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Tax justice

The European Parliament has agreed on its new special tax committee

The fight for tax justice continues... Today, the European Parliament officially brought back to life again its special committee to investigate tax rulings and other harmful measures, now called TAXE 2. After an intense battle – where the Greens pushed hard to ensure the Parliament's investigations could continue – we welcome the fact that we now have another six months to uncover past scandals and monitor current and upcoming EU tax reforms. At the TAXE 2 constitutive meeting today, Green Parliamentarian Eva Joly was elected Vice-Chair and the Greens will have two other full members: Philippe Lamberts and Sven Giegold.

The Greens have high ambitions for this TAXE 2 committee and have presented a detailed work programme for the next six months.
Among our main objectives, we want to ensure that:

1. The European Parliament has full access to the tax documents it requested, in order to check whether Member States have been honest and have removed the tax measures that were deemed harmful and to see whether they are not competing against each other to offer tax exemptions to companies, in breach of EU internal market rules. As revealed by some media, we know that countries like Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands have repeatedly blocked attempts at more progressive tax reforms and we want to question them about this.

2. Full political responsibility is established for those who deliberately granted tax privileges to big companies and were aware of the consequences of their actions on EU citizens: less tax collected from companies, so less money for public expenditure in areas like health and education and also, in the end, higher taxes on ordinary citizens.

3. Big companies' strategies for tax dodging are available for public scrutiny and that these companies are publicly questioned about their choices. Companies can no longer keep saying that they comply with all legislation. EU citizens demand that companies behave more responsibly, paying taxes where they really do business.

4. The role of intermediaries, all those helping governments to create tax breaks or helping companies to use them, is exposed and changes are proposed to stop these behaviours. We are especially thinking of banks, accounting firms or corporate tax lawyers who know the system very well and are paid to find loopholes.

For this, we are suggesting that TAXE 2 organises a series of hearings with high level politicians like Mr Juncker, former Prime Minister of Luxembourg and current president of the European Commission, or Mr Dijsselbloem, Finance Minister in the Netherlands and Chair of the Eurozone group. We also would like to audition countries that are well-known for their tax haven practices like Bermudas, Jersey, Gibraltar or Malta and Cyprus.

Please find here the complete work programme presented by the Greens.

The Green leadership in this special committee is part of our campaign for tax justice in Europe and we will also promote several key tax reforms like greater transparency of big companies' activities so that we know where they pay taxes, or greater fiscal harmonisation at the European Union level. 2016 will, with any luck, be an interesting year for tax justice!

Please click below for a colourful summary of 10 steps towards tax justice.

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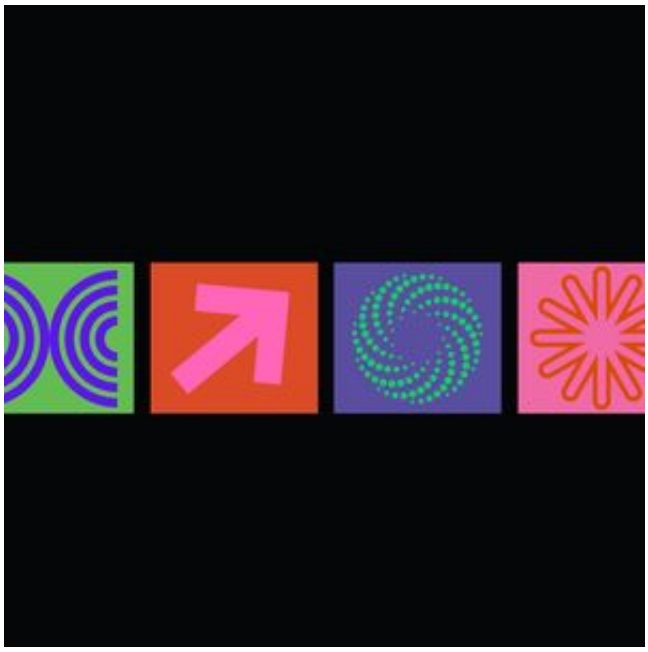
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