

Europe could begin to close the tax gap if only Austria...

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The EU is increasingly realising the importance of closing the tax gap across Europe to ensure public services can be maintained. [As EuroPolitics has reported:](#)

Tackling tax fraud and harmful competition is increasingly important to help resolve the economic crisis that continues to plague the Union, according to Taxation Commissioner Algirdas Semeta. He reiterated, on 17 September, that the Commission would strive to “ensure progress” on the issue of savings taxation. By year’s end it will present proposals “for concrete actions” to bring tax havens into line.

Semeta welcomed the comments made by Commission President Jos   Manuel Barroso in his ‘State of the Union’ address to the European Parliament, on 12 September.

“Stopping tax fraud and tax evasion could put extra billions into the public purse across Europe,” said Barroso. “This is why the Commission will fight for an agreement on the revised Savings Tax Directive, and on mandates to negotiate stronger savings tax agreements with third countries,” namely Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Andorra, San Marino and Monaco.

“If we succeeded in working out a good agreement with the Swiss, member states could collect taxes much more effectively and solve certain budget consolidation problems,” observed Semeta.

Absolutely right.

The obstacles are the governments of Luxembourg and Austria, both of whom are going out of their way to support and promote tax crime: I can be as unsubtle as that.