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[Press release](#) | 13.12.2017

Now the EU must turn plans into action

Panama Papers

The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament is calling on the European Commission and European Council to take immediate steps to turn the recommendations of the Panama Papers inquiry into action.

Today, the European Parliament voted in favour of the report and recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion (PANA). The report and its recommendations included a number of Greens/EFA policy demands.

Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur **Molly Scott Cato** comments:

"We now have a strong action plan for clamping down on the immoral and corrupt activity revealed by the Panama Papers scandal. To make tax justice a reality, the Commission must now turn this plan into legislative proposals.

"The EU should not allow itself to be complicit in siphoning tax payers' money into offshore accounts. If a business or intermediary decides to get involved in tax havens, they should be disqualified from receiving EU funding. Moving your business offshore shouldn't allow you to avoid all your responsibilities. Offshore companies should be subject to the same auditing and disclosure obligations as they are in Europe.

"While the Commission needs to be bolder, the real enemy of tax justice in Europe has been the prime ministers and presidents of EU governments. They have treated the demands of their citizens with contempt, again demonstrated by their failure to be present in the Parliamentary debate yesterday. This is an insult not only to the Parliament but also to Commissioner Moscovici and to President Juncker who made tackling tax avoidance a key priority for his term of office. If member state governments continue to block progress on key tax legislation then the Commission should force their hand and present legislative tax proposals under co-decision in 2018."

Background

The Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion (PANA) began its work in July 2016, [following demands from Greens/EFA and others](#).

One of the key tools for combatting tax evasion and avoidance is public country-by-country reporting. The European Parliament adopted proposals in July, but progress has stalled in Council.

Some of the key Greens/EFA achievements in the recommendations are:

- Establishment of a Permanent Inquiry committee in the European Parliament on the model of the US Congress
- No companies or intermediaries involved in tax havens to benefit from EU funding
- To end the blockade in Council, to end unanimity in Council for tax policies and for the European Parliament to be given co-decision
- Offshore companies should be subject to same auditing and disclosure obligations as in Europe
- The Commission to investigate Member States and possible breaches of EU law
- Call for proposal to separate accounting and advising activities of accountancy firms

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