

Brussels, May 13th 2013

Dear Commissioner Algirdas Semeta,

One of the main problems affecting the EU and several EU Member States in particular is the lack of sufficient financial and fiscal resources to invest in the economies and job creation and to deliver to citizens even the most basic services and infrastructure they expect and deserve. Sadly, tax evasion, tax avoidance and corruption are a reality and they have been protected by Switzerland, Liechtenstein and other tax havens and money laundering financial centres (including EU Member States), undermining governance in the EU by covering up criminal activities.

To put an end to this long running conspiracy to defraud all EU Member States, that undermine all EU economies - with the excuse of financial secrecy - more than 24 thousand EU citizens, including me, have already signed the petition #TruthCH (#VeriteCH-#VerdadCH-#WahrheitCH-#VerdadeCH) demanding to the EU institutions the creation of an Independent Truth and Justice Commission on Switzerland to investigate its role in political corruption and tax evasion.

I hope that you agree that, at this time in European history, it does not matter how many thousands of citizens have signed this urgent demand for action. It is our obligation as representatives of all 500 million Europeans to act, without further delay, to stop this unacceptable behaviour, investigate the truth and prosecute all criminally responsible as they are not only undermining our economies with their secret cross border financial services but are also eroding our democracy by hiding corrupt and illegal assets. This has been the case for too many decades.

The ECOFIN meeting taking place tomorrow, 14th of May 2013, under the presidency of Mr Michael Noonan, Minister for Finance of Ireland, will decide on very important EU instruments to tackle tax evasion. I urge you, thus, to bring up the creation of an Independent Truth and Justice Commission on Switzerland in the discussion.

We cannot remain indifferent. I look forward to working with you to build a social and transparent Europe that will fight together against all forms of corruption, tax evasion and avoidance.

You may find the complete text of the petition, along with the weblink, below.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ana Gomes

This is the complete text of the petition on line

#TruthCH

EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

CONTEXT

For the past years, the headlines in Europe and around the world have been filled with one tale after another about offshore havens, bad banking, money laundering, and official corruption.

By now these stories are sadly familiar. The time for endless fascination with the salacious details of particular cases is over. It is time to do something about it. Nothing less than the future of democracy is at stake.

For we have come to understand that this network of tax havens not only eludes the obligation to pay the due contributions that finance essential public services for the citizenry.

It also interferes directly with good governance and representative government.

It is virtually impossible for politicians and public officials to work for the common good when it is so easy for them to get rich in office and hide the “privatized” proceeds offshore.

THE PROBLEM – PERIPHERY AND CORE

Since the 1970s, this activity has proliferated. There are now more than 75 "secrecy jurisdictions" that facilitate official corruption as well as tax dodging, from Andorra, BVI and Cyprus to the Isle of Man, Singapore, and Vanuatu.

However, when it comes to helping "PEPs" ("Politically-Exposed Persons") move vast amounts of illicit wealth abroad, conceal it, and manage it from afar, the world capital of the global haven system is still **Switzerland**.

Serving PEPs is hardly a new activity for Swiss financial institutions. For at least two hundred years, Switzerland and its sister and partner Liechtenstein have been the preferred tax havens for corrupt European politicians and dictators who wanted to hide their illicit wealth.

Since World War II, and especially since the 1970s, Swiss financial institutions have managed to globalize these services to the entire world, serving corrupt PEPs on all continents.

Sadly, the Swiss federal government and various Swiss cantons appear to have been involved in abetting the growth of this semi-criminal, fully-immoral industry up to its eyeballs.

Today it is a **multi-trillion €business**, facilitating the corrupt transactions of businessmen, politicians and institutions worldwide, all with the protection of so-called “secrecy” laws that basically protect deeply-criminal activities.

The resulting innumerable bribes and kickbacks, the private enrichment at the expense of the public treasury, are literally a scourge on humanity. They bias public policy decisions in the direction of particular private interests. They permit these interests to combine excessive representation with minimal taxation and regulation. They degrade democracy at home and abroad.

Moreover, people like **Hervé Falciani**, who has the data of hundreds of Swiss accounts of PEPs from Europe and many other countries, are being treated as mere criminals instead of being protected. The information they could provide is ignored and thus the aforementioned deeply-criminal activities are by contrast protected instead.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

If we really want to have a significant impact on the problem of PEP corruption, we should focus the first round of this activity on the leader of the pack, that is Switzerland at this point, and it richly deserves our focused attention through concrete and coordinated actions of the EU citizens and of all EU institutions and all national and local governments.

This leads to the following call to action through:

#TruthCH

EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

We, citizens of the European Union, are deeply concerned by this reality that contributes to a lack of transparency and probity in politics, and demand of all European Union institutions and each of the national governments, national assemblies, parliaments and congresses, and of all regional and local governments in the EU:

- The establishment of an Independent Commission of Truth and Justice to investigate how Switzerland, Swiss banking and wealth managers and other tax havens have contributed to the concealment of corruption and tax evasion, and the erosion of public finances, governance, democracy and justice in all European countries.**
- The investigation of all accounts and hidden assets held by European PEPs (“Politically-Exposed Persons”) in Switzerland in particular, and in other tax havens.**
- Criminal action in European courts against politicians and officials (and their families) who are found to have fortunes of illicit or unknown origin in Switzerland in particular, and in other tax havens.**
- Criminal action in European courts against any person, official or otherwise, of any nationality, who has been illegally enriched with European aid funds allocated to combat poverty and promote development in other countries.**

- Criminal action in European courts against all bankers, wealth managers, advisors and any public official from Switzerland or any other country who collaborated or conspired with them in their actions to defraud European Governments, or who assisted them in the concealment of ill acquired assets in Switzerland or in any other tax haven.**
- The urgent creation of a European fund for the reward, personal protection and asylum of any person and their family, nationals of any country, who help identify ill-gotten wealth and assist in the fight against tax evasion and crime in any European country.**
- That all public servants, political appointees and elected officials in Europe, including all of the EU institutions, be required by law to declare under oath that neither they nor their immediate relatives have hidden assets or secret accounts in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Singapore or any other place in the world.**