Question for written answer E-003220/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Tax avoidance

A recent investigation by a coalition of trade unions and civil society organisations found evidence that McDonald’s saved more than a billion euro in taxes in Europe between 2009 and 2013, using a network of subsidiaries in Luxembourg and Switzerland.

McDonald’s strategy to minimise its tax bill allegedly involved shifting its headquarters from London to Geneva and creating a holding company in Luxembourg, with a Swiss subsidiary, which enabled it to benefit from low rates of tax in both countries. The Luxembourg holding company employed only 13 people but had a turnover of EUR 3.7 billion between 2009 and 2013, when it paid only EUR 16 million in taxes, giving an effective tax rate of 0.4%.

The report shows that 90 of the 124 companies assessed in the Transparency International report (6 November 2014) do not divulge how much tax they pay in the countries where they operate. These latest revelations, which come on top of similar information published courtesy of LuxLeaks, demonstrate the need for more transparency in the publication of financial data by multinational companies.

What is the Commission’s assessment of these figures and what action will it take to step up the fight against these iniquitous practices?