

Speech: Spring Statement 2018: Philip Hammond's speech

Mr Speaker.

I am pleased to introduce to the House the first Spring Statement.

The UK was the only major economy to make hundreds of tax and spending changes twice a year.

And major international organisations and UK professional bodies alike have been pressing for change.

In 2016 I took the decision to move to a single fiscal event in the Autumn.

Giving greater certainty to families and businesses ahead of the new financial year.

And allowing more time for stakeholder and parliamentary engagement on potential fiscal changes.

Today's statement will update the House on the economic and fiscal position.

Report progress on announcements made at the two budgets last year.

And launch further consultations ahead of Budget 2018, as set out today in my Written Ministerial Statement.

I won't be producing a Red Book today Mr Speaker.

[political content removed]

Mr Speaker.

I am pleased today to report to the House on a UK economy that has grown in every year since 2010.

And under Conservative Leadership now has a manufacturing sector enjoying its longest unbroken run of growth for fifty years.

An economy which has added 3 million jobs.

And seen:

- every single region of the UK with higher employment and lower unemployment than in 2010
- seen the wages of the lowest paid up by almost 7% above inflation since April 2015
- [political content removed]

Solid progress towards building an economy that works for everyone.

[political content removed]

I, meanwhile, am at my most positively Tigger-like.

As I contemplate a country which faces the future with unique strengths.

Our language is the global language of business.

Our legal system is the jurisdiction of choice for commerce.

We host the world's most global city, and its international finance and professional services capital.

Our companies are in the vanguard of the technological revolution.

While our world-class universities are delivering the breakthrough discoveries and inventions that are powering it.

British culture and talent reaches huge audiences across the globe.

And our tech sector is attracting skills and capital from the four corners of the earth.

With a new tech business being founded somewhere in the UK every hour.

Producing world-class products including apps like TransferWise, CityMapper,

And Matt Hancock.

Mr Speaker.

Today the OBR delivers its second report for the fiscal year 2017-18.

And I thank Robert Chote and his team for their work.

It forecasts more jobs.

Rising real wages.

Declining inflation.

A falling deficit.

And a shrinking debt.

The economy grew by 1.7% in 2017, compared to 1.5% forecast at the Budget.

And the OBR have revised up their forecast for 2018 from 1.4% to 1.5%.

Forecast growth is then unchanged at 1.3% in 2019 and 20, before picking up to 1.4% in 21 and 1.5% in 22.

That's the OBR's forecast Mr Speaker.

But forecasts are there to be beaten.

As a nation, we did it in 2017.

And we should make it our business to do so again!

Our remarkable jobs story is set to continue.

With the OBR forecasting more jobs in every year of this parliament.

And over 500,000 more people enjoying the security of a regular pay-packet by 2022.

I am pleased to report that the OBR expect inflation, which is currently above target at 3%.

To fall back to target over the next 12 months.

Meaning that real wage growth is expected to be positive from the first quarter of 18-19, and to increase steadily thereafter.

Mr Speaker.

I reported in the Autumn that borrowing was due to fall in every year of the forecast.

And debt to fall as a share of GDP from 2018-19.

The OBR confirms this today.

And further revises down debt and borrowing in every year.

Borrowing is now forecast to be £45.2 billion this year.

£4.7bn lower than forecast in November.

And £108bn lower than in 2010.

[political content removed]

As a percentage of GDP, borrowing is forecast to be 2.2% in 17-18.

Falling to 1.8% in 18-19, 1.6% in 19-20, then 1.3%, 1.1% and finally 0.9% in '22-'23.

Meaning that in 18-19 we will run a small current surplus, borrowing only for capital investment.

And we are forecast to meet our cyclically adjusted borrowing target in '20-21 with £15.4bn headroom to spare.

Broadly as forecast at the Budget.

Mr Speaker,

The more favourable outlook for borrowing means the debt forecast is nearly 1% lower than in November.

Peaking at 85.6% of GDP in 17-18.

And then falling to 85.5% in 18-19, then 85.1%, 82.1%, 78.3%, and finally 77.9% in 2022-23.

The first sustained fall in debt in 17 years.

A turning point in the nation's recovery from the financial crisis of a decade ago.

