The Power of Your Pen!

the people's purse

A CAMPAIGN FOR GLOBAL DEBT & TAX JUSTICE

DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT COALITION IRELAND

Hand-write a Personal Letter to Michael Noonan for Tax Transparency
Demand a Public Register of the Real Owners of all Companies in Ireland

It's time to dust off your desk, clear off the kitchen table and find that old ball-point pen. Write to Minister for Finance Michael Noonan and demand that he protects the People's Purse and acts for tax transparency by ***publishing a public register of the real owners of companies in Ireland***.

… a handwritten letter?

Handwritten letters are a personal and expressive way of demonstrating concern about a justice issue. But as a campaign tool they are becoming a dying art, often replaced by *'clicktivism'*. A simple handwritten letter from a constituent is a powerful and meaningful way of communicating with your TD; it makes them sit up and pay attention, and shows them that you expect a personal response from them.

What am I asking Minister Noonan to do?

You are asking the Minister to ***act for Tax Transparency by establishing a public register of the real owners of companies in Ireland***. You are asking him to reply to your letter and to promise to publish a public register. Send your letter to DDCI's office and we will send it on to the minister. This is so that we can monitor the amount of letters being sent to the minister, and post them at strategic moments.

Why is this important?

Currently the identity of the real owners of a company can be hidden by setting up a shell company in the name of a false owner. These companies are sometimes called ghost or phantom companies. Tax dodgers and criminals use these fake, shell companies to hide the profits they are making, and to dodge paying taxes on those profits. These taxes are public resources – they should go into the People's Purse in countries across the world to fund badly needed public services.

The current secrecy shrouding company ownership facilitates tax dodging and money laundering on a huge scale. In 2011, countries of the Global South lost seven times the amount they received in aid to illegal financial flows, including tax dodging. ***But people and some governments are fighting back****:* as part of the current revisions of the EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive, the European Parliament voted in March 2014 to support public registers. This amendment will now be considered by the European Council and finally through negotiations between the European Parliament, Council and Commission.

BUT! The ministers of the EU member states, through the European Council, are still stalling in implementing the proposal, and the Council might decide to restrict access to the information on company owners to tax authorities only.

Why? What is a public register?

Having a public register of beneficial owners means giving the public access to the names of the real owners of companies. It means that those owners who ultimately benefit from the profits of companies, trusts and foundations would have to register their names, nationalities, numbers of shares and control in those companies, and that these, and more details, would be freely available to the public.

Hope?

A number of governments have been proactive in this area without waiting for EU level action, including France, Norway and the UK which are moving towards establishing public registers in their own jurisdictions (although with different levels of transparency). Debt and Development Coalition urges the Irish government to actively support the European Parliament's proposal to establish public registers of beneficial owners. But DDCI also strongly urges the government to go further and to join the movement against corporate secrecy by establishing a national register of the beneficial owners of companies in Ireland, freely available to the public, with or without the EU.

Ok! I'll write a letter to Minister Noonan!

Great! Follow these steps...

1. Put your home address at the top so that the minister can write back to you directly (and please share any responses with us!).

2. Get straight to the point and be clear about your demand for tax justice. Ask the Minister to act for tax transparency by publishing a public register of the real owners of companies in Ireland, so that company 'beneficiaries' can be held to account for the financial activities of their company, including any tax dodging.

3. Tell the Minister you expect a reply and a promise from him to act according to your request.

4. Sign off with your full name and contact information. Always mention what you do, no matter what you do, because it lets the minister know that you are part of a community and networks.

5. Always keep a dated copy of the letter.

6. Send your letter to Debt and Development Coalition. We'll send it to the minister for you.*

Send your handwritten letter to us:

Debt and Development Coalition,
Unit F5,
Spade Enterprise Centre,
North King Street,
Dublin 7

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STOP tax dodging

The People's Purse holds our global resources and the wealth of our communities. It belongs to the people and is the key to our future. ***BUT*** *It is being looted by the world's bankers, and governments, to pay for* ***unjust debts*** *that are not the people's, and it is being undermined by corporations who are* ***dodging their taxes!***

To find out more about the People's Purse Campaign visit www.debtireland.org

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** We may photocopy your letter to use for our campaigning purposes. Please let us know if you would rather we did not copy your letter.*