

It's time for the government to say no to tax abusers

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As the [Guardian has reported this morning](#):

In a series of reports on efficiency across government, the public accounts committee raised concerns about the way public money is spent and accused both departments of failing to get the best value for taxpayers.

MPs found that while the government has considerable buying power, it does not adequately use it to challenge companies that owe tax or have failed to deliver public contracts.

As they also note:

One of the committee's reports said: "While it is long overdue, we welcome the co-ordination of the management of major suppliers across government. However, government is still not fully using its negotiating position as a large customer to challenge those who pay little UK tax on their profits or those who have failed to deliver effectively in previous contracts. The Cabinet Office should consider how suppliers' performance and record of paying their fair share of tax impact on procurement decisions."

I could not agree more. So long as a reasonable criteria can be defined - and those proposed by the government so far utterly fail in that respect - assessing the suitability of a government contractor on the basis of their tax paid and, as importantly, on their disclosure of their tax paid is wholly appropriate behaviour for any government.

And candidly I doubt the EU would uphold a challenge.