DOI: https://doi.org/10.30525/2256-0742/2025-11-4-332-337

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN THE FIELD OF COMBATING ECONOMIC CRIME

Viktor Konopelskyi[1], Daria Sukhanova[2], Hanna Sherstiuk[3]

Abstract. The article analyses the significance of international standards in combating economic crime, which, in the context of globalisation of economic processes and their transnational nature, acquires particular urgency, causing the need for unified approaches, legal coherence between states and effective mechanisms of international co-operation to neutralise threats that go beyond the boundaries of individual jurisdictions. It has been determined that economic crime, in particular money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption and trade in illegal goods, actively uses discrepancies and gaps in the legal systems of different states. It is widely accepted that international standards serve as the universal legal and regulatory foundations for the integration of these systems into national legal frameworks. This ensures the establishment of a unified, coordinated front in the global and national efforts to combat economic crimes. A study of the impact of the full-scale war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine on the intensification and transformation of the nature of economic crime in the country has been carried out. It is particularly noteworthy that fraud has emerged as the predominant form of criminal activity, reflecting the adaption of criminal elements to wartime circumstances and the exploitation of the vulnerability of the population in such contexts. It has been determined that crimes committed within the sphere of official activities, in addition to bribery, persist as a considerable problem. This has had a profound impact on the trust of international partners, thereby creating a significant challenge. It should be noted that the overall level of economic crime remains significantly higher than before the war, indicating the persistence of this threat and the urgent need for constant efforts to combat it. A comprehensive analysis was carried out of the regulatory framework of international standards, consisting of acts developed by leading international organisations, which form a comprehensive approach to combating phenomena such as money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, and other economic crimes. It has been determined that international standards, such as the conventions and recommendations of international groups, act as 'road maps' for states. They influence the harmonisation of national legislation by obliging countries to criminalise certain acts and introduce similar regulatory measures for financial and non-financial institutions. International standards also serve as a guide for reforms, as compliance with them is a prerequisite for countries seeking to integrate into international communities, thereby stimulating domestic legislative changes. It is emphasised that harmonising national legislation in accordance with international standards is a necessary prerequisite for strengthening international co-operation and increasing the effectiveness of combating economic crime at the global level. It has been demonstrated that enhancing the efficacy of global law enforcement can be accomplished through the harmonisation of procedures and requirements. This integration facilitates and expedites the processes involved in the provision of legal assistance in criminal cases, including extradition and the exchange of evidence. It is imperative to acknowledge that international standards constitute a pivotal component of the global architecture for countering economic crime. These standards serve to unify national approaches, thereby ensuring the requisite coordination and interaction between states. This, in turn, facilitates an effective response to the dynamic challenges prevalent in this domain. Moreover, the systematic integration of these standards into national legislation serves to fortify the institutional capacity of the state. It also fosters enhanced

[1] Odesa State University of Internal Affairs, Ukraine *(corresponding author)*
E-mail: konopelckiu@ukr.net
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4068-3902
[2] Odesa State University of Internal Affairs, Ukraine
E-mail: sukhanovadarina@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2060-3792
[3] Odesa State University of Internal Affairs, Ukraine
E-mail: hanna.sherstiuk@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9562-3531

trust from international partners and establishes a legal environment that is conducive to effectively addressing economic challenges.

Keywords: international standards, economic crime, counteraction, harmonisation of legislation, international co-operation.

JEL Classification: F13, F21

1. Introduction

In the context of globalisation of economic relations and the transnational nature of modern economic crime, the problem of its effective counteraction is of paramount importance, the key tool of which is the system of international standards, which ensures the harmonisation of national legislation and contributes to increasing the effectiveness of the fight against economic crime at the global level. In view of this, research and constant analysis of international standards is of paramount importance for the development of adequate and effective national strategies for countering this threat. In particular, such economic crimes as money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption and drug and arms trafficking actively exploit the differentiation and gaps in the legal systems of different states to achieve criminal goals. The absence of a uniform definition of economic crime, variations in the procedures for its criminalisation, and the paucity of legal mechanisms for cross-border co-operation engender favourable conditions for the activities of criminal groups in this domain. In this context, international standards function as universal legal and regulatory matrices, forming the basis for integration into the national legal systems of individual states. This ensures the establishment of a unified, coordinated and effective global and national response to economic crimes.

The purpose of the present article is to undertake a study of international standards in the field of combating economic crime.

