

The project: “Legitimacy and Accountability
for better protection of Whistleblowers_LAW”



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Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)
programme

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The UN Convention against Corruption and Whistleblower Protection

How are governments around the world responding?

The UNCAC Coalition Working Group on Whistleblower Protection, Government Accountability Project and other Reporting Persons released in June 2025 a global report regarding the Civil Society Perspectives on Implementing Resolution 10/8 on the Protection of Reporting Persons.

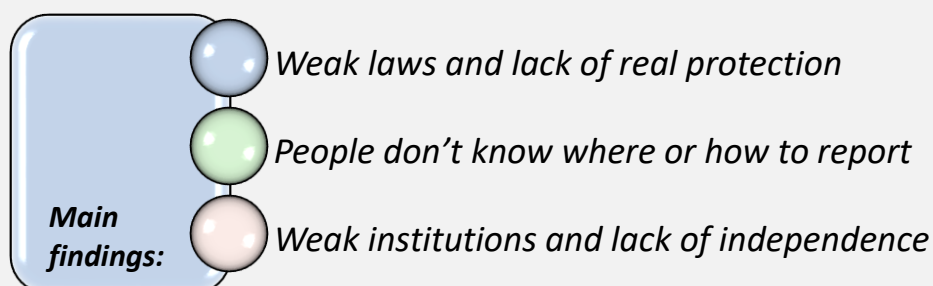
The global report reviews how 31 countries from five UN regions are implementing the Resolution 10/8 of the UNCAC, specifically Article 33, which focuses on the protection of whistleblowers. The report is based on input from legal experts and civil society and presents both progress and serious gaps in whistleblower protection worldwide.

The following criteria from Resolution 10/82F3 were evaluated:

- ☐ Legal recognition for reporting persons;
- ☐ Anti-retaliation protections including enforcement mechanisms and remedies;
- ☐ Institutional frameworks with dedicated specialized bodies and adequate resources;
- ☐ Support services encompassing legal aid, psychological support, and financial assistance;
- ☐ Reporting mechanisms that are effective, confidential, with transparent outcomes.



“The credibility of anti-corruption systems - and the trust placed in them by the public - depends on the courage of reporting persons and the integrity of the protections designed to support them”.



➤ *Weak laws and lack of real protection*

One of the main findings refers to the fact that even though many countries recognize the importance of whistleblowers in the fight against corruption, the actual implementation of their commitments under Resolution 10/8 is inconsistent, fragmented, and often ineffective. Only a small number of countries have passed strong, comprehensive laws that offer clear and practical protection to whistleblowers.

In most countries, there are many reporting channels, but they are poorly coordinated. There are no dedicated bodies responsible for investigating reports or protecting whistleblowers.

Legal, psychological, or financial support is limited or completely missing.

People who report wrongdoing often face serious retaliation — including job loss, defamation, lawsuits (such as SLAPPs – Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), and social pressure. In many countries, whistleblowers are not even guaranteed basic legal protections, like shifting the burden of proof in retaliation cases.

➤ *People don't know where or how to report*

The report warns that public awareness about whistleblower rights and reporting channels is alarmingly low. Few governments run public information campaigns to educate citizens and workers about how and where they can safely report wrongdoing. Existing tools are mostly focused on the public sector, ignoring large groups such as private contractors, former employees, and independent consultants.

In addition, reporting procedures are often slow and non-transparent.

Whistleblowers rarely receive feedback, which leads to frustration, distrust, and fewer people willing to come forward.



➤ *Weak institutions and lack of independence*

Even in countries with laws on paper, there are often no independent institutions with the mandate, resources or authority to properly investigate whistleblower cases. Most of the countries surveyed also lack systems to regularly monitor and improve how whistleblower protections are working in practice. Without this, it's hard to respond to new challenges or fix problems in time.

Instead of preventing harm through strong and accessible reporting systems, many governments act only after problems happen. Some even leave legal loopholes - like non-disclosure agreements or private contracts - that can silence whistleblowers and take priority over basic rights.