Light at the end of the tunnel.

Another step on the road to rebuilding the public finances [political content removed]

[political content removed]

Mr Speaker.

In Autumn 2016, I changed the fiscal rules to give us more flexibility to adopt a balanced approach to repairing the public finances.

Reducing debt.

Not for some ideological reason.

But to secure our economy against future shocks.

Because we [political content removed] are not so naïve as to think we have abolished the economic cycle.

Because we want to see taxpayers' money funding our schools and hospitals, not wasted on debt interest.

And because we want to give the next generation a fair chance.

But I do not agree with those who argue that every available penny must be used to reduce the deficit.

And nor do I agree with the fiscal fantasists [political content removed] who argue that every available penny should be spent immediately.

We will continue to deliver a balanced approach.

Balancing debt reduction against the need for investment in Britain's future.

Support to hard-working families through lower taxes.

And our commitment to our public services.

Judge me by my record, Mr Speaker [political content removed].

Since Autumn Statement 2016, I have committed to £60 billion of new spending.

Shared between long-term investment in Britain's future.

And support for our public services.

With almost £9 billion extra for our NHS and our social care system.

£4bn going into the NHS in 18/19 alone.

And as I promised at the Autumn Budget.

More to come if, as I hope, management and Unions reach an agreement on a pay modernisation deal for our nation's Nurses and Agenda for Change staff.

Who have worked tirelessly since the Autumn in very challenging circumstances to provide the NHS care that we all value so highly.

£2.2 billion more on education and skills.

And £31 billion going to fund infrastructure, R&D and housing through the National Productivity Investment Fund.

Taking public investment in our schools, hospitals, and infrastructure in this parliament to its highest sustained level in 40 years.

And at the same time we have cut taxes for 31 million working people by raising the personal allowance again in line with our manifesto commitment.

Taking more than 4 million people out of tax altogether since 2010.

Freezing fuel duty for an eighth successive year, taking the saving for a typical car driver to £850 [political content removed].

And raising the National Living Wage to £7.83 from next month, giving the lowest paid in our society a well-deserved pay rise of over £2,000 for a full-time worker since 2016.

Mr Speaker.

Since becoming Chancellor, I have provided an extra £11 billion of funding for 2018/19.

To help with short-term public spending pressures.

And to invest in Britain's future.

In the longer term, I can confirm that, at this year's Budget I will set an overall path for public spending for 2020 and beyond.

With a detailed Spending Review to take place in 2019.

To allocate funding between Departments.

That is how responsible people Budget.

First you work out what you can afford.

Then you decide what your priorities are.

And then you allocate between them.

And if, in the Autumn, the public finances continue to reflect the improvements that today's report hints at.

Then, in accordance with our balanced approach, and using the flexibility provided by the fiscal rules.

I would have capacity to enable further increases in public spending and investment in the years ahead.

While continuing to drive value for money to ensure that not a single penny of precious taxpayers' money is wasted.

A balanced approach.

Getting our debt down.

Supporting our public services.

Investing in our nation's future.

Keeping taxes low.

Building a Britain fit for the future.

And an economy that works for everyone.

Updates since the Budget.

Mr Speaker.

There is much still to do.

Since Autumn 2016 we have set out our plan to back the enterprise and ambition of British business and the hard work of the British people.

A plan to unleash our creators and our innovators.

Our inventors and our discoverers.

To embrace the new technologies of the future.

And to deliver the skills we will need to benefit from them.

To tackle our long-standing productivity challenges.

And to say more loudly than ever that our economy will remain open and outward-looking.

Confident to compete with the best in the world.

We choose to champion those who create the jobs and the wealth on which our

prosperity and our public services both depend.

Not to demonise them.

Mr Speaker,

[political content removed]

The market economy embraces talent and creates opportunity.

Provides jobs for millions and the tax revenues that underpin our public services.

So we will go on supporting British businesses.

We are reducing business rates by over £10 billion.

And we committed at Autumn Budget 2017 to move to triennial revaluations from 2022.

Today I am pleased to announce that we will bring forward the next business rates revaluation to 2021 and make the triennial reviews from that date.

