

**Question for written answer E-003223/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: The Commission's plans regarding whistleblowers

The leaking of the Panama Papers has again proved that whistleblowers play an essential role in our democracies, especially in terms of transparency and in disclosing amoral and sometimes illegal behaviour.

The results of these revelations have also shown how little whistleblowers are protected against the legal arsenal used by financial powers who can afford high legal fees.

Many whistleblowers are concerned and incur heavy penalties both in the civil and criminal courts.

The 'Trade Secrets' Directive clearly showed the need to protect whistleblowers not only in this context, but also across the board against civil and criminal proceedings which could lead them to no longer report illegal and amoral behaviour by certain societal stakeholders.

It would have been better for the Commission to present this directive together with one offering comprehensive protection for whistleblowers.

In Strasbourg the Commission's representative stated that the Commission would, if need be, take initiatives in due course. It's hardly reassuring!

Could the Commission expand on the brief comments made by its representative, inform us of its plans and provide us with a timetable for their introduction?