Press release | 18.11.2014

Tax evasion/Luxembourg leaks

Greens urge MEPs to support robust EP inquiry

The Greens/EFA group has today presented a mandate and terms of reference for a European Parliament inquiry committee into tax evasion and dumping, in the wake of the 'Luxembourg Leaks' revelations (1). Calling for cross-party support, with a view to ensuring the committee is set up without delay, Greens/EFA co-presidents **Philippe Lamberts** and **Rebecca Harms** said:

"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 Greens/EFA group wants a robust European Parliament inquiry to begin without delay and our group has today presented a proposal for an inquiry committee with a comprehensive mandate to investigate this pervasive problem across the EU and beyond.

"An inquiry committee is the most powerful tool available to the EP and goes beyond the powers of a mere special committee. It can investigate breaches of EU law and if the Commission acted in accordance with its duties under the EU treaties. We expect the other political groups to back this proposal, so the inquiry can proceed without delay. 'Luxembourg leaks' is a watershed moment for the battle against tax evasion. The issues raised by these leaks must be subject to a thorough inquiry. With the credibility of the EU itself at stake, the response from all EU institutions must be swift and decisive."

(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/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+RULES-EP+20140701+RULE-198+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&navigationBar=YES

The Greens/EFA group today presented a proposal for a committee of inquiry into tax avoidance and dumping practices in the European Union.

The committee will be tasked to investigate the 'tax rulings' issued by EU member states, with a view to assessing their compatibility with EU law (including state aid rules and transparency). It should also investigate whether the European Commission was in breach of its duties under the EU treaties by failing to fully assess the different tax systems applicable in EU member states, notably to verify whether they amounted to illegal state aid. The inquiry should also assess whether member states engaging in aggressive

'tax planning' undermined the principles of cooperation set out in the EU treaties, notably as regards the implications this had on public finances.

The committee will present an interim report after 6 months, with a final report to be presented after 12 months, which would then be adopted by the European Parliament plenary. This should make recommendations on necessary follow-up actions by the other EU institutions and member state governments.

The full draft mandate for the committee can be found at: www.greens-efa.eu/fileadmin/dam/Documents/2014-11-18_luxleaks_inquiry_committee_mandate.pdf

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Rebecca Harms

Member



Philippe Lamberts

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