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Joint Statement by the Whistleblowing International Network and the European Whistleblowing Institute

Slovakia Threatens Core Democratic Safeguards by Dismantling Independent Whistleblower Office

The [Whistleblowing International Network](#) (WIN) and the [European Whistleblowing Institute](#) (EWI) express deep concern and profound disappointment following the Slovak Parliament's decision to abolish the country's independent Office for the Protection of Whistleblowers (WPO) and effectively remove legal certainty of protection for whistleblowers. This step dismantles one of the most important safeguards for transparency, accountability, and public trust in Slovakia's democracy.

Whistleblowers help protect society from abuses of power and wrongdoing. They are central to detecting fraud, corruption, and misuse of EU resources. The WPO played a vital role in ensuring the impartial assessment of all these disclosures, as well as those related to EU financing, including under the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The reform was adopted in a fast-tracked process despite explicit warnings from [civil society](#), national and [international experts](#), and [EU bodies](#) that dismantling the WPO would undermine the institutional and functional independence required under EU law.

Further, while we acknowledge that parliamentary amendments were introduced prior to the adoption of the law, these did not address significant problems that the substance of the now adopted fast-tracked reform presents. This includes the retroactive requirement that the authorities charged with determining protection, following clear conditions, should continuously review their decisions and that employers will be able to seek a repeated review of the protection as well. This undermines a key objective of the EU Directive to strengthen legal certainty for whistleblowers in Europe.

The abolition of the WPO and the weakening of the protections for whistleblowers removes the institutional guarantees that the EU Whistleblower Directive obliges Member States to maintain. It creates a structural deficiency that directly affects the effective application of EU law within Slovakia and weakens the Union's broader constitutional framework, including the principles of sincere cooperation and legal certainty.

The retroactive application of the changes to the law and the replacement of the current leadership of the WPO without cause puts at risk the safety and legal certainty of individual whistleblowers

in Slovakia whose cases are already within the purview of the WPO and the protection of the law for any future whistleblowers who come across serious wrongdoing.

Its abolition:

- Reduces Slovakia's capacity to detect and prevent misuse of EU funds,
- Introduces uncertainty for ongoing cases involving potential breaches of EU law, and
- Weakens oversight mechanisms required to protect the Union's financial interests.

The Conditionality Regulation of the EU operates on the premise that certain structural features of the rule of law are indispensable to the Union's financial architecture. Whistleblower protection constitutes an integral part of the national integrity framework through which irregularities affecting EU resources are detected and the WPO has statutory competence in areas where EU funds are administered.

The substance of the changes to the law protecting whistleblowers in Slovakia, and the timing and method used by the Government to abolish the WPO, weakens the preventive architecture envisaged by the Conditionality Regulation and gives rise to a presumption of a deliberate intervention in an independent authority and arbitrariness incompatible with the principles of legality and legal certainty.

The European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, now faces a clear obligation to assess whether Slovakia's new framework ensures compliance with the EU Whistleblower Directive and broader EU financial safeguards. Where deficiencies are identified, proportionate enforcement measures will be essential to protect the Union's legal order and uphold the integrity of EU funds. This assessment is all the more urgent given the broader pattern of institutional pressure on independent oversight bodies in Slovakia.

The European Parliament and the European Ombudsman have repeatedly underlined that independent bodies are essential for upholding rule of law standards and for ensuring the fair, impartial handling of concerns raised by citizens. The abolition of an independent authority responsible for handling whistleblower disclosures, therefore, poses systemic risks to Slovakia's democratic governance and undermines confidence in the Union's ability to guarantee rights and protections for individuals who report wrongdoing. This is a further sign of an emerging pattern within some EU Member States of deliberately undermining accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms that underpin the core values of democracy, justice, and economic well-being.

In light of the gravity of these developments, WIN and EWI call on the President of Slovakia to use his power to veto this law on the basis that the process and speed by which these changes to the law and infrastructure for the protection of whistleblowers risk plunging the country into a constitutional crisis and are in breach of the EU Directive as well EU financial safeguards.

Further, we call on the:

- European Commission to conduct a prompt and thorough assessment of Slovakia's compliance with EU law and to take enforcement action.
- European Parliament, the European Ombudsman, and bodies responsible for the oversight of EU funds, to take relevant action.
- International civil actors and media to remain closely engaged and to support Slovak civil society, investigative bodies, and individuals who continue to act in the public interest despite significantly heightened uncertainty and risk.

The abolition of the Whistleblower Protection Office represents a serious regression in the institutional safeguards required under EU law. It weakens the mechanisms necessary to protect EU financial interests, undermines the detection of wrongdoing, and jeopardises public trust in democratic institutions. WIN and EWI will continue to monitor developments closely and support efforts to restore a fully independent, EU-compliant whistleblower protection framework in Slovakia.