

## **CURRENT REPORT No. 10/2017**

### **Date of Report:**

2 February 2017

### **Re:**

Company's position regarding decision by Head of Tax Control Office in Lublin

### **Update:**

In reference to current report 20/2016 of 2 March 2016 and current report 9/2017 of 31 January 2017, the Management Board of Emperia Holding S.A. ("Company"), based in Warsaw, announces that the Company does not agree with the findings and the legal assessment carried out by the Head of the Tax Control Office in Lublin in the Decision ("Decision"), issued in an inspection proceeding regarding declared tax bases and the accuracy of calculations and payments of corporate income tax for 2011.

#### Factual status:

- As a result of an arrangement of 21 December 2011, P1 sp. z o.o. (subsidiary of Emperia Holding S.A.) sold its distribution segment to Eurocash S.A. for approx. PLN 1.1bn. After the above transaction, P1 on the one hand ceased to perform its holding-company functions (in relation to the distribution companies segment) while on the other hand it held substantial cash, which had to be immediately and rationally used by Emperia Group.
- On 29 December 2011, an Extraordinary General Meeting of P1 (i.e. the sole shareholder - Emperia Holding S.A.), in line with the company's founding agreement, carried out a mandatory cancellation of 13 200 000 shares of P1 in exchange for a consideration of PLN 1.090bn. The reduction in P1's share capital was registered through a decision of the District Court in Lublin Wschód, 6th Commercial Division of the National Court Register, on 27 April 2012.
- According to the Act on Corporate Income Tax, the consideration received by Emperia Holding S.A. from the mandatory share cancellation is exempt from tax.

#### Charges made by the Tax Control Office:

- According to the Head of the Tax Control Office in Lublin, the mandatory cancellation of shares in subsidiary P1 was illusive and the legal activity performed on 29 December 2011 was actually a voluntary share cancellation. This is supposed to be proven by, among other things, the fact that P1 was controlled, in capital and personal terms, by Emperia Holding, and by the fact that grounds for the mandatory cancellation were introduced in P1's founding agreement only when the distribution segment was transferred to it. The Tax Control Office considered that Emperia Holding de facto had agreed to the share cancellation, making it easier to qualify this activity as a voluntary cancellation;

- The Tax Control Office considered that "the parties' intent was to form relations between Emperia Holding S.A. and P1 in a way that, while maintaining legal compliance, they would aim to reach an objective that would be against tax law." The Tax Control Office made a reference to the tax equality and universality rules and to the autonomy of tax law;
- In consequence, according to the Tax Control Office, the consideration for the alleged transaction consisting of a voluntary cancellation of P1 shares, constituted tax income for Emperia Holding in 2011 (tax arrears of approx. PLN 142.5m).

Company's position:

- The decision by the Tax Control Office is in clear violation of tax law but also civil and corporate law. The Tax Control Office incorrectly equates the illusiveness of legal activities with formulating the transaction in a manner that does not bring the expected tax proceedings;
- The Extraordinary General Meeting resolution on the mandatory share cancellation may not be considered to be illusive because illusiveness does not apply to one-sided legal activities that are not addressed to anyone in particular;
- There is no legal basis whatsoever for concluding that this matter involves a voluntary cancellation of P1's shares. This form of cancellation requires a share purchase agreement to be executed between the shareholder and the company in order for the company to cancel the shares. No such agreement was executed - which precludes concluding that this was a voluntary cancellation of P1's shares;
- The mandatory cancellation was carried out in compliance with the law and the company's founding agreement, which is confirmed by the register court's decision. Therefore, the Tax Control Office's decision is in contravention to a binding court ruling;
- Despite the fact that the dispute de facto revolves around there being a legal relation (the acquisition by P1 of its own shares for cancellation), the Tax Control Office refused to file a suit in a general court to determine that such an activity had been performed - citing a "lack of objective doubt." The above proves that the Tax Control Office does not have evidence allowing this to be determined by an independent court and, in violation of tax proceeding rules, is making standalone rulings in the area of private law.
- In reference to the principle of equity, the Tax Control Office seems to be assuming that in the circumstances of the matter the sole economically justified transaction was a voluntary share cancellation. The business objective of the share cancellation was the transfer of financial resources from P1 to the Group. According to the law, the above objective could have alternatively been achieved through other legal activities that are exempt from tax based on European Union law. The economic sense of the share cancellation should be compared to generating income from equity (as in the case of company liquidation or dividend payment) rather than income from a transaction (from the sale of property rights).
- The circumstances of the matter and the accusations made by the Tax Control Office had been analysed by renowned representatives of academia, tax law and corporate law, who have considered that the position of the Tax Control Office is completely unjustified and in violation of the law.

In connection with the above, the Company does not plan on recognising a provision in the amount of tax arrears indicated in the Decision.

The Management Board does not expect this tax issue to negatively impact Emperia Group's development plans.

**Legal Basis:**

Art. 17 (1) of Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on market abuse