Crimes against Justice under the Legislation of the States of the European Union

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Abstract: The countries of the European Union (EU) are united, but above all, each country is autonomous. EU Member States have different legislation on criminal offences. The EU authorities have already suggested the possibility of creating a single system for regulating legal provisions on criminal offences. Studying and comparing the legal systems and responsibilities for crimes against justice in individual countries will facilitate the analysis of the differences in the legislation of the EU countries. The purpose of this paper is to investigate crimes against justice in accordance with the laws of each individual European country. The paper considers the composition of such crimes, as well as the responsibility to which offenders can be brought in case of such crimes. The study uses the methods of analysis and synthesis, analyses legal provisions. General methods of scientific cognition used in this study include dialectical, historical, the Aristotelian method, method of systematic data analysis, formal legal method, method of legal modelling and comparative legal method. The study investigates the legal framework of European countries, in particular criminal codes and laws. This study systematises and groups the received information and data on criminal liability of judges for unlawful decisions. The European practices in punishing those who do not comply with court rulings and judgments are also analysed. A study of the legal system in individual EU countries will help distinguish between positive and negative aspects in the legislation. In addition, this study allows to consider and analyse the most effective laws, provisions, and principles that can be implemented in the current legal system of different countries of the world.

Keywords: Crime, justice system, European Union, legislation, Criminal Code.

INTRODUCTION

Under the laws of most European countries, including the Member States of the European Union, the legal regulation of crimes against justice plays an important role for society and the state. Punishment and prevention of crimes against justice constitute the basis for protecting the freedoms, interests, and rights of EU citizens (Entin and Voynikov 2019). Crimes against justice are intentional socially dangerous actions, actions, or inaction stipulated by law. They are directed against the state power and its interests, encroach on the statutory activities of the court and judicial bodies that ensure judicial activity and contribute to the achievement of the goals of justice (Bohonyuk 2016). This group of crimes is considered particularly dangerous for society. Crimes against justice are always committed with a certain intent and can harm citizens, violate the rights and freedoms guaranteed to them by the Constitution (Mendez-Pinedo 2020). Currently, the legal systems operating in the EU are one of the most adapted and socially oriented (Sinelnikov 2013). In the European Union, legislation differs from country to country. They have

certain similar aspects, which creates an opportunity to compare them and allows to identify the most effective and socially adapted of them. Within the European Union, each country operates in accordance with its individual legal framework for the classification, systematisation, punishment, and prevention of crimes against justice (Bazhanov, Baulin and Borisov 2005).

Crimes against justice are classified according to two principles. The first one classifies crimes according to the subject of the crime. The second – according to the object of the crime. According to the first principle, crimes are classified as follows:

- crimes committed by employees of the judiciary (judges, lay judges, jurors, and court staff);
- crimes committed by employees of the pre-trial investigation body, the prosecutor's office, the bailiff's service, or the field unit;
- crimes committed by persons serving sentences;
- crimes committed by a witness, victim, applicant, expert, or interpreter;
- crimes committed by representatives of a financial institution (Spector 2014).

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The second classification of crimes against justice distinguishes crimes according to their object, namely:

- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in the implementation and maintenance of normal activities of pre-trial investigation bodies, the prosecutor's office, and the court;
- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in guaranteeing the independence of the activities of the judicial bodies;
- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in the exercise of functions by officials;
- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in ensuring the effective implementation of lawful legal decisions;
- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in case of security measures against persons taken under protection;
- crimes that encroach on the interests of justice in guaranteeing the activities and professional secrecy of defenders or representatives of a person, including guarantees of safety of life, health, and property rights of the said persons (Marcelo and Balcells 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, theoretical research methods were used, such as the method of analysis of legal scientific literature on the subject matter. The authors analyse the scientific articles of scholars who have investigated the issues of crimes against the justice system, the legal system of the EU countries on this subject. In the course of writing this paper and studying the subject matter, the main provisions and definitions were considered. The EU comprises 27 countries, each of which regulates criminal liability independently. EU countries differ in the severity of the penalties applied to offenders. The main executive body in the European Union is the Court of Justice of the European Union (Court of Justice), located in Luxembourg. Each individual EU country regulates the punishment of perpetrators of a crime against justice in accordance with the national criminal code of a particular country. Within the framework of the study, the authors reviewed the criminal codes and laws of countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. Under the laws of most

European countries, the most common types of punishment are imprisonment and a fine.