We will launch a Call for Evidence to understand how best we can help the UK's least productive businesses to learn from, and catch-up with, the most productive.

And another on how we can eliminate the continuing scourge of late payments – a key ask from small business.

Because Mr Speaker, we are the champions of small businesses and the entrepreneur.

Since the Budget, we have made substantial progress in our negotiations with the European Union.

To deliver a Brexit that supports British jobs, businesses and prosperity.

And I look forward to another important step forward at the European Council next week.

But we will continue to prepare for all eventualities.

And today my RHF the Chief Secretary is publishing the Departmental allocations of over £1.5 billion of Brexit preparation funding for 2018-19 which I announced at the Autumn Budget.

Our Modern Industrial Strategy sets out our plan to keep Britain at the forefront of new technologies.

With the biggest increase in public R&D spending for four decades.

Much of this new technology depends on high-speed broadband.

And today I can make the first allocations of the £190 million local full fibre challenge fund announced at Autumn Budget and confirm £25 million for the first 5G testbeds.

As our economy changes, we must ensure people have the skills they need to seize the opportunities ahead.

So we've committed over £500 million a year to T-Levels, the most ambitious post-16 reforms in 70 years.

And from next month £50 million will be available to help employers prepare for the rollout of T-Level work placements.

Last week, the Education Secretary and I chaired the first meeting of the National Retraining Partnership between Government, the TUC and the CBI.

And I can re-assure the House, Mr Speaker.

[political content removed]

But there was a clear and shared commitment to training, to prepare the British people for a better future ahead.

And next month our £29 million construction skills fund will open for bids to fund up to 20 construction skills villages around the country.

We're committed as a government to delivering 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020 with the support of business through the apprenticeship levy.

But we recognise the challenges the new system presents to some small businesses looking to employ an apprentice.

So I can announce today that my Right Honourable Friend the Education Secretary will release up to £80 million of funding to support those small businesses in engaging an apprentice.

We publish a consultation on improving the way the tax system supports self-funded training by employees and the self-employed.

And because we currently understand more about the economic pay-back from investing in our infrastructure than we do about investment in our people.

I have asked the ONS to work with us on developing a more sophisticated measure of human capital.

So that future investment can be better targeted.

Mr Speaker, we're undertaking the largest road building programme since the '70s.

As Transport Secretary, I gave the green light to fund the new bridge across the River Mersey in 2011.

And I was delighted to see it open late last year.

The largest infrastructure project in Europe, Crossrail, is due to open in just 9 months' time.

We're making progress on our plans to deliver the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor.

We're devolving powers and budgets to elected mayors across the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

We're in negotiations for city deals with Stirling and Clackmannanshire, Tay Cities, Borderlands, North Wales, Mid Wales, and Belfast.

And today we invite proposals from cities across England for the £840 million fund I announced at the Budget to deliver on their local transport priorities.

As part of our plans to spread growth and opportunity to all parts of this United Kingdom.

And at the heart of our plan for building an economy that works for everyone is our commitment to tackle the challenges in our housing market.

With an investment programme of £44 billion to raise housing supply to 300,000 a year by the mid-2020s.

And today I can update the House.

We are working currently, with my Right Honourable Friend the Housing Minister, with 44 authorities who have bid into the £4.1 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund, to unlock homes in areas of high demand.

We are concluding housing deals with ambitious authorities who have agreed to deliver above their Local Housing Need.

And I can announce today that we have just agreed a deal with the West Midlands to have committed to deliver 215,000 homes by 2030-31, facilitated by a £100 million grant from the Land Remediation Fund.

And my Right Honourable Friend the Housing Minister will make further announcements on the over the next few days on the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

We will more than double the size of the Housing Growth Partnership with Lloyds Banking Group to £220 million, to help providing additional finance for small builders.

And London will receive an additional £1.7 billion to deliver a further 26,000 affordable homes, including homes for social rent, taking total affordable housing delivery in London to over 116,000 by the end of 2021-22.

Mr Speaker, my Right Honourable Friend for West Dorset has outlined his initial findings on the gap between planning permissions granted and housing completions.

In a letter which I have placed in the Library of the House.

And I look forward to his full report at the Budget.

