



EU Leaks: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why have the Greens/EFA MEPs decided to launch this initiative?

Despite perhaps being perceived often as privileged insiders of the “Brussels bubble”, the Greens/EFA MEPs regularly witness a severe lack of transparency in the European decision-making process. Whether we are investigating tax deals, or potential emissions fraud, we often find that we cannot access the information that we need to get our job done and to defend the public interest. We have all seen to what extent whistleblowers’ disclosures can shed light on important issues that otherwise would remain in the dark. So, by launching our own platform, the Greens/EFA MEPs want to end this tendency towards secrecy.

2. What is the added value of establishing EULEAKS?

EULEAKS is the first platform that focuses primarily on the EU institutions, which are a centre of power where decisions that affect more than 500 million citizens are taken every day. As far as we know, EULEAKS is also the first ever platform of this kind to be launched by elected representatives. In addition, whilst several media outlets and not-for-profit organisations have already established their own secure platforms, we have insider knowledge of the functioning of the EU, which gives us a strategic advantage to know how to handle the information we receive and how best to get a concrete impact in policy terms.

3. Why would whistleblowers go to a political party?

We often receive leaks already, and are used to dealing with sensitive information in a proportionate and strategic way. We have a proven track record of working on complex issues, and are obviously dedicated to the fight to protect whistle-blowers across Europe: we drafted a model EU law on the matter and are actively campaigning for the Commission and Member States to enact whistle-blower protection as a matter of urgency. In addition, though in many cases we will work with journalists to publish the information, we might also receive information that won’t make the headlines news but would still be an important topic that we should deal with as politicians.

4. What type of documents can people send?

The MEPs involved in this project have expertise in various areas, ranging from environmental protection and energy policy, to tax justice, transparency, public health, trade agreements, etc. People can send us documents that relate to EU decision-making processes, including the interactions between the EU institutions and Member States, and lobbyists, third countries, or other international organisations.

5. What will you do with the information?

This depends on what we receive. All documents will be individually reviewed and decisions on what to do with them will be taken on a case-by-case basis. We will either keep them for internal information, or work with trusted media partners, or publish the information on our websites. In some cases, we might share the information with scientists or other experts.

Sometimes the documents we receive might be classified (for good reasons), or they could relate to security or military issues. Or, parts of the documents might be covered by other laws, for example on trade secrets. In each case, we will weigh the risks and benefits and take a reasoned decision. Needless to say, we will protect personal data in line with the current EU legislation, always putting the public interest at the forefront.

6. How does EUleaks work in practice?

If a whistle-blower comes across a document that they consider to be in the public interest to share, they will need to download a secure, encrypted TOR browser and then visit the platform. Once they are there, they will have to fill in some basic information about the document, including information about how we can verify that it is accurate. They will have the option also to indicate the urgency of the document, though we reserve the right to take the final decision about how and when to publish it (if we decide to publish it at all). All information is automatically encrypted upon sending it. Once we receive it, we verify the documents and ensure that they are thoroughly cleansed of any information that might indicate where the documents came from.

7. Is the website really secure?

Everything has been done to offer a fully secured system and to match the equivalent security of other existing platforms. The platform itself has been programmed to work only with a secure browser (Tor); so if you don't have a safe browser you cannot even access the site. Once you are on the site, it will automatically encrypt the information once it is uploaded.

We won't have any information on who the whistle-blower is, and any metadata or other potentially identifying traces will be wiped from the documents received. So, in short, even if we wanted to contact the whistle-blower, we would not be able to.

8. Aren't you worried that you are inciting others to break the law?

We are not inciting anyone to do anything. We are simply providing secure tools for those that feel that they are doing the right thing in shedding light on particular processes or policies. We launched this project to defend the public interest and anyone who wants to blow the whistle is free to make the decision to use our platform or not.

9. Isn't this just a cheap PR stunt?

We take the issue of transparency and democracy very seriously in the Greens/EFA group - this is one of our key political priorities. Similarly, we are very involved on the issue of whistle-blower protection. We even prepared a draft directive to establish minimum levels of protection for whistle-blowers, and we are calling for the European Commission to initiate legislation to protect them.

Access to documents is also a necessary step for decision-makers to make informed decisions and that's why we believe in this project. In fact, the whole idea came up after we realised how difficult it was for MEPs to access documents for the #Luxleaks investigation in the European Parliament, even if they weren't marked as classified or confidential. We had the same problem with other inquiries, like the one on #Dieselgate, the car emissions scandal. This is why we thought we should provide for a secured tool, for those who want the Members of the European Parliament to have access to more information.

EU Leaks is an initiative of European Greens/EFA Parliamentarians Pascal Durand, Bas Eickhout, Sven Giegold, Benedek Jávor, Eva Joly, Philippe Lamberts, Ernest Maragall, Michel Reimon, Michèle Rivasi, Molly Scott Cato, Bart Staes and Ernest Urtasun