Various basic methods of scientific knowledge were combined to investigate the subject matter of this paper. This allowed to consider the main provisions and legislation on the criminal liability of perpetrators of crimes against justice. Methods of analysis and synthesis are used to determine the positive and negative aspects of the legislative systems of European countries. The study analyses the legal provisions that form the basis for regulation of the relations between the state and society on crimes against justice. Generally accepted methods of scientific knowledge were used in the study of the main issues related to the subject matter. Such methods include dialectical, historical, the Aristotelian method, method of synthesis, and method of systematic data analysis. The formal legal method, the method of legal modelling, and the comparative legal method were also applied. With the help of a dialectical method of research, the study objectively and specifically considered the state and legal phenomena in the EU. Discrepancies and connections were also identified, and the legal system and legal regulation were assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The dialectical method is based on such methods of cognition of information as data synthesis and analysis, as well as abstraction and the principle of rising from the abstract to the concrete. The historical method has been used to study historical data and information on methods of punishing perpetrators of crimes against justice, as well as to investigate information on the legal system and to regulate the liability of judges for knowingly unjust decisions. The Aristotelian method constitutes a set of laws and techniques of correct thinking for a more accurate and specific study of the subject. Synthesis, as a method of scientific research, constitutes an imaginary or material combination of parameters of one object, such as properties and features, allocated to a single system by means of analysis. The systematic method, or systematic data analysis, was used to investigate crimes against justice. This method allowed to explore the concept of a crime against justice, as well as the legal framework for the legal regulation of such a crime.

System analysis is one of the key methods of scientific knowledge of state and legal phenomena, regulations, and laws. The formal legal method has become the basis for research and analysis of known legal facts and regulations on the legal classification and types of punishment for perpetrators of crimes against justice in the EU. This method involves a consistent and logical study of the laws and regulations of EU Member States. The method of legal modelling is used to build models of possible legal situations and find ways to solve them. It also helps to learn and hypothetically resolve certain legal situations. The last of the methods used in the study is the comparative legal method. It was used to study and compare legal documents and regulations in the EU, it helped to compare and draw conclusions about different methods and ways of punishing criminals who committed crimes in the category of offences, as well as to systematise information on differences in legislation of different European countries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Penalties for Non-Enforcement of a Court Decision in the Countries of the European Union

Punishment as a definition is not stipulated by the criminal codes of most European countries, in particular in France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Spain (Arnaud 2017). European countries impose several sanctions on the perpetrators, the main types of punishment used in EU countries are fines and imprisonment (de Jonge 2020). These two types of punishment are most often used as alternative measures in the sanctions of the articles of the Special Part. They can also be used both as a primary and ancillary type of punishment.

In the legislation of Latvia, namely in Chapter XXIII "Criminal Acts against Jurisdiction" of the Criminal Code of Latvia, Article 296 deserves special attention (Criminal Code of the Republic of Latvia 1998). It specifies the types of punishment for a convicted person who does not comply with court decisions. According to this Article, the law stipulates criminal liability, where a convicted person may be temporarily deprived of liberty, and coercive correctional labour may also be applied. Article 245 of the Criminal Code and of Lithuania, Chapter XXXIV, "Crimes Misdemeanours Justice" against states what precautionary measures may be applied to a person who has not complied with a court decision (The Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania 2000). According to this Article, a person who violates or fails to comply with a court decision shall receive punishment in the form of forced correctional labour, a fine, restriction of liberty, or arrest.

