

1436 No platform for unethical companies passed 21 November 2013

Proposed by Elliot Folan (Doctor Who Appreciation Society)

Seconded by Lauren Sloan (Ethical Officer)

This Union Notes:

1. That the union has begun reviewing and consulting on the structure of union house, and the services we provide in it;
2. That there have been suggestions that a new coffee shop, managed by a chain, might replace the existing Hive one;
3. That the issue of tax avoidance by corporations and rich individuals has become a major political issue since 2010;
4. That tax avoidance by corporations has been estimated at £4.1bn by the Treasury and at up to £12bn by campaigners¹;
5. That the UEA Careers service, and the university generally has, in the past, invited companies that engage in or promote tax avoidance to recruit students on campus;
6. That the UK government is using lack of tax revenue as a reason to cut public services, including tripling tuition fees to £9,000.

This Union believes:

1. That the union's policy on chains and shops hosted in the union should be clarified before the consultation process ends, as part of the input into the #WhatIf consultation;
2. That tax avoidance is immoral as it deprives the state of democratically set revenue that could be used to fund higher education, the National Health Service, emergency services and other public services;
3. That companies who promote or engage in tax avoidance or evasion are engaging in an immoral practice;
4. That public pressure has already contributed to making tax avoidance a major political issue, convincing companies to address their avoidance and government to focus more on the issue;
5. That the government's action so far does not go nearly far enough to address the issue, and so the need for public pressure remains;
6. That is insulting to students to invite companies onto campus who promote or engage in tax avoidance while fees go up and courses close, with lack of revenue given as an excuse;
7. That, nonetheless, due to the widespread nature of the practice, a blanket boycott of all products from companies that avoid tax would limit the union's purchasing options.

Union therefore resolves:

1. To refuse any company that enables tax avoidance, or unethical practices that contradict union policy, access to Union House or other union-owned premises for recruitment, advertising or other activities that relate to

¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/money/tax/britains-missing-billions-counting-the-true-cost-of-corporate-tax-avoidance-8341096.html>

promoting the company, and to inform those companies of the reason for doing so;

2. To refuse to host, in Union House or through any union outlet, any branch of a company that engages in tax avoidance or whose business practices contradict union policy, and to inform those companies of the reason for doing so;
3. To refuse advertising space to companies that engage in or promote tax avoidance or whose business practices contradict union policy, and to inform those companies of the reason for doing so;
4. To offer support to any student who peacefully protests against the presence of such companies on campus generally;
5. To promote this policy to campus, local and national media so as to ensure its widespread knowledge.