And I am delighted to inform the House that an estimated 60,000 First Time Buyers have already benefited from the Stamp Duty relief I announced at the Autumn Budget.

[political content removed]

In the Autumn, we published a paper on taxing large digital businesses in the global economy.

And today we follow up with a publication that explores potential solutions.

And I look forward to discussing this issue with G20 Finance Ministers in Buenos Aires at the weekend.

We also publish a call for evidence on how online platforms can help their users to pay the right amount of tax.

We will consult on a new VAT collection mechanism for online sales.

To ensure that the VAT consumers pay actually reaches the Treasury.

And we will call for evidence, too, on how to encourage cashless and digital payments, while ensuring cash remains available to those who need it.

Mr Speaker.

This government is determined that our generation should leave the natural environment in a better state than we found it.

And improve the quality of the air we breathe.

So we will publish a call for evidence on whether the use of non-agricultural red diesel tax relief contributes to poor air quality in urban areas.

And following our successful intervention to incentivise green taxis, we'll help the Great British White Van driver go green with a consultation on reduced VED rates for the cleanest vans.

And follow up on the vital issue of plastic littering and the threat to our oceans.

With a call for evidence to support us in delivering on our vow to tackle this complex issue.

It will look at the whole supply chain for single use plastics.

At alternative materials.

Reusable options.

And recycling opportunities.

And it will look at how the tax system can help drive the technological progress and behavioural change we need.

Not as a way of raising revenue.

But as a way of changing behaviour.

And encouraging innovation.

We'll commit to investing to develop new, greener, products and processes.

Funded from the revenues that are raised.

And as a downpayment Mr Speaker, we'll award £20m now from existing departmental budgets to businesses and universities, to stimulate new thinking and rapid solutions in this area during the call for evidence.

Mr Speaker,

We are delivering on our plan.

With a balanced approach.

Restoring the public finances.

Investing in our economy and our public services.

Raising productivity through our modern industrial strategy.

Building the homes our people need.

Tackling the environmental challenges that threaten our future.

Embracing technological change, seizing the opportunities ahead.

As we build our vision of a country that works for everyone.

An economy where prosperity and opportunity are in reach of all.

Wherever they live.

Whatever their gender, colour, creed or background.

Where talent and hard work alone determine success.

A beacon of enterprise and innovation.

An outward looking, free-trading nation.

One that is confident that our best days lie ahead of us.

A force for good in the world.

A country we can all be proud to pass on to our children.

And, I commend this statement to the House.

[Help GB Work Well case study highlights science and innovation in health and safety.](#)

During national science week, HSE want to share a case study about how Crossrail's commitment to its workforce uses a science and innovation approach to provide a safe and healthy working environment for drill operatives.

Crossrail recognised early on in their project that innovation and the use and development of new technology had the potential to manage the risks posed by such a project. Championing innovation from the top of the organisation was instrumental to the changes they wanted to make and funding was provided. Everyone was involved and encouraged to bring forward new and innovative ideas.

One challenge faced by Crossrail was the fitting of supporting bracketry for the electrical cable management systems, overhead power and firefighting systems within the railway tunnel environment. There was a requirement to drill some 250,000 holes. To meet this challenge, a bespoke automated drilling rig was developed, which provided multiple drilling points to create service connection holes.

Whilst the potential for increased productivity initiated this project, the core value of safety and the welfare of the workers was paramount. This resulted in the focus being on improving the working environment for operatives. The innovations made to the drilling rig reduced, and under certain conditions eliminated, the issue of hand arm vibration, reduced the need for manual handling, and provided a key health benefit – the control of Silica dust.

For most of its use on the Crossrail project, the rig has mostly been used along the rails of the tunnels. The changes made provided flexibility to allow the rig to be mounted on tyre mounted vehicles, allowing the holes to be drilled where the track hadn't been laid. This gave the programme some schedule benefit with more work fronts being made available.

The process for setting up the drilling operation included a scientific approach using a 3D scan of the tunnel, development of the programme of data for the machine to operate and input of that data to the machine. The rig was designed and constructed to be capable of drilling 16 holes at a time,

working through 250 metres of tunnel a shift. Supporting data suggests that undertaking the same operation manually would complete some 30 metres a shift.

