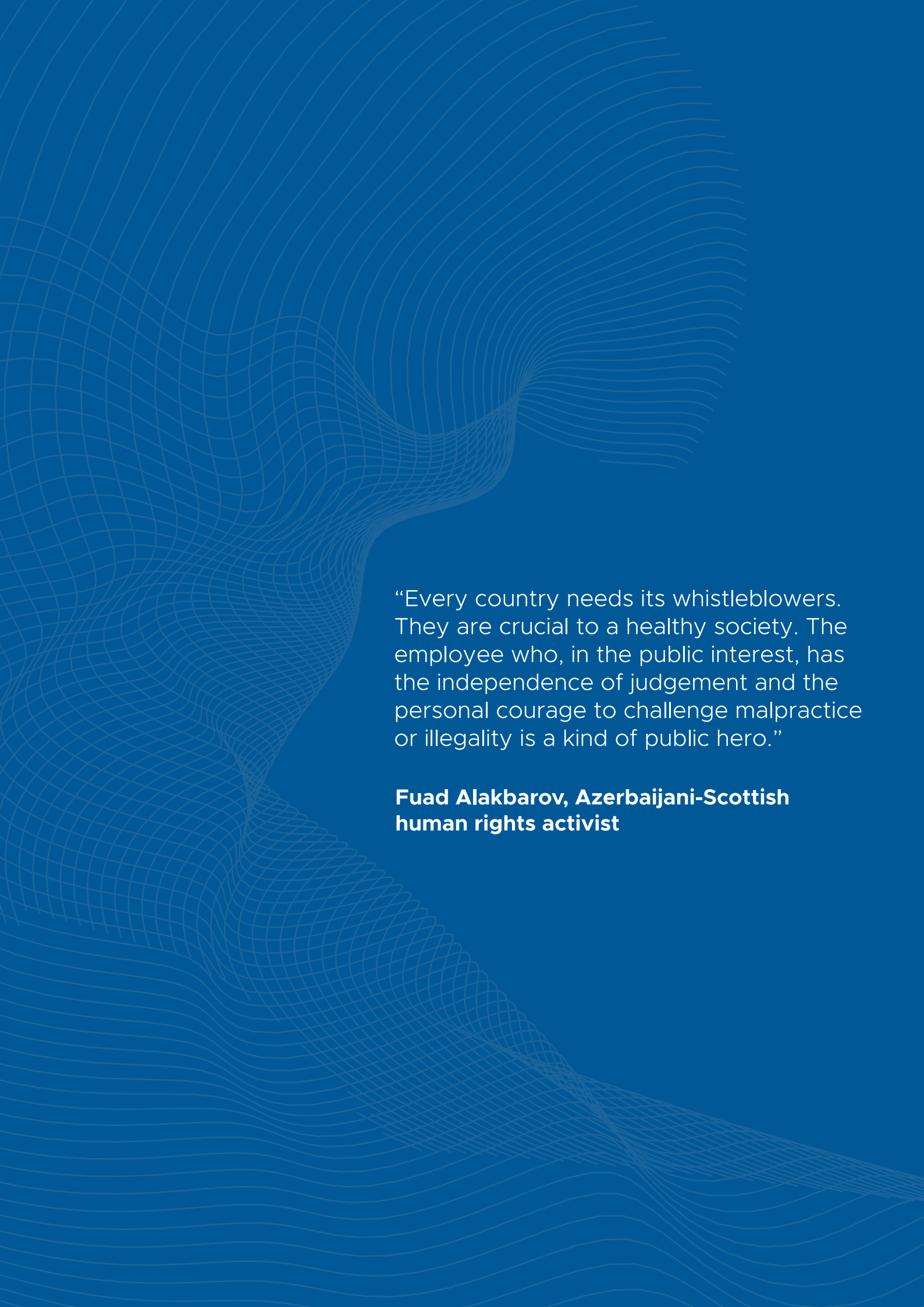




**Southeast Europe**  
Coalition on  
**Whistleblower**  
**Protection**

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**Newsletter**



“Every country needs its whistleblowers. They are crucial to a healthy society. The employee who, in the public interest, has the independence of judgement and the personal courage to challenge malpractice or illegality is a kind of public hero.”

