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The Festival puts the spotlight on the man who made the international banking system tremble

HERVÈ FALCIANI: "INFORMATION IS THE CURE FOR EVASION"

"It is difficult not to pay taxes illegally, but it is easy not to pay them legally". Hervè Falciani, the man whose "list" made the international banking system tremble, went straight to the heart of the issue.
In a packed hall in the municipal library of Trento, too small to house all those who were curious to see the man who handed the media the names of more than 130 thousand current account holders at the Swiss branch of the banking colossus HSBC, Falciani underlined that today it is possible not to pay taxes in an entirely legal manner, through the many tax havens present around the world. "The cure for all this is information", repeated Falciani on more than one occasion.-

The actions of Falciani, a Franco-Italian engineer born in Montecarlo, have caused embarrassment in many countries, which did not wish to make use of the names on the list, at least initially. A few weeks ago in Italy, the Supreme Court authorised the tax authorities to use the "Falciani list" as a source of evidence, making it easier to pursue those evading tax. "Many countries", said Falciani "are still not collaborating and allow large companies not to pay taxes, at the expense of smaller companies, which end up paying twice. In order to combat this more information is required and more popular participation. Laws are not enough", he added "because inside the banks there are those who have the job of getting round them. My main objective is to help the authorities to develop a method of defence in order to combat evasion", he continued.
For this reason Hervè Falciani set up an international platform that proposes to help the "alarm launchers", people like himself and many others, who decide to report the illegal situations that they witness. In the USA they are called whistle blowers and they are protected by law. The platform is called PILA (Plateforme internationale de protection des lanceurs d'alerte) and has already begun to bear fruit. Just recently, Falciani became a consultant for the Spanish political movement Podemos in the fight against evasion, and he works with other authorities in various countries around the world.
"Without information we cannot adopt any concrete action. We need to deal with the weak points of the banking system and Switzerland is one of these", he commented. "I wish to share my experience, which can be considered as an opportunity for all countries to better regulate the tax sector, involving citizens more extensively. Tax havens will always exist, until we succeed in removing the reason for them to be there. We can only combat the bank secrecy that lies at the root of evasion and inequality with information".
At the end of the session there was a question from the public, asking whether he would do it all again. Falciani, who lived under protection for many years, replied: "Certainly, although on the basis of my experience, I would perhaps change a few things".
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