The business benefits of this approach included elimination of setting out resources within the tunnel environment, saving time and reducing safety and health risks at the work face. This was the first time this piece of equipment has been used in an operational environment in the UK. Developing a solution to improve safety and health while also delivering programme / schedule benefits has proved invaluable and can be of benefit to others in the construction tunnelling environment going forward.

This equipment was a wonderful example of collaborative working across the Crossrail project environment, linking client, designers and contractor's delivery teams, who contributed valuable time and resources into making the rig a success.

There is no doubt that the process and schedule benefits will provide some element of commercial saving but the relevance in terms of improving health and safety in the workplace provided the inspiration for engineers on the project and we hope can inspire others in the future to demonstrate that innovative thinking can effectively align health, safety, cost and schedule benefits.

Further details on the development and use of the equipment will be available on the Crossrail Learning Legacy Website.

Make your commitment today visit [make a commitment](#) to join Crossrail in playing a part in #HelpGBWorkWell during British Science Week #BSW18

[News story: New offshore patrol vessel named HMS Trent](#)

Within the next few days the 90-metre warship, which is the third to be named following HMS Forth and HMS Medway, will take to the water for the first time and make the short journey across the Clyde from Govan to Scotstoun where she will be fitted out for sea trials.

The ship's sponsor, Mrs Pamela Potts, officially named the ship by pressing a button to smash a bottle of gin, which was distilled close to the River Trent, against the hull. Trent's lady sponsor Mrs Potts is the wife of Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, Director General of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.

HMS Trent will, alongside her sister ships Forth, Medway, Tamar and Spey, make a significant contribution to the defence of the UK by performing vital

counter-terrorism, anti-smuggling and other maritime security operations to secure the UK's borders.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Guto Bebb, said:

As the third of five Offshore Patrol Vessels being built in Scotland, HMS Trent will soon be part of a fleet of highly capable ships. These new vessels will keep the UK safe by conducting counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, anti-smuggling and other vital maritime operations. UK Defence has invested in an unprecedented ship-building production line in Glasgow and the city's shipyards with their 1,700 highly skilled engineers and technicians, benefiting from full order books for the next two decades.

The sixth Royal Navy vessel to bear the name, HMS Trent will be armed with a medium-calibre gun and a flight deck capable of accommodating a Merlin helicopter.

DE&S Chief of Materiel (Ships), Sir Simon Bollom, said:

This is another welcome milestone in the delivery of the Royal Navy's new Offshore Patrol Vessel fleet – one which we are celebrating alongside our partners in the Royal Navy and industry.

We look forward to the delivery of the remaining OPVs and good progress in the Type 26 build programme.

The work to build the new OPV fleet is sustaining jobs and the shipbuilding skills vital to the construction of the new Type 26 Frigate fleet. The first Type 26, HMS Glasgow, is currently under construction in Govan.

Following a period of rigorous sea trials, HMS Trent is expected to be delivered to the Royal Navy in the second half of 2018.

[Speech by President Juncker at the Plenary Session of the European Parliament ahead of the European Council meeting of 22 and 23 March](#)

2018

Monsieur le Président, re-bonjour.

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés,

Just under two weeks ago I returned from a tour around the Western Balkans. It was a memorable trip for many reasons.

What struck me the most was the passion and conviction in the European Union. This gave me a renewed sense of belief and hope: that if a region, a dramatic region like the Western Balkans is so determined to reform from top to bottom in order to join our Union, then we must be a Union worth being part of. The Western Balkans clearly see much more in us than we ourselves see in our Union. I want to see this same belief in our Union across all 27 Member States.

Of course there is a great deal of work to be done. All bilateral conflicts must be resolved and more unity is needed. Each of the Western Balkan partners must continue their reform path, especially when it comes to the rule of law and fundamental freedoms and values.

As I said to all leaders in the region, there will be no fast-tracking. We will put substance over speed. Each case will be taken on its own merits with no fixed dates or firm deadlines.

But I came back from the trip more convinced than ever that this is our shared future. It is about reconciling our history and geography.

But it is also a reason more to focus on building a stronger, more democratic and united Union.

This is what the March European Council is about.

