

EU blacklist of tax havens is a sham

(Press Release, Brussels, 5 December 2017) After months of screening some 90 jurisdictions and countries in light of EC criteria of lack of transparency and harmful tax measures such as 0 or near 0 corporate tax rates, EU Finance Ministers have agreed a tiny list of 17 countries: American Samoa, Bahrain, Barbados, Grenada, Guam, South Korea, Macau, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Namibia, Palau, Panama, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates are the countries listed, officials said.

The list excludes the most active harmful tax countries or jurisdictions including Benelux, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus, Switzerland, British channel islands, US Delaware, Singapore or Hong-Kong. Even Bermuda, that hosts the Paradise's offshore services firm Appleby, did not make it to the list.

Jan Willem Goudriaan, General Secretary of EPSU, said *"This tax havens list is a big sham. EU Finance Ministers have failed to agree a coherent and transparent blacklist with deterring sanctions to make it effective. Coupled with the cuts in corporate taxes in many EU countries, today's decision means that tax competition in and outside Europe will continue to run the show at the expense of workers' wages and quality public services.*

It also means that trade unions, NGOs, investigative journalists and whistleblowers will need to continue to do the transparency job that governments are not willing to do."

Nick Crook, head of international for the UK's largest public services trade union UNISON said: *"It's disappointing that this list fails to name some of the world's biggest tax haven offenders. The international community needs to do much more to tackle tax avoidance, and offshore tax scams that are happening on a grand scale. The richest individuals in our society should be making the biggest contribution to our public services – not hiding money abroad, and shirking their obligations"*

On the international scene, as tax rules for the digital economy are being discussed, this list is a sign that the EU is losing its credibility on fair tax.

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EPSU is the **European Federation of Public Service Unions**. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 260 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local, regional and central government, in all European countries including the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>

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