

THIRD PARTY PROJECT OVERVIEW – IMPACT4VALUES

CALL 1 – SMALL AND MEDIUM PROJECTS

SMALL PROJECTS

3. ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GOOD MANAGEMENT AND WORK POMAK: I4V - SHIFT CROATIA – CREATE A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT FOR WHISTEBLOWERS

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Project duration	12 months (01.09.2023-31.08.2024)

The general public does not fully understand the importance and role of whistleblowers in exposing corruption, potential whistleblowers themselves do not know their rights, the way to report irregularities and all the restrictions that await them on the long and arduous path of reporting irregularities, and political groups and elites view them as a nuisance and a dangerous group and not as a corrective of bad management. The goal of the project is to create a positive climate and an encouraging environment for whistleblowers, to educate them about their rights, the ways to exercise these rights, and to provide them with legal advice that would encourage them to report irregularities. We will spread knowledge about human rights to the general public and other stakeholders in the system, as well as the knowledge about implementation of the rights they have from the EU whistleblower directive and the EU Charter on Human Rights. Finally, during the entire project, we will collect data on whistleblowers, make a detailed analysis of their demographics, condition and needs, which will result in the preparation of a Report on the situation of whistleblowers in and implementation of the EU directive on whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia, which we will present at a round table and invite legislators, watchdog organisations, legal and other key actors to use the obtained data and be more involved in the protection of whistleblowers and prevention of corruption at all levels in the Republic of Croatia.

Expected project results:

- **Increased awareness of potential whistleblowers and the public about the EU Whistleblower Directive and the EU Charter on Human Rights** through the development of educational materials (e-book - digital manual of at least 16 pages, A5 format, intended for potential whistleblowers, which will be available on the website for reading and sending via email after filling out the contact form), minimum 10 publications in the media about the project, raised awareness of the EU whistleblower directive and the EU human rights charter by a minimum of 75% participants (audience) of the round table (number of participants 20), created and disseminated a contact form for reporting irregularities.
- **Support provided through legal counselling** for a minimum of 40 potential whistleblowers.
- **Increased body of knowledge about the needs and situation of whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia** through the writing of 1 research report on whistleblowers, which was prepared by experts, published on the website of the project holder and delivered to relevant

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stakeholders (data analysis of collected data on whistleblowers based on a detailed questionnaire, detailed tables of factors (demographic, social, economic), statistical tables and analysis of the results of monitoring the application process, report on the situation and needs of whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia), minimum 16 A5 pages.

Achieved results:

During the project implementation period from September 1 2023 until September 20 2024 the Beneficiary has achieved **Result 1 - Increased awareness of potential whistleblowers and the public about the EU Whistleblower Directive and the EU Charter on Human Rights**. An e-book "[Handbook for whistleblowers](#)" was developed, which was downloaded by 193 people, and was disseminated to 22 institutions, 11 media and 13 civil society organizations. The project was well covered by the media and 31 articles were published in the media. A round table was held on the topic of CLEANING CROATIA FROM CORRUPTION, attended by 23 participants who were presented with the "Handbook for whistleblowers" and a panel discussion was held on the topic - Challenges, problems and the position of whistleblowers in Croatia. Awareness of the EU Whistleblower Directive and the EU Charter on Human Rights was tested on a sample of 674 respondents of the general population of the Republic of Croatia, and the awareness of the EU Whistleblower Directive and the EU Charter on Human Rights of the general population of the Republic of Croatia was increased by 1%.

Result 2 - Provided support through legal counseling for 40 potential whistleblowers, it was achieved. Using the created and disseminated contact form for reporting irregularities published on the Beneficiary's website, which was also disseminated on 20 social networks, 22 institutions, 13 CSOs, 53 people contacted Beneficiary. However, judging by the reasons given in the contact forms, the conclusion is that only 3-4 people, who applied for legal assistance, fall under the Act on the Protection of Whistleblowers. All whistleblowers were referred to a lawyer who is a legal expert for whistleblowers, and people were advised and additionally educated about who is considered a whistleblower and what constitutes an irregularity in terms of the Act on the Protection of whistleblowers and the EU Directive on the Protection of Persons Reporting Violations of Union Law and the EU Charter on Human Rights. The course of assistance is summarized in the [Report on Communication and Legal Advice](#).

Result 3 - An increased corpus of knowledge about the needs and situation of whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia was realized through the [Report on the findings of the research on the level of knowledge and attitudes of the general population regarding corruption and whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia](#), which was conducted online, respondents were collected through public announcements on Beneficiary's website, social networks and the snowball method. The report was sent to 123 relevant stakeholders. The conclusion of the quantitative data analysis indicates an overall low level of knowledge and awareness of the general population regarding corruption and further action based on it in the Republic of Croatia. A high degree of polarization of attitudes and opinions is visible, as well as a tendency towards extreme and/or defeatist attitudes regarding corruption and whistleblowers in the Republic of Croatia, without a basis in knowledge and facts.

Differences between the two tests related to the effect of the intervention activities were obtained in most of the tested particles. Differences of 1 or more percentage points (before-after) were obtained in the perception: corruption creates serious problems in the development of society (increase of 2%),

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corruption is present in the Croatian private sector (increase of 6.3%), corruption is present in all levels of work in Croatia (2.6% decrease). Regarding information and transparency (is there information and transparency in the management of public funds in the Republic of Croatia), even more respondents stated that it does not exist (increase of 3.2%). In the perceptions of measures to improve the position of whistleblowers, a significant difference was obtained in the greater need for quality laws that protect whistleblowers (increase of 3.7%), a greater number of whistleblowers (decrease of 5.8%), systematic education and promotion of the value of good management and business (decrease of 4.3%) and by changing the attitudes and values of society towards whistleblowers (decrease of 2%).

Qualitative analysis of the answers reveals a spectrum of trust and skepticism among the respondents regarding reporting corruption. While some respondents show confidence in official channels such as the Ombudsman and judicial institutions, others express significant mistrust or uncertainty about the effectiveness of any reporting mechanism. This analysis highlights the need for improved awareness and perhaps reforms to build trust in anti-corruption institutions and processes. From the results of the research, it is evident that it is necessary to invest even more effort in educating the general public regarding corruption and whistleblowers, to give them more adequate tools to fight corruption, and to put more pressure on official institutions in order to increase the transparency of business, and thus the trust of citizens in institutions.

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