

Our horizons will shrink by leaving the EU and that is ...

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I am heading for Brussels today for reasons that will become apparent tomorrow.

To me this seems like a normal thing to do. I am well aware that it is for other tax justice campaigners. John Christensen is there with the Greens today. I will be presenting a report with the Socialists & Democrats tomorrow. Working with such groups, who have helped drive the tax justice agenda across Europe in ways that would not have been possible otherwise, has made sense to us.

Just as the fact that tackling an international problem at a co-ordinated international level has also made complete sense.

I am not for a minute saying that the EU has always done what we want, when we want and how we want. It has not. But having it has made international action on tax abuse easier to achieve. I think that is beyond dispute.

It will continue its work without the UK. That is clear. But balances will tip. And the UK will be impacted, for sure. The evidence is that seven British tax havens are currently changing their laws to comply with EU requirements or face threat of sanctions. We will be in that boat in the future. So much for taking back control.

And I can continue to think myself Irish. I have been an Irish citizen for a long time. But for those of from the UK who want to effect change in Europe as a whole and who have, it could be argued, done so, this will be harder. And that I regret. We could achieve more staying in. There is no doubt about that.

So this trip will gave a certain sadness attached to it. It may be the last I make to the European Parliament when the UK is represented there. I wish it was otherwise. It cannot but be said that our horizons will shrink as a result. And that is not good for anyone.