



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INTERGROUP  
INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY  
CORRUPTION AND ORGANISED CRIME

## **Cross party alliance within the European Parliament draws attention to urgent need to protect whistle-blowers across Europe**

The urgent need to protect whistle-blowers was a key theme last week, highlighted by all political groups present at a public event in the European Parliament at which a draft directive to protect whistle-blowers was launched.

The draft, which is open for public feedback and which was drafted by EU legal experts Alberto Alemanno, Vigjilenca Abazi and Janina Berg, was presented as part of an initiative to urge the European Commission, and indeed the EU Member States, to take swift and urgent action to ensure that those who expose information that is in the public interest are protected instead of harassed, threatened or dragged through the courts.

Ongoing high profile cases such as the #luxleaks trial, in which the involved whistle-blowers and journalists are currently facing potential prison sentences and enormous fines for revealing information that is in the interest of European tax payers and public treasuries across Europe, demonstrate that there is a clear need for a European solution.

Over the past decade the European Parliament has called on the European Commission to propose legislation to protect whistle-blowers on at least 4 different occasions. Most recently, the final report of the special inquiry committee on tax called on the European Commission to propose legislation by June 2016.

Benedek Jávor, Member of the Greens/EFA group, remarked that *"We sent the draft legislation to protect whistle-blowers to Jean Claude Juncker, Frans Timmermans and the other relevant Directors General of the European Commission by the Greens/EFA group, and are awaiting their formal response to this initiative."*

At the event, the European Commission representative, Anabela Gago, Head of the Organised Crime Unit at DG HOME, promised to assess the draft directive, highlighting that the EU's social partners would have to be consulted during the process.

Elly Schlein, co-chair of ITCO Intergroup, remarked that *"It is unacceptable that at the very moment whistle-blowers are revealing the European and global dimension of plagues such as tax evasion and corruption, they are rewarded with a total lack of protection in general at the European level. We need a European directive, with minimum standards, we are already late"*.

Given the broad support for whistle-blower protection within the European Parliament, the members of the ITCO group will continue to push the European Commission to come forward with draft legislation, and will work together with legal experts and civil society organisations, trade unions and journalists to campaign for the effective protection of whistle-blowers across Europe.