2. Literature Review

Given the extremely acute problem of updating, improving, changing, and expanding the legislative framework for preventing cross-border economic crime, neutralising the causes and conditions for committing this type of criminal offences under martial law in Ukraine, as well as blocking the channels, sources, and opportunities for their production, an important area of activity to improve such counteraction is the theoretical development of the problems raised. The following domestic scientists made an integral contribution to this development: V. V. Babanina, A. M. Babenko, V. M. Bilokonev, M. B. Golovko, N. A. Dmytrenko, S. F. Denisov, I. M. Koropatnik, Ya. S. Kulkina, Yu. B. Kurylyuk, I. I. Mytrofanov, V. O. Navrotsky, M. I. Panov, O. R. Polegenka, V. P. Popovych, A. O. Reva, O. M. Sarnavskyi, O. V. Stolyarskyi, V. M. Stratonov, E. L. Streltsov, M. S. Turkot, M. I. Khavronyuk, G. I. Changuli, V. V. Shablystyi, O. O. Shkuta and others.

3. Materials and Methods

The research is grounded in the findings of scholars from Ukraine and other countries, who have contributed to the development of methodological approaches to the understanding of crime prevention.

The present study employed a combination of general scientific and specialised methods. In particular, hermeneutic methods were utilised for the cognitive interpretation of scientific articles, monographs, and educational materials, with the aim of elucidating the content of the issues raised. Furthermore, sociological methods were employed to ascertain the positions and opinions of scientists and practitioners with regard to the causes and conditions of economic crime. Additionally, dogmatic methods were employed to identify positive foreign experiences in the field of economic crime prevention. Finally, statistical methods were employed to process statistical indicators of economic crime.

4. Results and Discussion

The full-scale war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine has significantly intensified and transformed the nature of economic crime in the country. This has created unprecedented challenges for the state's economic security, as the volume of illegal financial flows increases and corruption schemes become more active in conditions where state control is weakened.

The Criminal Code of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the Criminal Code of Ukraine) does not contain a separate section entitled "Economic Crimes", since this concept is largely doctrinal and encompasses a number of offences located in different sections of the Special Part of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, which encroach upon economic relations and the economic security of the state: Article 190 "Fraud"; Article 191 "Misappropriation, embezzlement of property or its seizure through abuse of official position" (Section VI. Criminal Offences against Property); Article 364 "Abuse of power or official position"; Article 368 "Acceptance of an offer, promise or receipt of an unlawful benefit by an official (bribery)";

Article 368-5 "Illegal enrichment"; Article 369 "Offer, promise or provision of an unlawful benefit to an official" (Chapter XVII. Criminal Offences in the Sphere of Official Activity and Professional Activity Related to the Provision of Public Services); and criminal offences enshrined in Chapter VII. Criminal Offences in the Sphere of Economic Activity (Arkusha, 2019), among others.

The following conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the dynamics and structure of economic crime in Ukraine for the period 2021– I half of 2025 (see Table 1).

In the context of a full-scale invasion, a fundamental shift in the nature of economic crimes became evident. Notably, fraud (Article 190 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code) emerged as the predominant form of criminal activity, reflecting the adaptation of criminal elements to wartime circumstances, the exploitation of the vulnerability of the population, and the exploitation of "military" themes. Following the initial decline in registered crime in 2022, which was attributed to disorganisation within the state and society, there was a marked increase in economic crime rates in 2023. Criminal offences in the field of official activities and bribery (Articles 364, 368 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code) persist as a significant problem, given that the restoration and growth of these indicators in 2023-2024 poses a substantial challenge to the trust of international partners and the effective utilisation of resources for the post-war reconstruction of the state. The overall level of economic crime remains significantly higher than before the war, indicating the persistence of this threat and the urgent need to constantly strengthen efforts to counter it. It is therefore imperative that Ukraine implements and strengthens international standards for combating economic crime. This will allow for the harmonisation of national legislation with global best practices, thus enhancing the effectiveness of global efforts to combat economic crime. International standards establish a set of unified rules and definitions that serve to eliminate legal loopholes that are often exploited by criminals. They also serve to establish a common regulatory framework for financial institutions and provide mechanisms for enhanced international legal assistance, operational exchange of information between Financial Intelligence Units, as well as the formation of joint investigative teams. Adherence to international standards for combating economic crime ensures the inevitable punishment of criminals, strengthens the institutional capacity of Ukraine, and promotes transparency and effective control over budget funds. This is vital for the successful post-war reconstruction of the country and its further integration into the global economic system (Arkusha, 2019).

The regulatory and legal framework of international standards in the field of combating economic crime consists of regulatory and legal acts developed by leading international organisations, which form a comprehensive approach to combating such phenomena as money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, fraud and other economic crimes.

The following international regulatory and legal acts are of particular significance in defining international standards in the field of combating economic crime:

– The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Convention), adopted in 2000, is a key instrument in the fight against organised crime. It provides for the criminalisation of participation in organised criminal groups, money laundering, corruption, and obstruction of justice. The Convention establishes a broad framework for international co-operation, including extradition, mutual legal assistance, the confiscation of criminal assets, and witness protection.

