



For Immediate Release

23 September 2020

European Countries Finally Act to Strengthen Whistleblower Rights

At least half of EU countries now working to improve whistleblower protection laws

BERLIN / WASHINGTON, DC – At least 14 European Union countries are moving to strengthen legal rights and protections for whistleblowers, one year after EU officials passed mandatory standards for the region.

After decades of largely ignoring the vulnerability of citizens who report corruption, European policymakers finally are taking steps to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. The EU passed legislation last October – known as a [Directive](#) – that requires all 27 EU countries to enable employees to report misconduct, protect them from dismissal and other reprisals, and penalize people who retaliate against whistleblowers.

“Amazingly, 13 EU countries have no whistleblower laws whatsoever. Without the means and safeguards for citizens to report corruption, countless scandals remain covered up,” said Stephen Kohn, Founding Partner of the international whistleblower law firm [Kohn, Kohn & Colapinto, LLP](#), “We hope the Directive will pressure European countries to grant citizens the rights and protections they deserve.”

Each EU country is required to pass its own whistleblower law that complies with the Directive by December 2021. According to research by [Whistleblowing International](#), at least 14 countries have begun this process: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

EU officials passed the Directive following a string of high-profile cases in which every whistleblower was victimized, including [Antoine Deltour and Raphael Halet](#), who revealed tax evasion in Luxembourg; [Ana Garrido](#), who exposed political corruption in Spain; [Stéphanie Gibaud](#), who disclosed tax fraud in France; [Howard Wilkinson](#), who exposed money laundering in Denmark; [Valery Atanasov](#), who revealed misconduct within Malta’s online gambling system, and the anonymous whistleblowers who alleged bribery by [Novartis](#) in Greece.

“There is a pandemic of whistleblower retaliation in Europe. Rather than being thanked for exposing corruption, people are routinely fired, sued, threatened, surveilled and prosecuted,” said Mark Worth, Executive Director of Whistleblowing International. “Hopefully these new laws will be part of the cure.”

Along with Kohn, Kohn & Colapinto and Whistleblowing International, the [European Center for Whistleblower Rights](#) and [National Whistleblower Center](#) are providing assistance to EU countries toward incorporating the EU Directive into their national laws.

Contacts

Mark Worth

Whistleblowing International
mworth@whistleblower-rights.org
www.wbinternational.org
(+49) 176 630 94903 (Berlin)

Maraya Best

Kohn, Kohn & Colapinto, LLP
maraya.best@kkc.com
kkc.com
(+1) 202 342 6980 (Washington, DC)

More on whistleblower rights and cases: [Whistleblower News Service](#) / [WhistleWire](#)