

The UK government - helping business achieve its goal o...

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I was sent a document produced by Ernst & Young late last week. No, not the one that revealed their paranoia about country-by-country reporting and accountability; another one.

Try as I might I have not been able to find this one on their own web site. The download source I have is from the UK Trade and Industry web site. And that's not surprising since it is entitled "[The UK open for business](#)". If that is not selling the government's line, it's hard to know what is. And the line that is being sold is that the UK is now a great place to avoid tax.

Some of the quotes from the report are telling. Start with this:

The Government's policy focus for improving competitiveness has been to lower the overall corporate tax burden on businesses, and to introduce specific measures to encourage the use of the UK as a center for innovation.

And then note this:

The key trend arising from the changes to the UK corporate tax regime is that these could well be a facilitator, rather than a barrier, to groups achieving their commercial objectives.

Tax competition is clearly on the agenda then - and is openly endorsed by the government. So much for tackling tax avoidance: the philosophies of tax competition and tax avoidance are identical. Both are designed to shift the burden of tax from capital onto ordinary people, undermining the state on the way.

But the really telling sting is in the tail, where in the final paragraph it is said that:

All these factors provide an opportunity for strategic alignment between multinationals, and HMRC, HM Treasury and the UK Government. We believe that such alignment is

likely to become increasingly important as a means to mitigate global tax risk.

As many will know, the capture of the state, and our tax authority in particular, for the benefit of big business is a theme on this blog. Here we see it writ large: a nice cosy relationship between the two is all set to help business achieve its goal - the unwritten assumption being that paying less tax is the goal they are setting out to facilitate.

But remember what that means. It means deficits, austerity, reduced services, more unemployment, a loss of hope and a blight on our youth. That's what Ernst & Young and HMRC are cooperating to offer the UK. And that's why this theme will recur here.