



# Low threshold whistleblower telephone hotline

Cyprus

	<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Cyprus' whistleblower telephone hotline was introduced to enable employees and others report malpractice and unlawful behaviour within the workplace. A dedicated hotline to receive complaints, information regarding undeclared work, and violation of basic terms of employment in the private sector has been operating in Cyprus since 2010. Information received has been handled by the Labour Inspectorate for targeted inspections.</p>
<b>Title of the practice in original language</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Name(s) of authorities/bodies/organisations involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cyprus Department of Labour Inspection (Τμήμα Επιθεώρησης Εργασίας)</li> </ul>
<b>Sectors</b>	All
<b>Target groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employers (directly targeted)</li> <li>▶ Employees and the general public (directly targeted)</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose of measure</b>	Deterrence: improve detection

	<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p> <p>The aim of the whistleblowing hotline is to allow the anonymous reporting of malpractice, fraud, and undeclared work occurring in the workplace. The introduction of the EU Directive<sup>i</sup> improves the transparency and protection for employees in the workplace.<sup>ii</sup></p>
<b>Background context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The low threshold whistleblower system for anonymous reporting of malpractice, fraud, and undeclared work in the workplace exists since 2010. It was introduced as part of the reorganisation of inspection procedures and control of undeclared work initiated in 2009;</li> <li>▶ In 2016 Cyprus introduced legislation for the protection of whistleblowers<sup>iii</sup>; however, it did not offer a comprehensive framework for protection until Cyprus passed the 2022 Law (transposing the EU Whistleblowing Directive) that consolidated existing national legislations and harmonised practices<sup>iv v</sup>;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ The Protection of Persons Who Report Violations of EU and National Law (Law of 2022 (Law 6(I)/2022) will reinforce the existing whistleblowing mechanism in Cyprus and will further improve transparency and employee protection in the workplace environment. The Whistleblowing Law requires all private sector entities with 50-249 employees to establish their internal reporting channels by 17 December 2023.<sup>vi</sup></li></ul>
<b>Key objectives of the measure</b>	<p><b>General Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ To improve reporting of fraud and malpractice in the workplace.</li></ul> <p><b>Specific Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ To increase targeted inspections and detection of undeclared work;</li><li>▶ To improve workers' collaboration with the labour inspectorate by improving transparency and employee's protection in the workplace environment.</li></ul>
<b>Main activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ With the new law, employees in Cyprus can file complaints to the competent authority on a case-by-case basis without fear of retaliation<sup>vii viii</sup>;</li><li>▶ The Law applies to any person reporting or disclosing information on breaches in a work-related context, including self-employed persons, volunteers, trainees (paid or unpaid), civil servants, shareholders (including non-executive members) and persons working under the supervision of contractors and suppliers<sup>ix</sup>;</li><li>▶ This protection is available to persons working (or that worked in the past) in the private or public sector reporting information on breaches acquired in a work-related context<sup>x</sup>;</li><li>▶ There is no overarching body/authority appointed to receive and investigate disclosures by whistleblowers. However, specific disclosures can be made to a governmental hotline, the Labour Department, the Public Service Commission, the Police and the General Audit Office of the Republic and now whistleblowers can also directly speak to the parliament's House of Representatives<sup>xi xii</sup></li><li>▶ Anonymous complaints and information about undeclared work or labour law violations can be made to the Labour Inspectorate's dedicated telephone hotline 7778577. Complaints are registered on a daily basis and assessed by the</li></ul>



	Labour Inspectorate Supervisor. They are then forwarded in turn to the appropriate Authority e.g., police) for further action.
<b>Funding/organisational resources</b>	► State funding

