

Network of European Integrity and Whistleblowing Authorities (NEIWA)

Declaration with a final call
Adopted on 17 September 2021

NEIWA currently consists of the following members:

Austria	Ministry of Justice
Belgium	Federal Ombudsman Vlaamse Ombudsman
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Commission for Anti-Corruption and Illegal Assets Forfeiture
Croatia	Ombudswoman
Czech Republic	Ministry of Justice
Denmark	Data Protection Authority
Estonia	Ministry of Justice
Finland	Ministry of Justice
France	Défenseur des Droits
Greece	National Transparency Authority
Hungary	Commissioner for Fundamental Rights
Ireland	Garda Ombudsman
Italy	Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione
Latvia	State Chancellery
Lithuania	General Prosecutor's Office
Netherlands	Huis voor Klokkenluiders
Portugal	Portuguese Ombudsman's Office Prosecutor General
Romania	Ministry of Justice
Slovenia	Commission for the Prevention of Corruption
Slovakia	Whistleblower Protection Bureau i.o. Whistleblower Protection Office of Slovakia
Spain	Agencia Valenciana Antifrau Oficina Antifrau de Catalunya Prevention and Fight against Corruption Office of the Balearic islands
Sweden	Ministry of Employment
Montenegro (observer)	Agency for Prevention of Corruption

Recalling that the Network of European Integrity and Whistleblowing Authorities (NEIWA), currently representing 22 EU Member States and one observer, has been established in May 2019 to offer a platform to cooperate and exchange knowledge and experiences in the field of integrity and whistleblowing.

Highlighting that NEIWA at the moment focuses its efforts on the transposition of the Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law (hereafter: "the Directive") and aims at strengthening the level of protection of whistleblowers within the European Union (EU).

Recalling the previous recommendations of NEIWA in the Paris declaration of 2 December 2019, the Rome declaration of 26 June 2020, the Brussels declaration of 17 December 2020 and the Utrecht declarations of 4 June 2021.

We, members of NEIWA¹, within the spirit of sharing best practices, recommend to all governments, administrations and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Directive to, at least:

1. ensure that the Directive is implemented correctly and on time, so before the deadline of 17 December 2021.
2. uphold that ethics, integrity and the creation of a speak-up culture remains a top priority for public and private employers and managers.
3. make sure that the external reporting channels, set up by the competent authorities, have sufficient organizational and financial autonomy needed to perform their functions properly and providing them with sufficient resources.
4. consider appointing an authority that is recognized and positioned as the main, central or pivotal authority within the Member State or region and that gives the Directive and the national implementing law a name, a face and a phone number.
5. provide for a clear legal prohibition of retaliation, which will have an important dissuasive effect.
6. ensure that reporting persons are granted protection status, where this is foreseen by national legislation.
7. ensure that competent authorities have, where appropriate, dissuasive tools to prevent any form of retaliations and impose sanctions on the individual and / or organization taking retaliatory measures.
8. provide that reporting persons benefit from effective legal, psychological and financial support when reporting, regardless of their personal or financial situation. These services could be provided by governmental or non-governmental organizations or other professional associations with the necessary funding, expertise and independence.

¹ The Hungarian Commissioner for Fundamental Rights has not participated in the vote.