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News | 11.03.2016

Tax transparency

we are getting tired of waiting!

Several tax matters have been discussed this week in the Brussels bubble and ‘spoiler alert’, you haven’t missed much of the last episode. Last Tuesday (08.03.2016), Finance Ministers from all over Europe gathered in Brussels to agree on a new tax reform. Soon, very large companies (a bit more than 1000 of them) will have to report to their tax administrations where their economic activities are and where they pay taxes. While this is incontestably a progress, the Greens [complained](#) that it was only a half measure because we should cover more companies and most importantly, we need this sort of information to be made publicly available to EU citizens. EU Ministers have been telling the Parliament to wait on public reporting until we have an assessment from the European Commission whether public information will not damage Europe’s business competitiveness. They tell us to wait four more weeks, but we are getting tired of waiting. On Tuesday again, the same Ministers also agreed to make the Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation more transparent. Never heard of this group? That’s normal because until now, it is a working group of Member States’ representatives working on tax matters under confidentiality. The European Parliament made one of its priorities to ensure this group – basically deciding if Member States enter into harmful tax wars among themselves – works more under public light. However, what our Ministers adopted on Tuesday is far from the ground breaking revolution promised. Ironically, Member States decided at the last minute that there was no need for the chair of this group to report regularly to the European Parliament. Not too much transparency please! Again, we are getting tired of waiting. Last but not least, the European Parliament is still waiting for important European tax documents for which the Commission drags its feet. In January 2016, the President of the Commission, Mr Juncker, told us we would be able to consult these documents. Mid-March, we hear that the Commission is still negotiating with Member States whether they can send us what we requested in April 2015 already. It was too much waiting this time and the Greens wrote to the President of the Parliament to call upon him to act as the guardian of the Parliament’s prerogatives and to ensure our institution sees its right to access information respected. Let’s hope we won’t have to wait for long this time as our investigative mission ends in the summer.

- [Greens/EFA letter to President Schulz](#)

So yes, we’re tired of waiting but we’ll continue to fight for progress and doing so in music.

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