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Welcome to “Weirdland”

The trial of a “Faucheur de Chaise”

Monday 9th of January is both the last day of Antoine Deltour’s trial in Luxembourg and the first day of Jon Palais’ trial in Dax, France. Jon Palais is one of the founding members and spokesperson of the peaceful civil movement “Les Faucheurs de Chaises” (the chairs ‘seizers’) who raised their voice against tax evasion in France and internationally.

It all started in February 2015 when the French NGO Attac and the magazine Basta published “the black book of banks”, explaining how banks benefit from tax evasion and the tactics they use to help their clients avoid paying taxes. Shocked by the findings of the report, a few NGOs joined together to organise peaceful citizens’ actions in order to alert people to this unfair system. Soon, in various parts of France, citizens decided to seize chairs from bank agencies until they would close their subsidiaries in tax havens and stop promoting tax dodging.

Linking taxation and climate, les Faucheurs de Chaises requisitioned 196 chairs and invited activists to participate to the ‘196 chairs summit’ on 6th December 2015, right in the middle of the COP21 in Paris, where alternative solutions for climate financing were presented. The movement has grown and become international since then. In total, 243 chairs were seized during 39 peaceful actions in different banks involved in tax dodging (BNP Paribas, HSBC, Crédit agricole, Société générale).

BNP Paribas, one of the worst banks involved in tax dodging - according to a report by French NGOs - filed a claim for theft against Jon Palais, one of the activists involved in the seizing of the chairs. He has become the symbol of this absurdity: being prosecuted when big banks involved in tax evasion are not even investigated! This is why Green Member of the European Parliament and lawyer Eva joly will defend Jon Palais.

Tax evasion and avoidance costs French citizens alone between €60 and €80 million a year. It is one of the main causes of social inequality and prevents the necessary and urgent transition to a fairer, greener and climate-friendly economy. It is in the interest of the EU member states to take action against this totally unfair system. Citizens’ frustration against their government as well as the EU will only escalate if we continue to defend a few large multinationals and banks instead of collecting and investing this money into a real and fairer political vision that would benefit the entire population. Such a huge sum of money could serve to support concrete initiatives like improving the energy performance of buildings and helping

to fight against energy poverty, to name only a very few.

Europe is currently swimming in troubled waters and failing to act on tax evasion will only facilitate the worrying rise of populism. In this new Trump era, EU politicians must learn their lessons and put their own house in order. Hurried tweets and huge declarations will not fool people for very long...

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Play your part!

- **Find more information** about the Greens/ EFA's work on tax justice and on climate in Europe.
- **Make your voice heard!** Follow the debate on twitter with @EvaJoly, @yjadot and @josebove but also our Green Members in Brussels via @GreensEP and via the general hashtags #FaucheursDeChaises, #BNP and **#EvasionFiscale**
- **Support what is right!** Civil society organisations need your support to organise the trial of tax avoiders in Dax on 9th January. They need to collect €15,000 to organise a festive day to call for tax justice and to change the system. Click here for more information (in French): https://faucheursdechaises.eu/

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Contact person



Delphine Chalençon

Advisor on Employment and Social Affairs

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