In its legislation, the Republic of Poland differs from most European countries. Under the law of this country, justice is considered in a narrower understanding, considering only the activities of the court and the judicial authorities (Criminal Code of the Republic of Poland 1997). In accordance with the legislation of Poland, those who do not comply with court decisions can be sentenced to up to three years in prison. This punishment can be applied to a person in case of non-compliance with the decisions of a judicial authority (Szczucki 2018). These include the following injunctions: to hold a certain position; to perform certain activities; to drive a vehicle; to visit

the place of residence without the appropriate court permission (Ochio 2016). Section IV of the Criminal Code of Romania lists the precautionary measures that may be applied to persons who do not comply with court decisions and rulings (Panainte 2014). Article 287 Section IV "Obstruction of Justice" stipulates the deprivation or restriction of liberty of persons who do not comply with a court decision (Romanian Criminal Code 2014).

gambling centres; to take part in gambling; to take part

in public mass events; to be in certain places; to approach a certain person or group of people; to leave

restriction of liberty of persons who do not comply with a court decision (Romanian Criminal Code 2014). These persons may be imprisoned for a term from three months to two years. Chapter VIII "Crimes against Public Order" of the Special Part of the Criminal Code of Slovakia, Chapter 5 "Other Forms of Interference by Public Authorities" lists the criminal liability of persons who obstruct the execution of a formal state court decision (Criminal Code of the Slovak Republic 2005). According to Article 348, persons who have encroached on the execution of state decisions may be brought to criminal responsibility. A person who has committed this offence may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of one to five years, or up to two years depending on the gravity of the offence.

The legislative provisions of the Czech Republic specify criminal liability to be imposed on persons who do not comply with a court decision or ruling (Criminal Code of the Czech Republic 2009). Chapter X "Criminal Acts Against Order in Public Cases" states that a person who obstructs the ruling of a judicial body or its execution shall be imprisoned for up to five years or shall be forced to pay a fine in accordance with the gravity of the offence committed. The Penal Code of Denmark also covers crimes against justice. In general, it considers crimes against credible evidence procurement as well as against a credible court decision (Danish Penal Code 2005). Also, the legislation of Denmark, namely Article 148 Chapter 16 of the Penal Code, stipulates penalties for crimes committed in the course of public service. The Penal Code of Denmark provides for a fine or detention. Chapter VIII of the Penal Code of the Netherlands stipulates the punishment of persons for performing actions prohibited by a court decision (Criminal Code of the Netherlands 1881). Article 195 of the Criminal Code states that a person who commits illegal acts under this Article shall be forced to pay a fine of the third category or shall be imprisoned for up to six months (Garoupa and Grajzl 2020).

Review on European Legal Regulation of Judges' Liability for Making a Knowingly Unjust Decision

Spain and its criminal legislation deserve special attention in protecting justice from unjust and illegal decisions. Book 2 of the Penal Code of Spain, in its Chapter XX "Crimes against the Judiciary" highlights the provisions on which the principles governing the liability of judges before the law are based. The first chapter of this section describes the liability to which a judge may be brought to in case of intentionally made illegal and unlawful decision. Also, a judge may be prosecuted for negligence, error, or criminal ignorance that led to an illegal decision. The reason for prosecuting a judge may be a refusal to make a decision without a legal basis, and the judge will be prosecuted in case of intentional delay of the court ruling process (Criminal Code of the Spain 1995).

Article 447 sets out the procedure for prosecution of a judge in case they make an illegal decision due to criminal ignorance or gross negligence. Under Article 447, a judge may be deprived of the right to hold public office for a term of two to six years. In case a judge makes an illegal decision, as a result of which the convicted person was deprived of liberty or suffered other serious consequences, the judge's responsibility before the law may be aggravated. The Penal Code of Spain also contains Chapter VII "Obstruction of Justice and Violation of Professional Duties". According to the provisions stipulated in this chapter, other participants in the trial may be held liable before the law. According to this chapter, the responsibility of lawyers, prosecutors, and judges is stipulated. They can be prosecuted for failing to appear in court without good reason. The aforementioned participants in the trial will be prosecuted if, for instance, the court considers the case of a crime, and the defendant was previously in custody - in this case, failure to appear in court will be considered as a delay in the trial.

