



FEE Tax Day 2013

'Towards responsible taxation? The role of policymakers - tax administrations - tax advisors – taxpayers'

Brussels, 2 October 2013

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

Opening speech: **André Killesse**, President of the Federation of European Accountants

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear speakers, dear colleagues, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the third edition of the FEE Tax Day.

Taxation is one of the major cornerstones of the accountancy profession. Professional accountants help business comply with their often complex obligations and find out what their fair share of tax is.

This is particularly important for SMEs and start-ups that cannot afford large tax departments.

But we should not forget that professional accountants also help governments design better tax regimes, simplify administrative obligations and fight tax fraud.

FEE has two very active working parties led by two prominent experts:

- Friedrich Roedler, from our Austrian member bodies KWT and IWP, and Ralph Korf, from our German member body, the IDW.
- I would like to thank the two of them, as well as Petra Weymüller, FEE Senior Manager. My thanks are also extended to the entire FEE Team for making this event possible.

Today citizens and stakeholders are asking more from business and their advisors, from taxpayers, from governments and tax administrations. All these players have to ask themselves what is a socially responsible attitude towards taxation.

Different players from different backgrounds have different views on what responsible taxation could be. This is why FEE is fostering this debate.

It is often said that with great powers come great responsibilities. I think that this is very true and very relevant for all of us here today.

Tax policymakers have great powers to craft legislation, decide which sectors should benefit from lighter or heavier taxation. Tax administrations have the power to collect taxes, investigate and ensure that due taxes are properly paid. Tax advisors, with their expertise, have the capacity to explain their clients the various options offered by complicated tax legislation.

However, with these powers come responsibilities: Responsibility to maintain a healthy and competitive economic environment, responsibility to abide the rule of law, responsibility to deliver on public policies and public services commitments.

As part of its Europe 2020 strategy, the Commission aims at empowering EU citizens and ensuring that tax rules do not discourage them from benefiting from the internal market. The overarching goal is to make the EU a "smart, sustainable and inclusive economy". There is still some work ahead.

Tax has a key role to play here and this is a shared responsibility of policymakers, taxpayers and tax professionals.

I truly hope that you will use this day as an opportunity to discuss these issues and take home some interesting food for thought!

Before "digitally" giving the floor to Commissioner Semeta, I would like once again to thank you all for your presence, and wish you a very inspiring and fruitful Tax Day 2013.

Thank you very much!