

Is HMRC corrupt?

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I hoped I would never have to ask if HMRC was actually corrupt but today I do. As [the Guardian reports](#):

MPs are to investigate an HM Revenue and Customs decision to turn down a French request for help with a criminal inquiry into a major Conservative party donor.

The Treasury select committee and the public accounts committee want to explore why tax officials rejected a request from the French authorities to help with an inquiry involving the mobile network operator Lycamobile.

It follows the disclosure on Thursday that the tax authority had sent correspondence to its French counterparts which pointed out that the telecoms company was the “biggest corporate donor to the Conservative party”.

I have assisted the Guardian in particular with Lycamobile investigations over the years. The company's accounts are so bad even KPMG resigned. That there has been substantial risk is obvious. And it is the absolute duty of HMRC to assist the tax authority of another country seeking information in that case, in my opinion (subject to all due process being followed).

What was not possible, and should never have been thought, let alone mentioned, was that assistance could not be supplied because Lycamobile donated to the Conservative Party.

If that explanation has been offered then that is corruption. And prison should await for those who offered the explanation, in my opinion. Nothing less will do: an example would have to be made.