According to the Criminal Code of Latvia, namely in accordance with the provisions specified in Section XXIII "Criminal offences against the administration of justice", criminal liability of all participants in the trial is stipulated. Under the legislation of Latvia, judges, prosecutors, and pre-trial investigation officials may be brought to criminal responsibility. Pursuant to Articles 291-293, the above persons may be prosecuted in cases of unjust decisions, unlawful arrest, and unlawful detention (Criminal Code of the Republic of Latvia 1998).

The Criminal Code of Latvia, namely Article 290, stipulates imprisonment for up to three years, community service or a fine in case of illegal decisions by the participants in the trial. The legislation of Latvia stipulates penalties for litigants in cases of unlawful arrest of a defendant or unlawful detention. In case of such unlawful actions, the prosecutor, judge, or investigator may be imprisoned for up to one year, fined, or sentenced to community service. The Criminal Code of Slovenia stipulates criminal liability of persons involved in court proceedings who have made illegal decisions, made biased or unjust decisions (Terpstra and Kort 2016). The Criminal Code of Slovenia, namely Article 288, contains provisions governing the liability of litigants before the law (Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia 2008). Article 288 stipulates criminal liability in the following cases: violation of the law, intentional misinterpretation of the law; passing an unlawful judgment with the intention of harming the defendant; giving personal preference to a particular party during the proceedings. Trial participants who were aware of false facts, testimony, or evidence during the trial will also be prosecuted. Criminal liability for such acts is punishable by up to three years of imprisonment.

The Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Germany provides for the criminal liability of participants in legal proceedings if, as a result of their actions or inaction, unlawful judgement has been passed. Article 339 of the German Criminal Code provides for the punishment of a judge, arbitrator, or other civil servant if they obstruct the administration of justice. The Criminal Code stipulates liability of authorised persons in cases where they make an intentional unlawful decision to the detriment or benefit of a particular party to the proceedings. The punishment for the above actions may be imprisonment for a term of one to five years (Criminal Code of the Federal Republic of Germany 1971). Article 344 of the German Criminal Code contains provisions on the intentional and unlawful criminal prosecution of an

innocent person. Such an offence can lead to imprisonment for one to ten years. Punishment can be reduced in a less serious case. Thus, a party to a trial can be imprisoned for a period of three months to five years.

Legal Regulation of Judges' Liability for Passing a Knowingly Unjust Judgement

Spain: legislative provision - Article 446 of the Penal Code of Spain. The object of the crime is public relations that ensure the normal operation of justice. The subject of the crime is a judge or a magistrate. Punishment - Part 1 Article 446 of the Penal Code - a ban on holding relevant positions or public office for a term of ten to twenty years and imprisonment for a term of one to four years if an unlawful judgement has not yet been executed or, if an unlawful judgement has been executed, imprisonment for a term of three to four years and a fine of twelve to twenty-four monthly wages; Part 2 Article 446 of the Penal Code - a fine of six to twelve monthly wages and deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions or public office for a term of six to ten years, if an illegal sentence was passed against the guilty person during the misdemeanour proceedings (administrative offence); Part 3 Article 446 of the Criminal Code - a fine in the amount of twelve to twenty-four monthly salaries and deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions or public office for a term of ten to twenty years, if any other unlawful sentence or unlawful judgement were passed. Legislative provision - Article 447 of the Penal Code of Spain. The object of the crime - public relations. The subject of the crime a judge or a magistrate. Punishment - deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions or public office for a term of two to six years. Legislative provision - Article 448 of the Penal Code of Spain. The object of the crime - public relations. The subject of the crime - a judge or a magistrate. Punishment – deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions or public office for a period of six months to four years. Legislative provision - Article 449 of the Penal Code of Spain. The object of the crime - public relations. The subject of the crime a judge, magistrate, or court employee. Punishment -Part 1 Article 449 of the Criminal Code - deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions or public office for a period of six months to four years; Part 2 Article 449 if this delay is due to the fault of any other employee, the penalty is imposed closer to the lower limit of the sanction.

