Press release | 04.12.2014

Tax evasion/Luxembourg leaks

EU Parliament must not take the easy route out in investigating tax dumping

The European Parliament's conference of presidents of political groups today agreed that the EP's economic affairs committee should draft two initiative reports on tax evasion. The Greens/EFA group has pushed for a full European Parliament inquiry committee into tax evasion and dumping as a follow-up to the Luxembourg Leaks revelations and the wider implications on tax dumping in Europe (1), and believes simply drafting new initiative reports would not go far enough. Commenting after the Conference of Presidents, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** said:

"While we are happy to contribute to new initiative reports from the European Parliament on tax avoidance and dumping, we are not convinced that simply producing more reports is commensurate to the issue at hand. Our group proposed a robust inquiry committee, as this is the most powerful tool available to the European Parliament. We are already close to having the required support for the establishment of such a committee and are renewing our call on the other political groups to go the distance and support such an inquiry (1). This would complement and strengthen any initiative reports, which - in themselves - are a limited tool and would not be an adequate response from the EU's directly-elected institution to the tax avoidance scandal. With EU governments refusing to take serious steps to tackle the problem of tax evasion in Europe, it is all the more important that the European Parliament fills this vacuum. The European Parliament cannot take the easy way out."

Green economic and finance spokesperson **Sven Giegold** added:

"An inquiry committee can investigate breaches of EU law by member states and if the Commission acted in accordance with its duties under the EU treaties. It can also make any recommendation for action it deems necessary and provides the strongest basis for legislative action. Aggressive tax competition by the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, Austria and others is a breach of the treaty obligation of sincere cooperation between EU member states. 'Luxembourg leaks' is a watershed moment for the battle against tax evasion and the issues raised by these leaks must be subject to a thorough inquiry."

(1) The European Parliament can set up committees of inquiry to investigate cases of breaches or poor application of EU law. To be created, the proposed committee must have the support of 25% of MEPs, with the terms of reference to be confirmed by the conference of presidents of the political groups, before the European Parliament plenary votes to approve the committee:
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00aab6aedf/Committees.html

The Greens/EFA group today presented a proposal for a committee of inquiry into tax avoidance and dumping practices in the European Union. The full draft mandate for the committee can be found at: /legacy/fileadmin/dam/Documents/2014-11-18_luxleaks_inquiry_committee_mandate.pdf

(2) The Greens/EFA action plan on tax avoidance and dumping can be found at: http://act-or-go.eu/assets/Actionplan_EN.pdf

Our campaign website can be found at: http://act-or-go.eu/en/about.php

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