



AFRICA - "Greater financial transparency" is what two Bishops ask the European Union

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "The challenge of implementing the structural reforms needed to counter tax evasion and the opacity of the financial system is urgent," says an open letter signed by Mgr. Gabriel Mbilingi, Archbishop of Lubango, President of the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé and Vice President of SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar), and by Mgr. Ludwig Schwarz, Bishop of Linz, in Austria, on the occasion of the meeting held on 22 May in Brussels on behalf of the European Union Council, which was dedicated among other things to a more equitable taxation and the fight against tax evasion. The document, sent to Fides Agency, stresses that "every year, Countries all over the world lose billions of potential revenue, with an annual average of money illegally taken abroad by developing Countries which ranges from 725 to 810 billion."

Recalling the previous commitments of the European Union Council to combat the illicit transfer of money from one Country to another, the two Bishops hope that concrete steps are taken in this field. These include: the creation of an international standard for the automatic exchange of financial information also outside the EU; the creation of national and regional bank records easily accessible to the tax authorities and courts; the strengthening of the rules against tax fraud and illegal financial flows. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 20/05/2013)