– Adopted in 2003, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is the most comprehensive international instrument in the fight against corruption. It covers a wide range of corrupt acts, such as bribery, embezzlement and abuse of office, and sets out measures to prevent them, encourage international co-operation and recover assets.

– The 1999 Criminal Convention against Corruption (ETS No. 173) obliges States Parties to criminalise a wide range of corrupt acts, including active and passive bribery, trading in influence, and laundering of the proceeds of corruption.

– The Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds of Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (Warsaw Convention) of 2005 (ETS No. 198) is an updated version of the previous 1990 convention, with the purpose of strengthening international co-operation in

Table 1

Indicators of recorded individual types of economic criminal offenses in Ukraine in the period 2021 – I half of 2025

	2021	2022	2023	2024	First half of 2025
Article 190 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine	23847	32086	82609	64978	28448
Article 191 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine	11092	6698	9222	7743	4144
Article 364 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine	3955	2214	2983	2345	1194
Article 368 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine	1566	988	1403	1640	952
Chapter XVII of the Criminal Code of Ukraine	5469	3414	4840	5139	3181

the field of confiscation of criminal assets and combating the financing of terrorism (Leheza, 2022).

– The EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive (AMLD) details the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), establishing obligations for financial and non-financial institutions, requirements for customer verification (Know Your Customer–KYC), the reporting of suspicious transactions, and co-operation between Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), amongst other provisions. For instance, Directive (EU) 2018/843 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing and amending Directives 2009/138/EC and 2013/36/EU is considered to be "the main legal instrument for the prevention of the use of the Union's financial system for the purposes of money laundering and terrorist financing" (Shkuta, 2022).

The regulatory and legal framework of international standards in the field of combating economic crime is pivotal in the field of harmonisation of national legislation and increasing the effectiveness of the fight against economic crime at the global level (Shkuta, 2022).

In particular, international standards such as the UN Conventions, the FATF Recommendations and the Council of Europe instruments serve as templates or "road maps" for states and influence the harmonisation of national legislation. International norms oblige countries to criminalise certain acts (for example, money laundering, terrorist financing, or bribery) and to define them uniformly across different legal systems, thereby eliminating legal gaps that criminals could exploit to transfer their activities between jurisdictions. Moreover, these standards require states to introduce comparable regulatory measures for both financial and non-financial institutions, including obligations for customer due diligence, monitoring of suspicious transactions, and reporting to financial intelligence units. They also serve as a guideline for reform, since for countries seeking integration into international communities (for example, Ukraine on its path towards EU membership), compliance with such standards is a prerequisite and a driving force behind domestic legislative reforms that align national law with global best practices in combating economic crime. For instance, the Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) "International Standards for Combating Money Laundering, the Financing of Terrorism and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (2012) are a pertinent exemplar of international standards in the field of combating economic crime. They also create a single legal framework that is critically important for the formation of universal mechanisms for responding to transnational threats and "represent a comprehensive and consistent system of measures that must be implemented by countries to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, as well as the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Which, in turn, minimizes the possibility of 'legal arbitrage', when criminal acts that qualify as serious crimes in one jurisdiction may be legal or insufficiently sanctioned in another" (Shkuta, 2022). Therefore, harmonising national legislation in accordance with international standards for combating economic crime is necessary to strengthen international co-operation and increase the effectiveness of combatting economic crime globally. This is because international treaties and recommendations establish effective mechanisms for exchanging information and experience between countries, which is fundamental to successfully fighting such a negative phenomenon (Lutsiuk, 2022).

Increasing the effectiveness of the fight at the global level is achieved by:

1. The unification of procedures and requirements has been demonstrated to have a significant impact on the simplification and acceleration of legal assistance processes in criminal cases. This includes, but is not limited to, extradition, transfer of court orders, exchange of evidence and information, and the assurance of the ability to prosecute criminals regardless of their location. International conventions (e.g., UNTOC, Council of Europe Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters) unify procedures for requests for legal assistance, exchange of evidence and extradition, which significantly simplifies and accelerates the process of prosecuting criminals who may be hiding in other countries, ensuring their inevitable punishment. Instruments such as the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) are a clear illustration of the efficiency of the EU legal system. They are based on the principle of mutual recognition of judicial decisions among EU countries. This principle means that a judicial decision issued by one EU member state can be used to arrest and transfer a person to another EU member state for criminal prosecution or the execution of a sentence. This significantly accelerates the process of transferring suspects and convicted persons (Halunko, 2021).

2. The effective functioning of financial intelligence units (Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units) is conducive to the establishment of mechanisms for the prompt exchange of information on suspicious financial transactions. This facilitates the tracking and freezing of assets obtained through criminal means, regardless of their movement across national borders. As stated on the official website of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), FIUs serve as national centres for receiving and analysing reports on suspicious transactions, as well as relevant information on money laundering, related offences, and terrorist

financing. They are also responsible for disseminating the results of their analysis (Shkuta, 2022).

