François DENUIT

Thesis:

The European Union and Minimum Income Protection. An Assessment of the Prospects for a European Universal Basic Income (EUBI)

Email: francois.denuit@erasmusmundus-gem.eu
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?trk=nav_responsive_tab_profile&id=107328164
Twitter: https://twitter.com/DenuitFrancois

Academic Degrees

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies, College of Europe, Warsaw, Poland, Magna Cum Laude

- Thesis: Quels fondements pour une Justice Distributive en Union Européenne? Analyse de la philosophie politique égalitariste dans une perspective européenne

Master in Management Science, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM), Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium, Magna Cum Laude

- Thesis: Economics of Growth, Economics of Degrowth: Questioning the Paradigms
- Erasmus: Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Bachelor in Business Engineering, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM), Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels, Belgium

Work Experience

Press Office and Public Relations Officer, Stand Up for the United States of Europe, Brussels, Belgium

Consultant, Moriset & Co, Brussels, Belgium

Intern in green consultancy and carbon offsetting solutions, CO2 Logic sa/nv, Brussels, Belgium

Specific Research Title, Area and Promotor(s)

Provisionary title:

The European Union and Minimum Income Protection. An Assessment of the Prospects for a European Universal Basic Income (EUBI)

Area:

Policy-relevant normative theory and European social policy

Promoters:

Prof. Edward Page (University of Warwick)
Prof. Amandine Crespy (Université Libre de Bruxelles)
Description of research work

Since the economic and financial crisis, a growing number of academic contributions discuss the idea of a European minimum income to combat poverty and drive European solidarity. In parallel, the universal basic income, an income granted to all members of a political community without strings attached, seems to present a real heuristic interest in contemporary debates about social justice and welfare state reforms. Whilst discussions concerning an EU involvement in minimum income protection typically rely on conditional forms of subsistence benefits, basic income studies remain mostly concerned with its justification and design at the national level. This research bridges the gap by investigating the conditions for establishing a basic income at the level of the European Union (EU).

Following an interdisciplinary approach combining insights from applied political theory, economics and political science/European studies, the aim of this contribution is to critically analyse to what extent a European universal basic income (EUBI) can be a normatively desirable, an economically sound, and an institutionally feasible policy to address the problems of poverty and social exclusion at European level. The dissertation rests on the hypothesis that the specific characteristics of the basic income - its individual, universal and unconditional features - might offer a just, efficient and feasible answer to the crisis of welfare capitalism in the EU.

The first chapter focuses on the current social map and its challenges in the EU. It defines the ‘new social question’ associated with the incapacity of paid employment and existing welfare models to lift everyone out of poverty and social exclusion, and it analyses the challenges posed by current dynamics on the labour market, technological progress, changes in family structure and the rise of the precariat. It also reviews the successes and (mostly) failures of EU strategies to fight poverty and social exclusion.

Chapter two proposes to investigate solutions using a ‘token-type’ analogy distinguishing between the notion of ‘social minimum’ (i.e. the type) and two different tokens thereof, namely conditional and unconditional schemes. It then assesses both tokens by using three yardsticks: target efficiency, return to employment and emancipatory power. Taking a conditionally prescriptive stance, this chapter suggests that if one considers the basic income to be superior to its rivals, it should then be further “tested”, which is the object of the next three chapters.

Chapter three first shows that a basic income is compatible with various conceptions of distributive justice at national level. Then, it argues that EU institutions generate transnational economic, political and social relations that provide a motive for sharing resources among Europeans whilst it lacks institutions sophisticated enough to satisfy the related claims. If the introduction of an EUBI should not be seen as a direct consequence of this fundamental asymmetry, it might constitute a reasonable form of distribution which can find support among both internationalists and federalists.

Chapter four evaluates the prospects for the EUBI as an instrument of economic reform in the European single market as a whole and in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in particular. It argues that the EUBI would foster upward economic convergence, act as an automatic macroeconomic stabiliser capable of absorbing shocks in times of crisis and provide the transnational transfers required in an incomplete monetary union.

Chapter five examines the institutional feasibility of the EUBI. It looks at the legal basis and the administrative capacity of current EU institutions before proposing routes and avenues for the implementation of a concrete proposal specifying at which scale it should be organised (e.g. EU/EMU/enhanced cooperation), who should receive it and which funding opportunities based on the EU’s own resources can be considered.

Finally, chapter six integrates the insights of the previous chapters to propose a new conceptual foundation for the European Social Model conceived as an additional distributive welfare layer complementing both existing national and EU welfare arrangements and in which the EUBI embodies a commitment to EU social citizenship.

Overview of Publications


DENUIT, F. « A quand un triple-A social pour l’Union Européenne, Monsieur Juncker? », L’Echo, 26 December 2015, Brussels, Belgium

DENUIT, F. « Pour un revenu de base émancipateur », *La Libre belgique*, 17 September 2015, Brussels, Belgium


DENUIT F. & GROSJEAN, P. « RTL, un groupe atypique au top du marché européen de l’audiovisuel », *Lobby*, n° 28, October 2014, Brussels, Belgium


DENUIT, F. « Avec les enfants du Paraguay », *La Revue Générale*, n° 12, December 2007, Hamme-Mille, Belgium