

# The Silent Europe

“**You lose everything** if you blow the whistle in the EU. You will have to start all over again. It is like a golden cage, which creates a pressure that makes people not blow the whistle and sound the alarm regarding irregularities at their institutions.”

This is a quote from one of the EU-whistleblowers that the Swedish journalist Helle Larssen has interviewed. The fact that EU staff are well paid is well known, but something less talked about is that these generous circumstances have a darker side to it. The staffs are financially tied to their employer and anyone who is accused of disloyalty to the EU institution will risk losing not only their social network and financial safety but also their own and their families' entire welfare benefits.

This is the story that several EU-whistleblowers tell in the book. They speak of the fights they have fought to be heard regarding the corruption and irregularities they have seen, and how they as a result have been bullied and harassed in such a way that they have been forced out from their offices and work and eventually have ended up on permanent sick leave, totally in the hands of the EU bureaucracy. The fear of such treatment has created a “silent culture” in the EU.

The journalist Helle Larssen worked during a period as an EU staff member in Brussels and there had the possibility to

study close up how the European bureaucracy works. Taking her starting point from some of the central statements in the EU employee staff regulations the author takes the reader through what possible effects such a silent culture can have on the already democratically poor EU. How does that silence affect our democracy and what kind of information is the Swedish public as a result never told?

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