I would like to thank this House and the Bulgarian Presidency for leading the way in recent weeks. The breakthrough on posted workers will ensure that fairness comes first in our labour market. As we collectively agreed: equal pay for equal work in the same place. The agreement on 5G shows we are serious about our digital leadership and equipping ourselves with the tools we need to thrive in the society of tomorrow.

Mr President,

Europe believes in open and fair trade, based on a global rulebook. Our economy depends on it, our consumers expect it. But as I have said all along: we are not naïve free traders.

So we will not sit idly by if our industry is hit with unfair trade measures that put European jobs at risk. We will defend our workers, we will defend our industry, and we will do so respecting the rules that the world agreed to under WTO.

The United States has regrettably decided to impose restrictions on steel and aluminium which will impact a significant amount of EU trade. We believe in win-win trade, but going it alone on tariffs is a lose-lose for all.

Yes, the global steel industry has an over-capacity problem. This is why since December, along with Japan and the U.S., we have been looking at how to address this issue globally.

Commissioner Malmström met with both of her counterparts this weekend to deepen that cooperation further. And she also expressed our concerns to the United States on the tariffs they imposed on national security grounds.

Exports from the European Union are clearly not a threat to the United States' national security. We are long-standing and trusted security partners and we work together to keep each other safe and secure. And as their own figures show, the U.S. only needs 3% of its annual steel production to serve the Pentagon's needs.

We will keep making this point in the run-up to the European Council next week. We are expecting more clarity from the American side in the coming days and we will continue to work with our partners to push for an exemption to these measures.

But as always we will – and we have to – prepare for all eventualities.

Should the need arise, the European Union will respond in three ways.

First, under WTO rules we have the right to rebalance these measures, and we stand ready to do so.

Secondly, we will be ready with safeguard measures if there is a surge in imports into the European Union as a result of the U.S. closing its market.

Thirdly, we will seek dispute settlement consultations in the WTO, in conjunction with other affected countries.

Herr Präsident, meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren,

wenn wir unserer Union mehr Stärke, mehr Handlungsfähigkeit verleihen wollen, müssen wir auch in die Architektur unserer Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion investieren und sie zukunftsfester machen. Die Umstände dafür sind so günstig wie selten zuvor.

Die europäische Wirtschaft wächst über Erwarten, in den vergangenen zwei Jahren mit mehr als 2 Prozent, und sie wächst schneller als die US-amerikanische Wirtschaft. Gleichzeitig haben wir in Europa mehr Menschen in Arbeit als jemals zuvor: 236.3 Millionen – ein neuer Rekord.

Das sollte uns Bestätigung und Ansporn zugleich sein, unseren Reformkurs konsequent fortzusetzen, und genau das tun wir. So legt die Kommission heute, am frühen Nachmittag, ein Paket zur Bankenunion vor. Es geht darum, die Finanzstabilität zu sichern, indem wir uns noch stärker mit notleidenden Krediten beschäftigen. Dort haben wir schon einige Erfolge erzielt.

Seit 2014 ist der durchschnittliche Anteil notleidender Kredite in der EU schon um ein Drittel gesunken. Dabei wollen wir es nicht belassen. Das ist umso wichtiger, weil bei der Vollendung der Bankenunion Risiko-Minderung und Risikoteilung Hand in Hand gehen.

Eine vollendete Bankenunion wäre ein wichtiger Schritt, um unsere Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion zu stärken. Genau darum geht es beim Gipfel. Über die Vorschläge, die die Kommission im Dezember vorgelegt hat, haben wir hier im Hause und bei einem früheren Eurogipfel schon diskutiert. Wir wollen den Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus schrittweise zu einem Europäischen Währungsfonds ausbauen. Außerdem wollen wir die Mitgliedsländer und solche, die es werden wollen, bei den Reformen unterstützen sowie mit einer Stabilisierungsfunktion sicherstellen, dass selbst im Falle von schweren Schocks Investitionen in Bildung und Infrastruktur weiterhin gewährleistet bleiben.

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues,

Compléter l'Union économique et monétaire n'est pas une fin en soi. C'est un moyen de créer les conditions d'une vie meilleure, d'une vie plus prospère et plus équitable pour tous nos concitoyens.

