

PRESS RELEASE**WOLF THEISS WARSAW CONFERENCE SEES VALUE IN ENHANCING WHISTLEBLOWING BEST PRACTICES IN POLAND**

Warsaw, 30 November 2017 – Polish companies should intensify efforts to strengthen their internal whistleblowing systems, which increase value for all stakeholders and can prevent reputation crises, according to experts gathered at a seminar held by international law firm Wolf Theiss in Warsaw.

Participants in the conference, which brought together compliance officers from leading enterprises including insurer PZU SA, Bank Zachodni WBK SA, T-Mobile Polska SA and the Warsaw Stock Exchange, said companies should enhance procedures to protect those who report wrongdoing and fight against negative cultural stereotypes of whistleblowers.

"Implementing effective whistleblowing systems within a company is not an easy task, but it is really beneficial," said Jacek Michalski, Partner and Head of the Corporate and M&A Practice at Wolf Theiss in Warsaw. "The benefits are obvious, as a proper compliance function helps minimize legal risks and facilitates internal channeling of information, and without doubt is a driver of positive perceptions."

The goal of such systems is to encourage genuine disclosure of information about a wide range of public interest issues, including potentially serious risks to health and safety, environmental damage and breaches of other legal or regulatory violations that can result in significant harm.

"The trend in Europe is that more and more legislators require whistleblowing systems in specific industries, for example in the banking and insurance sectors," said Roland Marko, Partner at Wolf Theiss in Vienna. "Compliance and risk management are an integral part of the long-term success of any company."

"Compliance is a very good investment; it boosts the shareholder value of a company, and helps business operations," said Wojciech Nagel, Chairman of the Warsaw Stock Exchange's supervisory board. "Compliance is an insurance policy. It prevents potential crisis situations, and contributes to a positive image."

Most whistleblowers report misconduct by a fellow employee or superior within their company through anonymous mechanisms including hotlines. Employees are more likely to take action against unacceptable behaviour if there are complaint systems that offer a range of options for absolute confidentiality, participants said.

"What's key is that violations of compliance codes can be easily reported, securely handled and quickly solved," said Gernot Rauter, General Manager at Responsible Business Solutions, a Wolf Theiss subsidiary that offers the

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SecuReveal internet-based whistleblowing system. "To ensure active compliance management, you need a reliable system where data security and confidentiality have top priority, and where a whistleblower is not traceable and remains protected."

ABOUT WOLF THEISS

Wolf Theiss is one of the leading European law firms in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe with a focus on international business law. With 340 lawyers in 13 offices located in Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine, Wolf Theiss represents local and international industrial, trade and service companies, as well as banks and insurance companies. Combining law and business, Wolf Theiss develops comprehensive and constructive solutions on the basis of legal, fiscal and business know-how.

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