

Tax Superhero 2010

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Christian Aid today (Thursday 20 May) announced the winner of its Tax Superhero of the Year award, which recognises outstanding individual work on the potential of tax to change the world.

Eva Joly, an activist, European politician and former judge, has beaten other nominees including the comedians Ricky Gervais and Graham Norton and is the winner of this year's Award.

Norwegian-born Joly was elected as a Member of the European Parliament in 2009 for the Europe Ecologie list and represents Ile de France. She also chairs the Parliament's Committee on Development. Her work has shifted the terms of the international debate about the vital importance of tax revenues to developing countries.

As a judge in France, Ms Joly famously investigated a half-billion Euro corruption scandal involving the state-owned oil company Elf-Acquitane, and received death threats as a result. Thirty people were eventually convicted in connection with the affair.

‘Eva Joly has a proud record of championing the vital role that tax revenues play in both rich and poor countries — and also of successfully fighting corruption,’ said Helen Collinson, Christian Aid's Campaign Manager, Economic Justice. ‘She is an outstanding ambassador for tax justice and good governance.’

Christian Aid will officially announce Ms Joly's award outside the Royal Exchange building in the City of London during its Alternative Tax Awards 2010 ceremony, from 9.30am on Thursday, 20th May. The date coincides with accountants' own awards bash at London's Park Lane Hilton.

In addition to Ms Joly, Christian Aid also received nominations for comedians Ricky Gervais and Graham Norton, for tax justice campaigners John Christensen, Richard Murphy and Alvin Mosioma and for investigative reporter Denis Roberts. Other nominees were the singers Billy Bragg and Katie Melua, the novelist Rhidian Brook and

the Christian Aid board member Phil Hodgkinson. Another nomination was for the organisation Blood:Water Mission, which works on HIV/AIDS and water.

Christian Aid launched its Alternative Tax Awards in 2009, to highlight its campaign about the vital importance of tax for developing countries. The organisation estimates that they currently lose around \$160 billion a year as a result of tax dodging by unscrupulous companies trading internationally. This is a vast sum, equal to roughly one-and-a-half times the amount of money that they receive in development aid each year.

“The money urgently needed to pay for education, medical care, sanitation and other public services which we in the UK take for granted,” said Helen Collinson.

Christian Aid is campaigning for the introduction of a new accounting standard, country-by-country reporting, which would require multinational companies to publish the profits they make and the taxes they pay in every country in which they operate. It is also working towards the automatic, multilateral exchange of tax information between countries, to help governments more effectively counter tax dodging. In addition, the organisation supports the strengthening of poor countries’ collection of tax domestically, to help strengthen their governments’ accountability to their citizens.

Eva’s great.

I’m more than happy to lose to her!