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Time to respond to the public consultation on whistleblower protection!

For those of you that have not yet responded to the European Commission's public consultation on whistleblower protection in Europe, now is the time! The deadline closes on 29th May. The Greens/EFA group has put together a submission to the consultation which we are publishing here in case you'd like to use it for inspiration. The consultation can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=54254

We prepared 9 principles for whistleblower legislation, which can be found here or downloaded here in pdf format: https://extranet.greens-efa-service.eu/public/media/file/1/5178

In addition, here is our submission made via the Commission's website: http://extranet.greens-efa-service.eu/public/media/file/1/5180

We also prepared a comprehensive briefing, gathering together a series of examples and sectors in which whistleblower protection is key, and the EU clearly has the competence to legislate. We argue in the briefing that only horizontal whistleblower protection would be a real solution for those who continue to suffer because they revealed information that was in the public interest or that revealed wrongdoing. Read it here: http://extranet.greens-efa-service.eu/public/media/file/1/5181

Finally, for the legal geeks out there, we commissioned a legal study looking at the various competences of the EU and which legal instruments might best be used to protect whistleblowers in both the private and public sectors. You can download it here: http://extranet.greens-efa-service.eu/public/media/file/1/5179

And, if you want an update on how the debate in Brussels on whistleblower protection is advancing, read below!

Update on the whistleblower protection debate in the European Union

When it comes to the possibilities of offering better whistleblower protection, the current context in the European Union gives us reason for hope: The European Parliament has repeatedly called on the European Commission to propose horizontal EU legislation on whistleblower protection, most recently in a report on

the protection of the financial interests of the EU, which has asked the Commission to put forwards whistleblower legislation by the end of the year.

In October 2016, the Council of the European Union, composed of the EU Member States, also requested that the Commission assess the scope for strengthening the protection of whistleblowers in EU law, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The Council of Justice Ministers has also started to engage in discussions on the issue since March 2017.

For its part, the European Commission has taken great strides to push the topic forward, with President Juncker making public commitments on the need to protect whistleblowers, plus the establishment of an inter-service working group within the Commission, the recent launch of a public consultation on the matter, and the decision to conduct an impact assessment. The level of ambition has therefore multiplied, as has the speed at which this issue is being dealt with: the European Commission has actually promised to deliver something, though we don't know what, before the end of 2017.

We have therefore moved into a new phase in the whistleblower protection campaign; with deliberations now revolving around the *nature* or *scope* of EU action on the matter. In the Commission's recently published Inception Impact Assessment, key questions focus on the need for either "horizontal" or "sectorial" action on whistleblower protection, and on whether or not the EU should take legislative action, or rather focus on non-legislative measures.

The Commission's public consultation will end on 29 May and they will then begin to analyse all the results. The submissions are supposed to feed into the Commission's impact assessment, which is currently ongoing.

In the meantime, the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee will draft a report focussing on the protection of whistleblowers in the EU, to be drafted by Virginie Rozière, of the S&D group. She will organise an event with stakeholders on 7 June to gather input for the drafting process. The vote in the JURI committee on the report is scheduled for 28 September.

We believe that it is of utmost importance that any action taken by the EU on the matter should work to change the balance of power so that individuals and workers no longer fear the consequences of reporting wrongdoing or of revealing information that is in the public interest. The EU needs, now more than ever, to show to citizens that it is capable, relevant and committed to defend values that are common to us all.

This is why we are convinced that a robust horizontal Directive to establish minimum levels of protection for whistleblowers across the Union, that covers both the private and public sectors, would be the only real solution.

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Attached documents

PRINCIPLES FOR EUROPEAN WHISTLEBLOWER LEGISLATION
LEGAL BRIEFING BY V.ABAZI
GreensEFA response to public consultation on whistleblower protection
Arguments for EU action to protect whistleblowers_final

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