What needs to be done?

The report emphasize that real progress requires clear standards, political commitment and cooperation - including with civil society, legal experts, and those working on the ground.

Therefore it recommends Governments to take actions as follows:

- ➡ Expand legal protections to cover all types of employment, including contractors and freelancers.
- ➡ Set up independent institutions with a clear role to protect whistleblowers.
- ➡ Develop safe and reliable reporting channels that allow anonymity and safeguard the identity and personal data of reporting persons.
- ➡ Provide legal, psychological, and financial support to whistleblowers.

Equally important is assuring transparency for the results of whistleblower laws, both in terms of effectiveness against retaliation, and for making a difference against illegal spending or other significant misconduct.

Also, Governments should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their whistleblower protection systems and allocate sufficient and sustained resources to responsible oversight bodies.



“Legal experts and civil society will continue to play a significant role in monitoring implementation and providing essential support to reporting persons”.



To translate Resolution 10/8 and Article 33 from principle to practice, the report authors call for coordinated action from states, international actors, legal professionals, civil society, and other relevant experts. The full report is available here: ["From Principle to Practice: A Civil Society Review of the Implementation of Resolution 10/8"](#).

By specific objectives and estimated results, the LAW project contribute to improve whistleblowing protection, as an additional guarantee of respect for freedom of expression and the right to information, taking into account that insufficient protection of whistleblowers against reprisals affect people`s freedom of expression.





Key information about the LAW project

The main goal of the LAW project is to contribute to national and EU efforts to support and protect whistleblowers and build capacity of national authorities and legal practitioners to ensure adequate legal remedies to protect whistleblowers.

We anticipate that, through participants involved and implemented activities, the LAW project will strengthen the application of the Directive (EU) 2019/1937 and of national framework in Romania and Bulgaria, in line with respect for transparency, good governance, accountability and freedom of expression.

The path of the two countries in terms of legal framework in the field of whistleblowers protection is quite different. Based on these differences, valuable information can be gleaned about how the two countries manage to ensure the protection of whistleblowers after the legislation transposing the EU Directive was approved. The lessons learned can have a transnational dimension, useful for other EU member states, including from the perspective of respecting the right to freedom of expression.

Considering the challenges in Romania and Bulgaria, the project identified a few types of key target groups that will have a major impact in whistleblowers protection on the short and medium term.

The focus is on CSOs, experts active in the field of WB protection, persons in charge of handling whistleblowers' reports and also students as future experts in the field. It is expected that through events such as training sessions, workshops and seminars the project will support at least 400 persons to improve their knowledge to assure adequate counseling and protection for potential whistleblowers.

To improve general public awareness, at least 3 million people will benefit from better information about their legal rights and reliable channels to report wrongdoing. Also, the project will contribute to increase whistleblowers protection, as an additional guarantee of respect for freedom of expression and the right to information, as insufficient protection of whistleblowers against reprisals affects the freedom of expression.

The LAW project is implemented by Transparency International Romania in partnership with Transparency International Bulgaria and cofinanced by European Union through the European Commission - Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme.



Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV)

Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme aims to protect and promote rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights in particular by supporting civil society organisations active at local ,regional, national and transnational level.

The CERV programme seeks to support and develop open, rights-based, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on the rule of law. That includes a vibrant and empowered civil society, encouraging people's democratic, civic and social participation and cultivating the rich diversity of European society, based on our common values, history and memory.

Launched in 2021 the CERV programme will run for seven years until 2027. It was created along with the 2021-2027 Justice programme under the Justice, Rights and Values Fund.

Civil society organisations active at local, regional, national and transnational level, as well as other stakeholders, can apply to receive CERV funding for initiatives aimed at citizens' engagement, equality for all and the protection and promotion of rights and EU values.

The project “Legitimacy and Accountability for better protection of Whistleblowers_LAW” is co-financed by European Union, through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme.