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## Britain Contemplates Online Retailer Tax

Chancellor Philip Hammond has [stated](#) that Britain will consider implementing a unilateral tax for online retail sales. Discussing recent GDP figures, Hammond noted that as the prevalence of online shopping increases and the nature of high street and traditional business models evolve, so too must the means of taxing traditional and digital business.

Hammond said renegotiating international tax treaties was the best means to “ensure that taxation is fair between businesses doing business the traditional way and those doing business online...because many of the big online businesses are international companies”, but that if a consensus cannot be reached at international level then “tax on online platform businesses based on value generated” which could help to “rebalance the playing field” was “certainly something we’d be prepared to consider”.



## European Investment Bank Hosts Blockchain Challenge Event

The European Investment Bank (EIB) recently [hosted](#) a Blockchain Challenge at its headquarters in Luxembourg on the simplification and streamlining of existing financial processes, attended by treasurers, EIB employees, and representatives from financial institutions.

Coders also in attendance were tasked with using blockchain technology to develop a method to improve the transaction process relating to short-term financing instruments, by collaborating with attendees on the technicalities of the financial processes.

The use of blockchain and virtual currency transactions to perpetrate tax evasion was recently examined in a workshop hosted by the European Parliament’s Committee on financial crimes, tax evasion and tax avoidance (TAX3) and is the subject of an upcoming OECD Forum.

## Finland’s Prime Minister Discusses Tax Agenda

At a recent public appearance, the Finnish Prime Minister, Juha Sipilä, [discussed](#) the government’s budget proposal and its implications for taxation.



Mr Sipilä reportedly stated that upcoming government budget negotiations would centre around taxation issues, and that his government had decided not to increase personal income taxation in 2019. Low and middle-income earner tax reductions are said to be a priority for the party.

Increased benefit payments and pension payments will also feature in the upcoming discussions, as well as emergency assistance relief for Finnish farmers.



## Luxembourg Introduces VAT Grouping Law

A new law as regards VAT grouping has [recently entered into force](#) in Luxembourg.

Luxembourg-based entities who share organisational, economic or financial links are now entitled to establish a VAT group. The new rules will provide administrative simplification by enabling the group to file group declarations. Additionally, the new law will potentially enable groups to recover what would previously have been non-deductible input VAT.

The law entered into force on 31 July 2018, and was published on 10 August 2018.



## European Commission Fair Taxation Seminars

The European Commission is hosting a [series of seminars](#) concerning the issue of fair taxation in the European Union. The Commission has organised the events to facilitate engagement with policy makers, business representatives, academics and interested citizens to increase tax transparency and remedy tax abuse issues.

The final two seminars in the series will take place on 19 September in Rome, and the final seminar in Dublin has been rescheduled to take place on 26 September, rather than in October. Those wishing to attend the seminars can register for the events via the following [link](#).