

## The consequences of deep Tory cuts to HMRC risk undermining efforts to tackle tax avoidance – Dowd

**Peter Dowd MP, Labour's Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury**, responding to reports that HMRC is struggling to deal with the growing number of cases of tax avoidance, said:

“The consequences of deep Tory cuts to HMRC are being felt, and risk undermining its efforts to tackle tax avoidance and evasion.

“Labour has consistently said that only a fully resourced and funded HMRC will be able to effectively tackle the scourge of tax evasion and its huge cost to the taxpayer. These latest revelations only further confirm some of our worst fears.”

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## West End history #dundeewestend

Airlie Terrace – now DUSA (from the University of Dundee Archives) :



# Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the ceremony marking the beginning of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Добър вечер (*good evening*)!

For my good friend Donald: that means good evening.

Mister President of the Republic,

Prime Minister,

Presidents from here and there,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Excellencies, that is for all of you,

It is indeed a great pleasure to be here in this splendid national theatre for the launch of the first ever Bulgarian Presidency. We have all been waiting for it: I am sure all Bulgarians here remember the clocks hanging all over Sofia and counting down the days to the country's EU accession.

Eleven years ago – in 2007 – Bulgaria joined the European family. But the process, of course, began well before that date. And personally, I feel to be a small part of Bulgaria's remarkable EU journey ever since the day I signed the Accession Treaty in April 2005 – when I was Prime Minister of Luxembourg and holding the Presidency of the European Union.

You have to know, had I refused to sign, you would not be a member – so be grateful – I was in a good mood, in an optimistic mood, in a future-oriented mood, because for years as a Prime Minister and as a Finance Minister of Luxembourg I did admire the performances of the Bulgarian society, mainly of the modest part of the Bulgarian society. How many efforts, how many sacrifices have been delivered by all those who strongly believed in the European future of Bulgaria? So it is for us and to us to say thank you to Bulgaria.

I remember another moment from that day: it was in a Luxembourgish abbey when I heard for the first time the cosmic "Mystery of Bulgarian voices". These voices have literally travelled to space when a recording of these unique voices was placed on the US voyager in 1977. This is quite an achievement already. However, we do not actually know if there was someone in space to listen to them! The Bulgarians were absent from space. But now, tonight, there is a potential audience of 500 million people. In that sense: the Bulgarian voice will be heard loudly and prominently in Europe – tonight and in the next six months and beyond that.

Bulgaria is a country I have a special affection for: for its people, for its culture, for the *шопска* (shopska salad) and the *луканка* (lukanka, Bulgarian salami) – mainly for those.

Your Presidency is taking place at a crucial moment when the European Union must deliver on a number of initiatives for our citizens and shape our Union's future.

I can think of nobody better than my friend Boyko to carry Europe forward and act as a bridge builder in our Union and beyond. I know he will do this with force; he is doing everything with force – *сила* – because he is a strong and committed European.

You can count on us – on Donald, on the Parliament, on the Commission. Because your place is in Europe. And your place is in Schengen. And your place is in the euro. We will work for that. The Commission will be by Bulgaria's side: united we stand strong and united we will stand.

Good luck; best wishes.

Благодаря! For Donald: that means "thank you".

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## [The plight of the coal industry](#)

The third of the commanding heights of the 1940s economy to be nationalised alongside steel and rail was the coal industry. It employed 700,000 employees in the later 1940s, producing around 200 million tonnes of coal a year. The number of employees slumped to just 235,000 by 1979. Many of the employees lost their jobs under Labour governments, who accepted a large number of pit closures as the industry struggled with costs and falling demand. More job losses followed in the 1980s and 1990s, along with a bitter strike about whether individual pits could be economic or were exhausted.

Today there is no deep mined coal produced in the UK, and a very small opencast coal industry. We now import most of the reduced amount of coal we do need. An industry employing well over 700,000 at peak has all but disappeared. It was nationalised for most of the post war period, but this did nothing to arrest the long term decline. Indeed, there were occasions when the nationalised management took too pessimistic a view of the economic prospects for individual pits. I remember helping the miners at Tower Colliery take over their mine from the NCB when the NCB said it had to shut for economic reasons, and go on to make a success of mining more coal from it for many years.

The nationalised concern did have substantial investment programmes from time to time, developing a range of new super pits with better machinery and operating at larger scale. None of this arrested the long term decline in

coal use and coal output. More recently governments have turned anti coal on environmental grounds.

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## [Speech by President Donald Tusk at the opening ceremony of the Bulgarian presidency](#)

*My beloved Fatherland, how beautiful you are!  
How blue your vast skies are!  
How your sights magically change!  
Each glance reveals ever newer beauty.*

These words of Ivan Vazov, the patron of this place, capture the spirit of today's celebration well. "Each glance reveals ever newer beauty" – this reflection is present with me today, as President of the European Council and a Pole. Because as a Pole I understand well how much work, courage and determination it cost you, Bulgarians, to achieve European success for your fatherland. No one gave you anything for free. It was you, in the first place, who were the authors of this historic breakthrough, this "ever newer beauty".

For the younger generations, the theatre in which we find ourselves, is probably more closely associated with the renowned actor, Zachary Baharov, and his role in the cult series "Game of Thrones", than with the poetry of Vazov. The history of the Balkans is more dramatic and interesting than the screenplay of "Game of Thrones", even if there are no dragons in it. We would all like it if the present and future of the Balkans were less like dramatic screenplays. Stability, security, prosperity – this is what the people of the whole region deserve. And the EU's purpose is to help make this screenplay a reality.

It is a good thing that one of the priorities of the Bulgarian presidency is the future of the Western Balkans. Who, if not you – the descendants of Spartacus, the inheritors of the oldest European statehood, you, who never ever lost a flag in any battle – would be better placed to rise to this important and exceptionally difficult task, that is to renew the European perspective for the whole of the region. You have always been determined and brave, which you have also confirmed in recent years, and this is why I believe that during the presidency you will be just as efficient as Hristo Stoichkov was at the World Cup a quarter of a century ago. With a Prime Minister, who could strike fear into many a Thracian warrior, you will certainly make it.

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