3. The establishment of international standards has been instrumental in facilitating collaborative investigations of economic crimes that are of a transnational nature. Joint investigations represent a highly efficacious instrument of international co-operation in the realm of combating transnational economic crime. This efficacy is predicated upon the presence of a unified regulatory framework, formed by international standards and mutual trust between law enforcement agencies of disparate states. In accordance with the relevant international standards, Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) are established and operational, and investigative measures are coordinated. For instance, international agencies such as Eurojust and Europol play a pivotal role in supporting and coordinating JITs, including in cases related to economic crime. In particular, these agencies coordinate operations aimed at combating cross-border VAT fraud schemes (Missing Trader Intra-Community fraud), which cause billions in losses to the budgets of EU countries. According to the information posted on the official Eurojust website, JITs (Joint Investigation Teams) are one of the most modern and effective instruments of international criminal co-operation. They involve the competent authorities of two or more states concluding a legal agreement to conduct specific criminal investigations. Eurojust plays a key role in supporting JITs by providing operational, legal and financial assistance, as well as access to expertise. The JITs Network is an association of national specialists who share best practices in investigating transnational crime (Shkuta, 2024).

4. International platforms and forums, operating on the basis of international standards for combating economic crime, facilitate the exchange of information on novel methods of combating economic crime, the introduction of innovative technologies (for example, in the field of big data analysis) and the development of effective strategies. They operate on the basis of international standards such as the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the UN Convention and the Council of Europe, thereby contributing to the continuous development of national systems for combating economic crime. For instance, Europol has introduced SIENA (Secure Information Exchange Network Application), which is a secure communication system enabling law enforcement agencies in member states and partner countries (including Ukraine) to share operational information vital for investigations (Shkuta, 2022).

It is evident that international standards play a pivotal role in the global architecture for combating economic crime. These standards serve as a unifying element, harmonising national approaches and facilitating the coordination and interaction between states. This coordination is imperative for an effective response to the dynamic and complex challenges encountered in this domain.

5. Conclusions

International standards for combating economic crime play a pivotal role in the establishment of an effective system for combating economic crime, ensuring consistency of approaches at the global level and creating a foundation for the strengthening of relevant domestic mechanisms. In the context of the ongoing military conflict in Ukraine, the threat to the state's economic security is increasing. This makes it necessary to introduce a unified legal framework and regulatory procedures to facilitate transnational interaction between law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, and regulatory authorities. Supporting international standards for combating economic crime, as set out in international conventions, directives and recommendations, helps to create coordinated instruments for preventing economic crime. It also facilitates and accelerates information exchange processes, and provides the conditions necessary for promptly prosecuting offenders and implementing joint investigative actions at international and interstate levels. The implementation of international standards for combating economic crimes into national legislation engenders the prerequisites for increasing transparency in the field of financial flows, thereby strengthening responsibility for offences and preventing the transfer of criminal activity between jurisdictions of different states. The systematic integration of these provisions into national legislation has been demonstrated to enhance the institutional capacity of the state, foster trust with international partners, and establish a legal framework capable of effectively addressing economic challenges at both domestic and international levels.

References:

Arkusha, L., Korniienko, M., & Berendieieva, A. (2019). Criminal activity in Ukraine in the light of current conditions. *Amazonia Investiga*. Vol. 8 Núm. 24: 386 – 391/ diciembre 2019. P. 386–391.

Leheza, Y., Len, V., Shkuta, O., Titarenko O., & Cherniak, N. (2022). Foreign experience and international legal standards for the application of artificial intelligence in criminal proceedings. *Revista De La Universidad Del Zulia,* 13(36), 276–287. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.46925//rdluz.36.18

Lutsiuk, K., Dolhov, A., Svynarenko, Y., Shkuta, O., & Konopelskyi, V. (2022). International experience of correction and resocialization of prisoners sentenced to imprisonment. *Revista Cuestiones Políticas*. Vol. 40 №º 75 (2022). P. 79–88.

Halunko, V., Shkuta, O., Predmestnikov, O., Petrenko, N., & Holenko, N. (2021). International experience in assessing the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in crime prevention. *Cuestiones Políticas*. Vol. 39 № 68 (enero-junio 2021). P. 343-355. Available at: https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/cuestiones/article/view/35419/37520

Shkuta, O., Korniienko, M., & Yankovyi, M. (2022). Foreign experience of preventing military and economic crimes. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*. Vol. 8 № 4. P. 185-190.

Shkuta, O., Koval, M., & Koropatov, O. (2024). State, structure and dynamics of crime in the penitentiary sphere of Ukraine. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*. Vol. 10 № 3. P. 380-384. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30525/2256-0742/2024-10-3-380-384

Received on: 03th of August, 2025
Accepted on: 19th of September, 2025
Published on: 29th of October, 2025