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Press release | 08.10.2012

Tax avoidance/Greece

EU must avoid double standards and resolve impasse on tax avoidance rules

Co-presidents of the Greens/EFA group **Rebecca Harms** and **Dany Cohn-Bendit** today wrote to EU Council president Van Rompuy and Commission president Barroso urging swift action on tax evasion in the context of the deteriorating economic situation in Greece (1). The letter calls for the forthcoming EU summit to resolve the impasse on the EU's automatic tax information exchange, as well as on the stalled tax agreement with Switzerland. It also calls on the Commission to propose an ambitious review of the Anti-Money Laundering Directive and to outline a comprehensive action plan on tax havens.

Greens/EFA co-presidents **Dany Cohn-Bendit** and **Rebecca Harms** stated:

"In the light of the ever more dramatic economic, social and political situation in Greece, there is a need to redouble efforts to prevent all tax evasion and avoidance both within Greece and at EU level.

"While the Greek government clearly must make more progress towards establishing an efficient and fair tax system, Greek capital must flow back to Greece to support the recovery and stabilise state revenue. This is essential for public legitimacy both in countries facing the onerous conditions attached to rescue funds, as well as in countries contributing to the funds. The failure to take concrete steps against tax havens at EU level undermines this legitimacy and reflects double standards.

"The continued failure of EU finance ministers to make progress on the EU's automatic tax information exchange and on the tax agreement with Switzerland has highlighted that ECOFIN is no longer the correct forum. The European Council must intervene to ensure this impasse in EU efforts to tackle tax avoidance can be overcome.

"Related to this, the Commission must also be ambitious in its forthcoming proposals for a review of the Anti-Money Laundering Directive. It must also set out a far-reaching action plan to combat tax havens before the year-end, including a comprehensive definition of an EU tax haven and related legislative proposals."

(1) Letter available at: /legacy/fileadmin/dam/Documents/Letters/Letter_to_VanRompuy-Barroso_Greece_08-10-12.pdf

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Rebecca Harms

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