**Fuad Alakbarov, Azerbaijani-Scottish  
human rights activist**

# “WHISTLEBLOWERS UNDER THE PROTECTION’ OF POLITICS”

is the title of the article published on KALLXO.com, raising the question whether whistleblowers in Kosovo can de facto be protected by officials with ties to politicians. The article mentions a number of public institutions that have appointed members of parties or people personally related to politicians to the respective offices responsible for whistleblowing. The ongoing fight against corruption in the region has proved to be



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one of the most difficult, if not THE most difficult challenge that affects not only efficiency but also citizens' rights and the business environment, thus hindering a country's ability to prosper. At the same time, it puts whistleblowers in a rather hostile environment. However discouraging the overall context may sound, there are a set of steps that can increase whistleblower protection which in turn, may have an effect on pushing forward the fight against corruption. As the commitment of politicians and the general political will to fight corruption is rather difficult to measure, the efforts to reduce the risk of corruption may be clear and specific.

**Offices responsible for whistleblowing cannot simply be treated as another ‘vacancy’ to be filled with just anyone.**

Offices responsible for whistleblowing cannot simply be treated as another ‘vacancy’ to be filled with just anyone. One step would be to not only establish the responsible offices for the protection of whistleblowers in both public and private institutions as foreseen by the law, but introduce clear criteria about the selection of the people in charge and design a plan that would further develop their understanding of the law and whistleblower protection. This is how politics can protect whistleblowers: by working

with experts of the field to resolve the conflict created by juggling insiders of the parties into these ‘vacancies’.

## “YOUTH WHISTLES FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS”

It is becoming a tradition of the SEE Coalition on Whistleblower Protection, together with Coalition member INFOHOUSE Foundation and the media portal Interview.ba to engage youth in writing about whistleblowers as a mean to raise awareness.



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about the role and importance of whistleblowers in society. While at the same time acknowledging the challenges of whistleblower protection which may impede some from reporting wrongdoings, the writing competition contributes to encouraging young journalists to become allies of whistleblowers, tell their stories and advocate

for them. This year, we awarded students of communication / journalism in Sarajevo for the best journalist pieces created within the Competition of Young Journalists 2021. Coalition coordinator, Mark Worth addressed the participants by thanking them for the engagement and congratulating them for showing interest and concern on the matter. Additionally, he noted how every person and every country has a chance to progress as long as people remain hopeful that there is chance to bring about positive change.

## “CLIMATE WHISTLEBLOWERS?”

In the face of climate changes and increased efforts to engage the public at large with these concerns, Transparency International Macedonia published an article about how this broad sensibilization has raised the question of climate whistleblowers, why there is a need to legalize climate reporting and strengthen and protect whistleblowers who detect crimes that pose a threat to the environment. Mark Worth, director of the European Center for Whistleblower Rights in Berlin said that climate change is our most serious problem and citizens are our effective problem solvers.



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Additionally, he emphasized that if people have information about climate threats and cannot detect them, we will lose the chance to save the planet from further injury. Thus, legalizing climate reporting will allow fossil fuel, energy, transportation, manufacturing, and other companies to uncover evidence of fraud, illegal concealment of pollution risks, and falsified financial statements submitted to regulators. Without legal protection, employees with information about abuse are likely to remain silent – for fear of dismissal, physical threats, and more. In the US (a frontrunner on whistleblower protection), the National Whistleblower Center published the Climate Corruption Campaign which is the first sustained effort to educate potential whistleblowers in the fossil fuel and industrial logging industries – as well as those in enabling industries – about their rights under whistleblower laws, including the right to keep their identities confidential.<sup>1</sup> The campaign is designed with the approach to educate whistleblowers on how to address their concerns, offering them specific legal aid, protecting their confidentiality, and strengthening laws that specifically protect this category of whistleblowers.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whistleblowers.org/climate-corruption-campaign/>

# DATA

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## Youth views and knowledge of whistleblowing in Serbia:

- 75%** of respondents understand what whistleblowing means
- 21%** of respondents witnessed a wrongdoing
- 70%** of the respondents believes that nothing will come out of reporting



This project is funded by the European Union



REGIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

## Youth views and knowledge of whistleblowing in Moldova:

- 90%** of respondents understand what whistleblowing means
- 82%** of respondents did not witness a wrongdoing
- 73%** of respondents learned about whistleblowing through media

## HOW INFORMED IS YOUTH ABOUT WHISTLEBLOWING?

## Youth views and knowledge of whistleblowing in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- 67%** of respondents understand what whistleblowing means
- 75%** of respondents think that a person should report wrongdoing
- 72%** of respondents would report wrongdoing

## Youth views and knowledge of whistleblowing in Montenegro:

- 77%** of respondents understand what whistleblowing means
- 14%** of respondents witnessed a wrongdoing
- 67%** of the respondents believe that nothing will come out of reporting

