

Resolution on the protection of whistleblowers

The Annual Members Meeting (AMM) of Transparency International (TI), held in Berlin on 17-18 October 2009, acknowledges that whistleblowers have a critical role to play in the protection of the public interest. Therefore, TI calls on governments and on the private sector to put effective mechanisms in place to ensure a safe alternative to silence.

Whistleblowing can be a crucial instrument to detect and report corruption, fraud and mismanagement in the public, private and non-profit sector. However, by disclosing wrongdoing or the risk thereof, whistleblowers often take high personal risks. They may face retaliation, dismissal or even physical danger. At the same time, their disclosure is often not appropriately being followed-up.

By supporting the protection of whistleblowers, TI promotes integrity and freedom of speech, which are crucial conditions for democracy, the rule of law and sustainable development. The international community has recognised the necessity to set up appropriate mechanisms for whistleblower protection, most prominently in Article 33 of UNCAC. While related provisions do exist in some jurisdictions, private companies and non-profit-organisations, they only exceptionally provide comprehensive and effective protection and follow-up to the disclosure.

Governments should create or strengthen the legal and institutional tools that protect honest and engaged individuals who report wrongdoing. To do so, governments should develop dedicated legislation or implement clear and effective improvements in existing legal framework. Both public institutions and companies should establish programmes to protect whistleblowers against retaliation, including appropriate channels for disclosure, independent review and efficient follow-up mechanisms.

TI declares its commitment to support whistleblowers and to work in collaboration with allies, experts and groups of concerned persons such as whistleblower networks to make sure the key role of whistleblowing in the fight against corruption and in promoting public integrity is recognised.

Submitted by TI-Romania with the support of TI-Bulgaria, TI-Czech Republic, TI-Estonia, TI-Hungary, TI-Ireland, TI-Italy, TI-Latvia, TI-Lithuania, and TI-Slovakia

###

Adopted 18 October 2009, Berlin.