



**Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament**

European Parliament
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Brussels, 27 March 2018

Dear Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen,

Academic freedom in Denmark and the case of Dr Brooke Harrington

We contact you as Members of the European Parliament, working on taxation matters and on behalf of the Socialists and Democrats Group to express our deep concern over the treatment of Dr Brooke Harrington. Dr Harrington is a professor of business and politics at Copenhagen Business School, and an internationally renowned scholar on wealth managers, an industry which exists to allow high net worth individuals to sidestep their social and legal responsibility to pay taxes.

As members of the European Parliaments, we have cooperated with and received important input from Dr Harrington on several occasions since the beginning of the parliamentary term in our work on taxation matters. We can adamantly state that the testimony, research and input received from Dr Harrington has proven to be of immense value in the fight against international tax avoidance and evasion. There can be no doubt as to her professionalism and expertise in the area of taxation and by extension as to the importance of allowing Dr Harrington to continue both her academic work and public engagements in this connection. Be they for the benefit of parliamentary committees or indeed the wider public.

It has been five months since Dr Harrington learnt that she was facing criminal charges for speaking publicly on issues of her academic expertise, even though she was invited to Denmark to teach about wealth management, tax structures and tax avoidance. The charges relate to a series of both paid and unpaid lectures off campus, which included invited speaking engagements before the Danish Parliament and Danish tax authorities. In return for these valuable contributions to Danish public life, and indeed to tax justice, Dr Harrington has been charged with violating her work permit. The allegation is that it does not allow her, as a non-permanent resident, to work outside of the university without obtaining special

permission – while Dr Harrington has noted in response that a separate Danish law requires university faculty to share their research publicly.

As “Scholars at Risk” have highlighted, the prosecution of a scholar in retaliation for the nonviolent exercise of the right to academic freedom and freedom of expression is expressly prohibited under international human rights instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Denmark is a party.

Denmark has a long history of leading international performance in freedom of speech, and in good governance – resulting in consistently high standards of public services, educational system and figuring among the lowest inequality in the world.

We call on you to act now to protect this reputation now and in the future, and to retrospectively remove any threat of criminal prosecution from Dr Harrington and any other academics who may have been caught in this Kafkaesque situation.


Yours sincerely,



Jeppe Kofod
S&D Vice-Chair and rapporteur on the
Special Committee on Financial Crimes, Tax
Evasion and Tax Avoidance



Pervenche Berès
S&D Group spokesperson on the
Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee



Peter Simon
S&D Group spokesperson on the
Special Committee on Financial Crimes, Tax
Evasion and Tax Avoidance



Ana Gomes
S&D Vice-Chair on the
Special Committee on Financial Crimes, Tax
Evasion and Tax Avoidance

cc: Inger Støjberg, Minister responsible for Immigration and Integration
Søren Pind, Minister for Higher Education and Science

Danish parliamentary 'Immigration and Integration Committee':

Martin Henriksen (chair)

Astrid Krag (deputy chair)

Christian Langballe

Marie Krarup

Peter Kofod Poulsen

Peter Skaarup

Pernille Bendixen

Marcus Knuth

Britt Bager

Preben Bang Henriksen

Mads Fuglede

Erling Bonnesen

Jan E. Jørgensen

Laura Lindahl

Villum Christensen

Naser Khader

Dan Jørgensen

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Holger K. Nielsen

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