



**The Greens | European Free Alliance**  
in the European Parliament

Herman Van Rompuy  
President  
European Council

José Manuel Barroso  
President  
European Commission

Brussels, 8 October 2012

Dear Presidents,

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, as well as money laundering, both within Greece and at EU level.

In this context, we are extremely concerned about the Austrian and Luxembourgish governments' continued obstruction of the generalisation and extension of automatic information exchange within the EU, and the Commission's attempts to open negotiations on a tax agreement with Switzerland. Even the wealthier Member States face difficulties negotiating appropriate third country agreements. The EU and its Member States must be united in their efforts to combat major tax havens like Switzerland.

This has a direct impact on the situation in Greece, where tax avoidance is greatly exacerbating the massive fiscal problems the country faces. While the Greek government clearly must make more progress towards establishing an efficient and fair tax governance, Greek capital must flow back to Greece to support the recovery and stabilise state tax income.

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.

The continued failure of EU finance ministers to make progress on this issue 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.

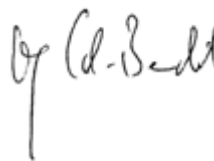
Related to this is the forthcoming review of the Anti Money Laundering Directive. The Commission must set out an ambitious proposal to establish the necessary rules, such as transparency concerning the beneficial ownership of (shell) companies, trusts, foundations etc. We also hope the proposals will show ambition with regard to tackling money laundering structures within the EU and beyond.

On tax havens, the Commission has promised to put forward a concrete action plan by the end of the year. Such a plan is urgently needed but only makes sense if concrete actions are outlined. This must start by outlining a comprehensive definition of an EU tax haven, and include legislative proposals on closing tax havens within the EU, whilst providing fresh impetus to international efforts.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Harms



Daniel Cohn-Bendit

Co-Presidents  
Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament