there must be a (re)distribution from richer countries and global corporations to countries that have been historically made poor through actions of richer nations and global corporations – as well as for building a socially and ecologically sustainable society and economy in these countries.

In order to achieve a major ecological impact, the basic income must at least secure the basic needs and the participation of each and every individual in the respective society. Only then can the consent to the ideology of growth and the individual economic compulsion to gainful employment be overcome. Only then can we expect broad support for the necessary departure from ecologically disastrous production and consumption. Only then can fears of the necessary change be minimised and at the same time the advantages of ecologically and socially sustainable production and lifestyles be anticipated.

Only if the basic income secures everyone's existence and social participation will it also enable people to enjoy economic and political freedom, which will in turn result in a democratic shaping of public affairs by the people. This is because the political pressure for

economic growth and job creations, no matter how ecologically disastrous they are, is greatly weakened.

Only if basic income secures the existence and social participation of all people is a broad democratic participation of all in shaping the socio-ecological transformation possible.

Only if the basic income secures livelihood and social participation, will it also enable all working people to radically reduce their working hours or prevent working hours from being extended out of necessity. With a basic income that ensures the livelihood and social participation of all, everyone can pursue diverse, time-consuming and self-determined social, caring, cultural, artistic and political activities beyond individual economic necessities. For a socio-ecological transformation aims at a socialization beyond ecologically disastrous productivism and individual consumerism – and it also has to.

Basic income is *one* of the necessary components of a global, national and regional policy mix for socio-ecological transformation. This includes, for example, the development of an ecologically sustainable economy oriented towards the common good worldwide, the debt relief of poor countries, fair and democratic global trade and financial relations, the development of public and social infrastructure and services including sufficient health care for all, the emancipation of women, the strengthening of women's rights and the gender-equitable division of labour as well as the democratisation of the economy and society in all areas. These and other things are necessary components of a socio-ecological transformation, including a policy to stop climate change and overcome the climate crisis.

These are all good reasons for the basic income movement, the ecological movement, the feminist movement and other social movements to join their forces. Let's fight together for a world in which all people can live a good life on a healthy planet.

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***It is time for change.”*** <https://www.earth4all.life/>

**It is time for a basic income, too!**

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## Affiliated Organisations of BIEN



Network Basic Income, Germany



Basic Income Korean Network



Network Basic Income and Social Cohesion – B.I.E.N. Austria



Basic Income Network Italy



The First Hungarian Unconditional Basic Income Association



Association Basic Income, Netherlands



India Network for Basic Income



Social Policy Initiative, South Africa



Equal Right, United Kingdom



Basic Income Network, Spain

# BIEN Japan



MOUVEMENT FRANÇAIS  
POUR UN REVENU DE BASE

French Movement of Basic Income

## Other Organisations and Networks

**UNCONDITIONAL  
BASIC INCOME**  
EUROPEAN INITIATIVE

Unconditional Basic Income  
European Initiative



Institute for Political & Economic  
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Basic Society, Korea



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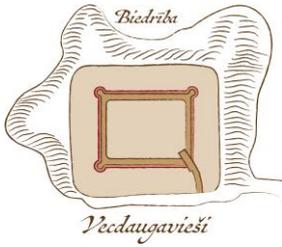
Basic Income Party, Korea



Peace Academy Linz, Austria



Eureka, Network of Activists for  
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Association Vecdaugavieši, Latvia



Labournet Germany



Initiative Group Unconditional Basic Income Rhein-Main, Germany



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Collective Ecology and Peace, Spain



Pirate Party, Germany



Alliance Basic Income, Germany



Trade Union Dialogue Basic Income, Germany



Thuringian for Basic Income, Germany



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Basic Income Observatory, Attac Spain

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