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Study | 23.04.2018

## Whistleblowers in Europe

### Why we need protection for all

#### Europe needs comprehensive whistleblower protection

There has been widespread coverage in recent years of whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden who exposed widespread surveillance and spying by national governments and telecommunication companies; or Antoine Deltour, who went public with information about the favourable tax deals given to multinational corporations by the Luxembourg government. Despite revealing information that was in the public interest however, both individuals have faced serious repercussions for their whistleblowing, laying bare the inadequacy of existing whistleblower protection. These scandals have convinced the public of the important role whistleblowers play in helping to fight corruption and crime, and a recent study showed that 96% of the public support EU legislation aimed at protecting whistleblowers.

Although tax injustice and privacy have drawn most headlines, it is important to remember that whistleblowers expose wrongdoing in all sectors and industries, both public and private. In countless examples across Europe, individuals continue to expose corruption and other illegal activities or misconduct. In most cases they suffer serious consequences, including harassment, isolation, dismissal, legal action, violence and defamation, not to mention the psychological and financial problems that result from the experience of such hostility or retaliation. If we are to be serious about combatting corruption and crime we urgently need to protect those who are leading the charge, those who are often putting their lives on the line to expose wrongdoing.

The EU thus needs to ensure that protection is given to all whistleblowers. This short report will document some recent whistleblowing cases from each of the Member States, touching upon issues such as corruption, privacy, doping, public health and more. With so many gaps in the protection afforded to whistleblowers across the EU, this report thus renews the long-standing Greens/EFA call for comprehensive, EU-wide protection for whistleblowers. Without such protection, the risk that people who expose wrongdoing are punished will remain. This is a deterrent that only stands to weaken our fight against corruption and crime.

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### **Contact person**



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