

Minister of Justice of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Boris Susko,
Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Matúš Šutaj Eštok,
Speaker of the Parliament, Mr. Richard Raši,
Constitutional Law Committee, Security Committee, Human Rights Committee of the
Parliament of the Slovak Republic

25 November 2025

Dear Ministers, Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Parliament of the Slovak Republic,

We, the undersigned organisations, are writing to you to express our grave concern about the renewed effort to severely limit whistleblower protections in Slovakia in the form of a new bill and the fast-tracked process to effectively remove the leadership of the Office for the Protection of Whistleblowers (WPO).

At the outset, we must emphasise that these developments raise serious and immediate concerns under European Union law, including the EU Whistleblower Directive, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Conditionality Regulation, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Taken together, they signal a deeply alarming rule of law crisis of constitutional proportions, with the potential for direct consequences for the continued disbursement of EU funds to the Slovak Republic and for the country's standing within the Union's legal and financial framework.

This is the second time in less than two years that this Government has supported and now put forward proposals that, if adopted, would effectively eviscerate whistleblower protection in Slovakia. This has been compounded by the legal proposal, agreed at an extraordinary cabinet meeting on Saturday 22 November, to abolish and replace the Office for the Protection of Whistleblowers without following any consultative or legislative process and whose immediate and only clear impact would be the removal of the Chair of the Office without cause.

Both the timing and the retroactive nature of these proposals puts at risk the safety and well-being of individual whistleblowers whose cases are already within the purview of the WPO and the protection of the law. These proposals will also severely restrict access to protection and effectively dissuade anyone in the future from reporting or disclosing information about wrongdoing, corruption or risks of harm in Slovakia.

These actions strike at the very heart of democratic accountability and institutional independence in Slovakia. They also risk placing the country in systemic non-compliance with its EU obligations, including those tied directly to financial conditionality.

The proposal to reform the whistleblower protection law was tabled by three HLAS Members of Parliament on 6 November 2025 with a proposed date of entry into force of 1 March 2026. Many of the provisions repeat those included in a bill tabled by the Government on 2 December 2023 and withdrawn in February 2024 after serious criticism, both from inside and outside the country, including concerns about incompatibility with the EU Whistleblower Directive.

Then, as now, the context in which the new bill is being introduced appears to be a response to the cases of police officers who blew the whistle on alleged interference with corruption investigations and who were granted legal protection. Unlike the 2023 proposal, the new bill no longer explicitly removes protection from the police. It does, however, introduce arbitrary and subjective criteria that do not exist in the EU Whistleblower Directive. The proposed legislation narrows the basis of protection for whistleblowers in such a way that it contradicts the Directive and to obtain protection may be hardly accessible in certain situations.

If adopted, the new law would also retroactively allow employers to request a review, thereby challenging all protection decisions issued prior to 1 March 2026 and threatening legal certainty for the more than one hundred individuals who already benefit from protection. This mechanism will further allow for repeated reviews every six months for all new cases permitting employers to apply ongoing pressure by repeatedly challenging the duration of protection. These proposals are contrary to EU law.

It is also relevant that in the past week the Ministry of the Interior lost its administrative court case against the first police whistleblower, who must now be reinstated. In a related police whistleblower case, a ruling of the Court of Justice of the EU in a preliminary reference has resulted in the case returning back to proceed in the national courts. Additionally, a high-ranking prosecutor has issued a public report and formally requested whistleblower protection. These developments underscore the essential role of the WPO in maintaining institutional checks and balances.

Slovakia has long been regarded as a leader in Europe in establishing an independent and effective whistleblower protection framework. The method of appointment of the WPO's Chair by a multi-institutional process involving different bodies was designed to guarantee independence from political power. Public trust has grown accordingly: awareness of the WPO has increased from 11% in 2022 to 28% today, and willingness to report wrongdoing has risen from 61% to 71%, accompanied by the highest number of submissions in the Office's history.

The proposal adopted at the extraordinary cabinet meeting of 22 November 2025 would dismantle this independent institution and replace it with an entirely new authority whose acting head would be appointed directly by the Speaker of Parliament. The Speaker belongs to the political party that initiated the proposal. The effect is to remove the current leadership without cause and without using the statutory mechanism provided by law.

Such an appointment process lacks legality, legitimacy, and democratic integrity. Any person appointed under these conditions would be perceived as politically selected, undermining public trust and the operational legitimacy necessary for whistleblower protection. The Office would be structurally incapable of fulfilling its role as an independent authority, and reporting persons could no longer rely on confidentiality or impartiality.

This institutional overhaul introduced without consultation, without interministerial procedure, and under an expedited legislative process not justified under Slovak law raises profound concerns about improper political interference and the capture of an independent authority. It also potentially jeopardises significant EU funds linked to anti-corruption reforms under the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

We urge you to reject these proposals on the basis that the process and speed by which these fundamental changes to the law and infrastructure for the protection of whistleblowers are not in the country's national interest. If adopted, they would mark the end of Slovakia's position as a leader in Europe in protecting whistleblowers, strike a serious blow to the country's capacity to fight corruption and significantly undermine key safeguards to the rule of law.

Yours sincerely,

The Whistleblowing International Network
European Whistleblowing Institute
Stop Corruption Foundation
Transparency International Slovakia
VIA IURIS

See additional signatories below.

cc: The President of the Slovak Republic, Mr Peter Pellegrini

ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES:

Transparency International Ireland
Human Rights Law Centre Whistleblower Project (Australia)
Pištaljka (Serbia)
Transparency International (International)
Association "Resource Aarhus center in BiH" Sarajevo
GLOBALEAKS
Transparencia por Colombia
Centre for Free Expression (Canada)
Transparency International Australia
Transparency International Italia
Ozivení - Whistleblowing Center (Czech Republic)
Transparency International EU
Free Press Unlimited (Netherlands)
The Good Lobby (Europe)
Transparency International Bulgaria
Protect (United Kingdom)
Pro Publico (Europe)
Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF)
Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation (Malta)
Blueprint for Free Speech (International)
Anti-Corruption Academy Foundation
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
Civil Liberties Union for Europe
Government Accountability Project
Climate Whistleblowers
RECLAIM
Reporters Without Borders
Artistic Freedom Initiative