

## **Ethical and social considerations underlying the unconditional Basic Income**

Dr. Hans Ruh\*

*\*Hans Ruh, ethicist, is both a theorist and a practitioner. Formerly head of the Institute for Social Ethics in Zurich, he now initiates company managers in ethics and has founded Bluevalue, an investment fund for ethical investments. He participated in a FORUM held in Berne (Switzerland) on 29 August 2006.*

The classic social State seeks to compensate for consequences of the market economy that are considered unjust on the ethical and political level. To this end it intervenes in the market, regulates the distribution of goods and when appropriate gives charitable assistance. This involves a vast administrative task and huge effort. On one hand the process is often regarded as economically too onerous ; on the other the State is criticised for giving assistance to the individuals concerned. The failure of the market (as regards social justice) is replaced by failure of the State (as regards efficiency). Is there an alternative?

The unconditional Basic Income is seen by different political actors as a possible substitute for several elements of our social State. Instead of just tackling the symptoms, it gets to the roots of the matter. It is not "paternalistic" and because it is more efficient it relieves some of the economic burden. "Production costs" tend to diminish, even disappear altogether. This approach would help to resolve many existing problems and possible future ones. Furthermore, it would enable different economic and socio-political goals to be pursued.

For the Association for Social Justice (*Association pour la justice sociale*): Gerda Hauck, President

Adresses:

-Réseau pour la responsabilité sociale dans l'économie (RSE)

Schläflistrasse 6, 3013 Bern, Tel. 031 318 55 70, buero@nsw-rse.ch / [www.nsw-rse.ch](http://www.nsw-rse.ch)

-Association pour la justice sociale

Wabersackerstrasse 21, 3097 Liebefeld, Tel. 031 972 82 23, info@haelfte.ch / [www.haelfte.ch](http://www.haelfte.ch)