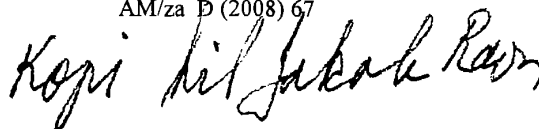


LÁSZLÓ KOVÁCS
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

B-1049 BRUSSELS

28 February 2008
AM/za P (2008) 67



Dear President,

In my capacity as EU Commissioner for Taxation and the Customs Union, I have the honour to inform you and your government that we are organising the second '*Brussels Tax Forum*'. The first annual fiscal event to allow for open discussions between politicians, experts and the general public on specific fiscal issues was held last year and it was a great success with more than 450 participants.

The 2008 Brussels Tax Forum will take place on 7th and 8th April 2008 in the premises of the European Commission. The theme of this edition is '*Taxation Policy: enhancing competitiveness and growth in a European way*'. This topic is timely and high on the political agenda. I am therefore convinced that the conference has the potential to articulate how EU and national tax policies can contribute to achieving the key European objectives.

I would like to stress that all participants must register on-line; registration can be accessed from this link:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/gen_info/tax_conferences/tax_forum/index_en.htm

I would be honoured if you would attend the conference and would actively participate in the discussions foreseen.

Yours sincerely,



Enclosure: draft programme of the 2008 Brussels Tax Forum

Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen
Chairman
Folketings committee on taxation
Folketingets Skatteudvalg
Christiansborg
1240 Copenhagen K
DENMARK



The Brussels Tax Forum
Le Forum Fiscal de Bruxelles
Das Brüsseler Steuerforum

Taxation policy: enhancing competitiveness and growth in a European way.

Provisional Programme

Brussels, Charlemagne building – Room S3
April 7th and 8th, 2008



DAY 1.

Monday 7th April 2008

13.30 Registration

Opening Session

14.00-14.15 Opening of the Conference by **László Kovács**, EU Commissioner for Taxation and Customs Union

14.15-14.30 Opening Speech by **Pervenche Berès**, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

14.30-14.55 Opening Speech by **Christine Lagarde**, French Minister of Finance

14.55-15.20 Opening Speech by **Günther Verheugen**, Vice-President of the European Commission

15.20-15.55 Coffee break

Session: The role of taxation in enhancing growth and competitiveness

Chair: **Christa Ranzio-Plath**, University of Hamburg

15.55-16.00 Introduction by the Chair

16.00-16.20 How can taxation policy lead to growth in Europe by **Andrej Bajuk**, President of EU ECOFIN and Slovenian Minister of Finance

16.20-16.40 Taxation and growth: an assessment by **Peter Birch Sørensen**, university of Copenhagen

16.40-17.50 Panel discussion – Chair: **Christa Ranzio-Plath**, University of Hamburg
Peter Birch Sørensen (University of Copenhagen), **Philippe de Buck** (Secretary General of BusinessEurope), **Michael Treschow** (TBC) (Chairman of Unilever, Ericsson, Electrolux and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise), **Jeffrey Owens** (Director of the OECD Centre on Tax Policy and Administration), **Maria Lourdes Pérez-Luque** (TBC) (Confédération Fiscale Européenne) and **Michael Aujean** (former Director of Tax Policy TAXUD)

17.50-18.00 Conclusions by the Chair

18.00 Cocktail for participants

DAY 2.

Tuesday 8th April 2008

- 8.00 Registration
- 8.30 Welcome coffee
- 9.00-9.10 Opening of the second day by Director General **Robert Verrue**

Morning session: Which fundamental tax reforms for growth and competitiveness in Europe to meet the challenges of a globalised world?

Chair: **Robert Verrue**, Director General of Taxation and Customs Union, Commission

- 9.10-9.30 Which tax reforms are desirable for growth in Europe? By **Etienne Davignon**, Former Vice-president of the European Commission
- 9.30-9.50 Shall we shift taxation from labour to consumption? Efficiency and equity aspects by **Clemens Fuest**, University of Cologne
- 9.50-10.10 Flat tax and growth: the Estonian experience, by **Mart Laar**, Former Prime Minister of Estonia
- 10.10-10.30 Flat taxes: what have they achieved? By **Michael Keen**, International Monetary Fund
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee break
- 11.00-11.20 Would businesses benefit from an EU wide tax base? by **Will Morris**, General Electric and AmCham
- 11.20-12.10 Discussion and questions with the floor - Chair: **Jacki Davis**, European Policy Centre
- 12.10-12.30 Which fundamental tax reforms in Europe in a tax competition environment by **Christopher Heady**, Head of Tax Policy Division, Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, OECD
- 12.30-14.00 Buffet lunch for participants

Afternoon session: How to finance the Welfare State in Europe: threats and challenges

Chair: Karel Lannoo, CEPS

- 14.00-14.20 How can tax policies contribute to the development of a modern, innovative and sustainable European Social Model? **Vladimír Špidla**, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- 14.20-14.40 Are high taxes and high social benefits an obstacle to a competitive economy? By **Jaakko Kiander**, Director of the Finnish Labour Institute of Economic Research
- 14.40-15.00 Do countries compete over tax and welfare systems and if so, how? By **Hans-Werner Sinn**, President of Ifo Institute for Economic Research, University of Munich
- 15.00-15.20 How can tax and benefit systems promote women's participation in labour markets? by **Joakim Palme**, Institute for Future Studies
- 15.20-15.50 Coffee break
- 15.50-16.10 Current tax reforms and the financing of welfare state in Europe by **John Monks**, General Secretary ETUC
- 16.10-17.10 Discussion and questions with the floor, Chair: **Karel Lannoo, CEPS**
- 17.10-17.20 Conclusions by the Chair
- 17.20-17.30 General Conclusions by **Commissioner Kovács**
- 17.30 Close
