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MEPs back measures to fight VAT crime

VAT fraud

The European Parliament has today backed the directive on the protection of the financial interests of the EU (or "PIF Directive"). This will reform the collection of VAT for cross-border businesses and will make consistent EU-wide rules on VAT fraud. Alongside the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), this is the first step towards the harmonisation of criminal law in Europe when crimes are committed against the EU budget. The European Commission estimates that Member States lose at least 50 billion euros per year to VAT fraud.

Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur in the Budgetary Control Committee **Bart Staes** comments:

"The European Parliament has made a clear call for action against the billions of euros of cross-border VAT fraud. It is completely unacceptable that tax revenues, which could be invested in public services, are instead being lost to cross-border economic crime. The harmonization of definitions and sanctions will make it easier to better combat fraudsters and to recovery funds."

Jan Philipp Albrecht, Greens/EFA home affairs and justice policy spokesperson and shadow rapporteur for the European Public Prosecutor, adds:

"Today's vote sends a clear message to both the law enforcement authorities of the EU Member States and the future European Public Prosecutor that they must be tough in tackling VAT fraud. It also demonstrates to citizens that the European Union is ready to take strong action against the cross-border criminals who bleed funds out of budgets all across the continent."

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