

Cooperation with the EU on tax should be a two-way street

bron Staatssecretaris van Financien van de Nederlandse Antillen (16 mei 2008)

The European Commission should take concrete measures to persuade members of the European Union (EU) to cease the discriminatory blacklisting of the Netherlands Antilles. This was the central message of Mr. Alex Rosaria, State Secretary of Finance of the Netherlands Antilles, in a meeting with representatives of the Taxation and Customs Union Directorate-General of the European Commission (TAXUD).

The Netherlands Antilles has been cooperating with the European Code of Conduct Group, the OECD-Harmful Tax Practices, European Union Saving Directives, Financial Action Task Force and other measures against money laundering, but still some EU members - arbitrarily - list it as "tax haven".

"It is difficult for even the smallest EU member to realize how difficult it is for a small country like the Netherlands Antilles to comply with all these directives. That is not the main problem however. We are always expected to cooperate yet the gain from all this has been rather one-sided. Not only have a lot of European countries not been much forthcoming regarding the negotiation of double taxation agreements - instruments par excellence to promote investments - but some have even put us on their black lists", said Mr. Rosaria.

Spain has recently decided to not blacklist the Netherlands Antilles anymore. Both countries will sign a tax information exchange agreement on June 10. Yet the Netherlands Antilles is still blacklisted by Portugal, Italy, Greece and Poland.

It seems as if the cards are stacked against small countries. We are held to higher standards than is demanded of Austria and Switzerland for example. According to Mr. Rosaria, in many jurisdictions it is becoming difficult under these circumstances to shore up support from governments for more cooperation with EU initiatives on taxes.

"We should be alert and need to guard our financial services sector against further erosion. We want a level playing field and cannot afford the discriminatory treatment of blacklisting by some EU members. The European Commission needs to know that cooperation is a two way street", Mr. Rosaria said in the Hague where the meeting with TAXUD took place.

Bespreking Staatssecretaris Rosaria met delegatie Europese Commissie

bron Antillenhuis (16 mei 2008)

Donderdagmorgen heeft een delegatie uit de Nederlandse Antillen om de tafel gezeten met vertegenwoordigers van de Europese Commissie.

Het was een bespreking in het kader van de 'zwarte lijst op fiscaal gebied'. Zoals bekend, beschouwen enkele leden van de Europese Commissie de Nederlandse Antillen onterecht als een fiscaal paradijs. Tijdens de bespreking van heden is overeengekomen dat de Nederlandse Antillen alle relevante stukken over het

onderwerp doen toekomen aan de Europese Commissie waar het dan zal worden besproken met de leden van de Europese Unie waar de Nederlandse Antillen staan vermeld op de zwarte lijst.

De vergadering vond plaats op het Antillenhuis te Den Haag.

Netherlands Antilles and European Commission to discuss 'blacklists'

bron Staatssecretaris van Financien Nederlandse Antillen (6 mei 2008)

The State Secretary of Finance, Mr. Alex Rosaria, will hold talks with the European Commission regarding the inclusion of the Netherlands Antilles on negative fiscal lists of some European Union (EU) member states. Among others, Portugal, Poland, Greece and Italy consider the Netherlands Antilles as a “tax haven” and have included the Netherlands Antilles on their “black lists”. The talks with the Directorate General on Tax matters of European Commission is aimed at bringing to an end the inclusion of the Netherlands Antilles on black list of members of the EU.

“Calling us a tax haven is inaccurate and a totally misguided labeling of our country. In fact, the Netherlands Antilles complies with OECD and EU regulations making it a first class international business and financial services jurisdiction,” according to Mr. Rosaria.

What puzzles Mr. Rosaria is how other EU countries can have tax treaties and/or are in the process of negotiating tax treaties with the Netherlands Antilles, while other members of the same union consider us a tax haven. For example, the Netherlands Antilles will be signing a Tax Information Exchange Agreement with Spain in June 2008 and is negotiating similar treaties with Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

“These countries don’t negotiate or sign treaties with tax havens or secrecy jurisdictions. It should become clear that the Netherlands Antilles complies with the same standards applicable to EU members. We will therefore not permit that the Netherlands Antilles is held to a higher tax standard than what is demanded of the EU,” said Mr. Rosaria.

Talks with the European Commission will be held on 15th May in The Hague.