Latvia. Legislative provision - Article 291 of the Criminal Code of Latvia. The object of the crime -

public relations. The subject of the crime - the person conducting the inquiry, the investigator, the prosecutor, or the judge. Punishment - Part 1 Article 291 of the Criminal Code – imprisonment for up to five years; Part 2 Article 291 of the Criminal Code – imprisonment for a term of three to ten years, if the same acts are committed for selfish motives or combined with charges of committing a serious or particularly serious crime or forgery of evidence. Legislative provision - Article 292 of the Criminal Code of Latvia. The object of the crime - public relations. The subject of the crime - a judge. Punishment - imprisonment for up to three years. Legislative provision - Article 293 of the Criminal Code of Latvia. The object of the crime - public relations. The subject of the crime - a judge or a person conducting a pre-trial investigation. Punishment - imprisonment for up to one year or a fine of up to twenty minimum monthly salaries.

Slovenia. Legislative provision – Article 288 of the Criminal Code. The object of the crime – public relations. The subject of the crime – a judge. Punishment – imprisonment for up to three years. Germany. Legislative provision – Article 339 of the Criminal Code. The object of the crime is public relations. The subject of the crime – a judge, other official, or arbitrator. Punishment – imprisonment for a term of one to five years.

In general, the issue of criminal liability of judges for passing a knowingly unlawful judgement is most extensively described and regulated by the Penal Code of Spain. Under the legislation of Spain, judges who pass unlawful judgement may be deprived of the right to hold relevant positions or hold public office, may be forced to pay a fine, or may be imprisoned. The most common are fines and deprivation of the right to hold relevant positions. Under the legislation of Latvia, imprisonment is mainly stipulated. Slovenia and Germany also stipulate imprisonment for offenders.

In summary, the authors define European legislation as moderately strict. Comparing the European legislation on the responsibility of judges for passing a knowingly unlawful judgement, the most strict and similar to the Ukrainian is the legislation of Spain. It involves the removal of perpetrators from office, which constitutes one of the most effective ways to combat unlawful judgement.

CONCLUSION

The study of the international legal framework, as well as the study of scientific papers in accordance with

the subject matter, identified similarities and differences in the legal frameworks of different European countries. Analysis and study of the Criminal Codes of European countries allowed to identify the main types of punishment for offenders in these countries. The authors discovered which EU countries impose penalties in the form of correctional labour, which countries are more prone to imposing fines on violators, and identified the strictest states, where legislation stipulates the imprisonment of offenders for up to ten years. The study and systematisation of the main provisions of European criminal codes helped to identify the most effective methods in the fight against perpetrators of crimes against public justice.

After analysing all the information collected, the EU countries can be grouped according to certain criteria. The first group includes European states where the legislation stipulates an arrest, imprisonment, or restriction of liberty of the perpetrator as a precautionary measure. This group includes the Republic of Poland and Slovakia. The second group includes countries that stipulate a fine, arrest, imprisonment, or restriction of liberty. This group includes: Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark. Comparing the European legal system with the Ukrainian legislation, it is worth noting the similarities between the Criminal Code of Spain and Ukraine. Both codes stipulate the impossibility of holding a relevant public office in the future as a precautionary measure. The legislation of Lithuania and Latvia is also different from other European countries. These countries practice community service as a form of punishment for perpetrators. The experience of these countries can be applied to the Ukrainian justice system and to the legal systems of all European countries.

Comparing the legislation of the EU countries with the current legislation of Ukraine, it can be concluded that the Criminal Code of Ukraine is more severe for perpetrators of crimes against justice. However, the Criminal (Penal) Codes of each of the European states can contribute certain practices that can be further introduced in the state legislation of other European countries. By introducing new practices and constantly modernising the legal system, it is possible to conduct a regular assessment and analysis of each type of punishment introduced. Thus, the study and borrowing of legal experience of neighbouring countries will present new opportunities for European countries. The modernised justice system will become even more socially adapted and perfect, thereby facilitating better regulation of precautionary measures against criminals and timely prevention of crimes against justice.

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