	<b>Outcomes</b> <p>The measure has been successful in providing the wider public with a safe route to reporting fraud and malpractice in the workplace, improving detection rates, and targeted inspections.</p>
<b>Achievement of objectives</b>	<p>► The Whistleblower telephone hotline has been relatively successful in achieving its objectives as it has allowed the wider public to anonymously report fraud and malpractice in the workplace without fear of retaliation. The practice has contributed to the increase in targeted inspections and detection of undeclared work;</p> <p>► As a result of this practice, the following number of complaints/reports via the whistleblowing hotline were received and processed by the Labour Inspectorate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 359 in 2017</li><li>- 702 in 2018</li><li>- 629 in 2019</li><li>- 394 in 2020</li><li>- 272 in 2021</li><li>- 360 in 2022</li></ul>
<b>Lessons learnt and success factors</b>	The EU Directive lays down common minimum standards for the protection of persons reporting breaches of Union law and specifies the scope and conditions for effective implementation at the level of the Member States. For a successful implementation of the measure, it requires, <i>inter alia</i> , a need to provide safe channels to report incidents both within an organisation and to public authorities as well as training for public authorities on how to deal with whistleblower reports.
<b>Transferability</b>	This practice is fully transferable to other Member States. Implementation requires the necessary legislation to be put in place. Implementation methods can also be adapted at national, local, and individual organisation level.

## Further information



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<b>Useful sources and resources</b>	<p><b>The Protection of Persons Who Report Violations of EU and National Law (Law of 2022 (Law 6(I)/2022) (Ο περί της Προστασίας Προσώπων που Αναφέρουν Παραβάσεις του Ενωσιακού και Εθνικού Δικαίου Νόμος του 2022 (Ν. 6(I)/2022));</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2022_1_006.pdf">http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2022_1_006.pdf</a></p> <p><b>EU Directive 2019/1937 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law</b></p> <p><a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02019L1937-20211110">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02019L1937-20211110</a></p>
<b>Metadata and key words for online search</b>	Cyprus; EU Whistleblowing Directive; Cyprus Whistleblowing Law; workplace fraud; whistleblowing hotline; online tool

<sup>i</sup> [Directive \(EU\) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Michael Kyrianiou & Co LLC](#) (2022), [Whistleblowing Law In Cyprus: An Effective Tool to Enhance Transparency and Employee's Protection in the Workplace - Whistleblowing - Cyprus \(mondaq.com\)](#) Available at: <https://www.mondaq.com/cyprus/whistleblowing/1205204/whistleblowing-law-in-cyprus-an-effective-tool-to-enhance-transparency-and-employee39s-protection-in-the-workplace> accessed 10 December 2022

<sup>iii</sup> *Whistleblowers protection already in place*, available at [EU Whistleblowing Directive - CYPRUS – Whispli](#).

<sup>iv</sup> *How will CYPRUS protect whistleblowers*, 10 February 2022, [Panel discussion on Whistleblowing.pdf \(dataprotection.gov.cy\)](#).

<sup>v</sup> [National Whistleblowing laws in the EU - Whistlelink](#).

<sup>vi</sup> See [Cyprus: Whistleblowing Law is published in the Official Gazette | News post | DataGuidance](#)

<sup>vii</sup> Whistleblower Protection newsletter, March 2022, available at [whistleblowing-european-employment-newsletter-andersen.pdf](#)

<sup>viii</sup> Nicky Xenofontos (2022), *Cyprus Enacts EU Whistleblower Directive*, article available at [\(2\) Cyprus Enacts EU Whistleblower Directive | LinkedIn](#)

<sup>ix</sup> Antoniou McCollum & Co (2022), EU law, insights, Regulatory - *Whistleblowing in Cyprus*, Published 31 January 2022. Available at [Whistleblowing in Cyprus - Antoniou McCollum & Co. \(amc.law\)](#), Accessed 10 December 2022

<sup>x</sup> Nasia Pantelidou and Eleni Antoniou, (2021), EU Whistle-Blower Directive: article available at [EU Whistle-Blower Directive: Cyprus - Whistleblowing - European Union \(mondaq.com\)](#)

<sup>xi</sup> Transparency International (2019), *Mapping the EU on legal whistleblower protection. Assessment before the implementation of the EU Whistleblowing Directive*, available at [Mapping-the-EU-on-Whistleblower-Protection-TI-NL.pdf \(transparency.nl\)](#), p.22, accessed 10 December 2022

<sup>xii</sup> *Cyprus passes national whistleblower law*, Published 21 January 2022, article available at [Cyprus passes national whistleblower law, KNEWS \(kathimerini.com.cy\)](#), Accessed 10 December 2022