

# EU Commission: Bilateral tax agreements between Switzerland and EU states possible

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## At a glance

The EU Tax Commissioner Šemeta clarified in a question and answer session in the plenary of the European Parliament on October 25 that the EU member states can in principle negotiate bilateral agreements with third countries even if they affect the EU Savings Tax Directive.

The Commissioner answered questions from Parliament on the conclusion of tax agreements that Switzerland has concluded with the UK and Germany. According to Šemeta's answer, such agreements must respect applicable EU law and not interfere with exclusive EU competences. However, the EU does not have such competence in tax matters.

"The EU Commission is thus showing that the German tax agreement with Switzerland does not contradict the planned European agreement," emphasized the Chairman of the CDU/CSU Group in the European Parliament, Werner Langen (CDU). He rejected the assertion by Green MEP Sven Giegold that the EU Commission had harshly criticized Germany and announced infringement proceedings. The opposite was the case.

The German agreement with Switzerland is important for the rapid taxation of untaxed foreign assets, said Langen. "We cannot wait years for an EU agreement to be renegotiated and come into force."

**Further information:**

[Speech by Commissioner Šemeta](#)