# NEXT STEP

Ongoing projects of some Coalition members

## INTERNEWS KOSOVA

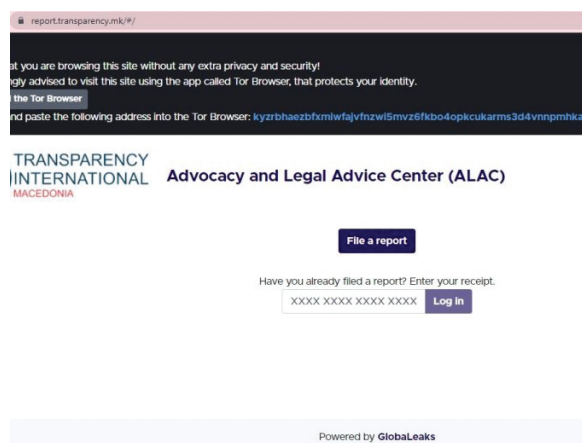
“Raising awareness of the public institutions and private businesses regarding whistleblowers’ rights and legal protection” is the ongoing project of Internews Kosova, aiming at fostering awareness, accountability and transparency of public institutions, the private sector and overall citizens for implementing the secondary legislation regarding the protection of whistleblowers.

While media and civil society are the main groups to voice concerns over affairs related to public spending, unfortunately journalists often lack the capacities and practical skills required to utilize provisions of freedom of information, carry out in-depth investigations and monitor developments in public procurement, rule of law and organized crime.

With this project, journalists will engage in research and in-depth investigation of the implementation of the secondary legislation within responsible institutions.

## TI MACEDONIA

Over this period, Transparency International Macedonia will be contributing in the “Promotion of Digital Whistleblowing Mechanisms and the EU Directive on Whistleblowers”, to increase know-how about digital whistleblowing methods and the EU Directive on Whistleblowers. Public institutions and relevant stakeholders will be reached out at and news content and articles of legislative relevance for the public institutions will be published for this purpose. The digital campaign will further promote the whistleblower reporting online platforms with the aim to inform potential whistleblowers about safe and secure channels of reporting, alongside with expertise on how to best protect their confidentiality.



**Safe reporting channel**

## TI SLOVAKIA

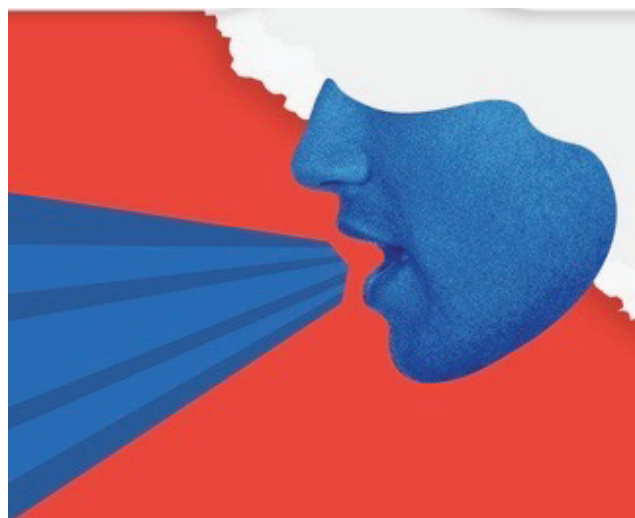
As of September 2021, the new Whistleblowing Office in Slovakia should be operating fully (according to the amendment of the whistleblowing legislation in force since 2019). During a personal meeting with the director of the Office and her employees in June 2021, Transparency International Slovakia agreed on upcoming cooperation for the purpose of which, TI Slovakia will provide know-hows, data from public opinion polls, best practices and recommendations.

In this context, the project “Raising awareness of whistleblower protection and enhancing the protection of those who blow the whistle in public sector in Slovakia” aims at increasing attention toward the topic of whistleblowing among the general public as well as monitoring the outcomes and activities of institutions related to whistleblowing, especially the Office for the Protection of Whistleblowers.

Additionally, Transparency International Slovakia will publish a ranking of 100 biggest municipalities as a result of an evaluation containing, among others, indicators of ethical standards as well as whistleblowing mechanisms. The outcomes will be compared with previous editions of rankings. Findings will be published and promoted on social media.

## SEEMO

South East Europe Media Organisation will continue to inform the public, journalists and students of journalism / communication about the mission of and challenges posed to whistleblowers. For this purpose, two interviews with whistleblowers and / or experts / journalists covering the work of whistleblowers will be conducted. The outcome will be distributed online and especially to over 2800 individual SEEMO members, informing members of all journalists associations in the region.



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