Egalité des chances, conditions de travail équitables, protection et insertion sociales doivent devenir une réalité pour tous. C'est pour cela que nous nous sommes engagés à mettre en œuvre le Socle européen des droits sociaux.

16 millions de nos concitoyens, par exemple, vivent et travaillent dans un autre Etat membre que le leur. C'est deux fois plus qu'il y a dix ans et ce phénomène ne fera que s'amplifier. Ces personnes ont, comme tout à chacun, des droits qui doivent être respectés et effectivement mis en œuvre dans un marché européen du travail.

C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission va présenter aujourd'hui sa proposition de création d'une Autorité européenne du travail qui ne viendra pas se substituer aux autorités nationales mais qui renforcera la coopération et la coordination entre elles.

Ceux qui travaillent à temps partiel, ceux qui relèvent du statut des travailleurs intérimaires, ont eux aussi droit à une protection sociale convenable. C'est une responsabilité commune, celle de mettre en œuvre le Socle des droits sociaux.

Il faut évidemment continuer à parfaire le marché intérieur, notamment les marchés de l'électricité qui, en Europe, s'ils étaient totalement interconnectés, les Européens permettraient aux Européens de réaliser des économies de 40 milliards d'euros par année. Si l'Europe numérique fonctionnait, cela nous apporterait 415 milliards d'euros de croissance nouvelle chaque année. Donc rien que sur l'interconnectivité de l'électricité et de la mise en place totale de l'Europe numérique, nous réaliserions un bénéfice – si je peux m'exprimer de la sorte – de 450 milliards d'euros.

Nous avons tous, je crois, conscience qu'il serait essentiel, souhaitable, bienvenu que nous puissions mettre en œuvre tous les éléments dont je viens de vous parler d'ici les élections européennes de l'année prochaine.

Commission welcomes adoption of far-reaching new transparency rules for tax advisers in the EU

The decision was taken by EU Economic and Financial Affairs ministers at their meeting in Brussels this morning. First proposed by the Commission in June 2017, the new measures build on a multitude of ambitious rules to fight tax avoidance and to boost tax transparency already agreed at EU level under the Juncker Commission.

Once in force, tax intermediaries who provide their clients with complex cross-border financial schemes that could help avoid tax will be obliged to report these structures to their tax authorities. In turn, EU Member States will exchange this information with each other, further increasing scrutiny around the activities of tax planners and advisers.

Following the agreement, Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"The new rules agreed today confirm the EU as the world leader in tax transparency. In future, intermediaries will have to share with tax administrations the schemes they sell to their clients. Tax administrations will then have access to the information they need to put an end to the aggressive tax planning schemes eroding their tax bases. This agreement is a further step towards more openness and better cooperation, facilitating fairer and more effective taxation throughout the EU."*

Recent media leaks such as the Panama and Paradise Papers have exposed how some intermediaries actively assist companies and individuals to escape taxation, usually through complex cross-border schemes.

Cross-border tax planning schemes can bear certain characteristics – or 'hallmarks' – that indicate a risk of tax avoidance or evasion. Such hallmarks can include the use of cross-border losses to reduce tax liability, the use of special preferential tax regimes, or arrangements through countries that do not meet international good governance standards. Intermediaries that design or provide schemes bearing any one of these key hallmarks will now have to report these schemes to the tax authorities before they are used.

Member States will automatically exchange the information that they receive on the tax planning schemes through a centralised database, giving them early

warning on new risks of avoidance and enabling them to take measures to block harmful arrangements and carry out audits more effectively. The requirement to report a scheme does not necessarily imply that it is harmful, only that it merits scrutiny by the tax authorities. But Member States have also agreed to implement effective and dissuasive penalties for those companies that do not comply with the transparency measures, creating a powerful new deterrent for those that encourage or facilitate tax abuse.

Next Steps

The new reporting requirements will enter into force on 1 July 2020, with EU Member States obliged to exchange information every 3 months after that. The first exchange willll take place by 31st October 2020.

For More Information

[Q&A on new transparency rules for intermediaries](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[DG TAXUD webpage on the new rules for tax intermediaries](#)

[Video on new rules for tax intermediaries](#)