

JAROSLAV IVOR*

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WE LIVE in a digital age. The proliferation of digital technology and the convergence of computing and communication devices transformed the way in which we live. Every advance has been accompanied by a corresponding niche to be exploited for criminal purposes.

No crime is as borderless as computer crime, requiring law enforcement authorities to adopt a co-ordinated and collaborative approach across national borders. Worldwide, the total cost of computer crime to society is significant. A recent report suggests that victims lose around 388 billion \$ each year worldwide as a result of computer crime, making it more profitable than the global trade in marijuana, cocaine and heroin combined.

The three-stage classification of computer crime has been known: first, crimes in which the computer or computer network is the target of the criminal activity - for example, hacking; second, offences where the computer is a tool used to commit the crime - for example, child pornography or criminal copyright infringement; third, crimes in which the use of computer is an incidental aspect of the commission of the crime, however, computer is not significantly implicated in the commission of the offence - for example, writing a blackmail letter.

As far as the European Union is concerned, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union lists computer crime as one of the areas of particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimen-

* Prof. JUDr., DrSc., Faculty of Law, Pan-European University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

sion. At the level of the European Union, crucial legislative measures combating computer crimes have been adopted, among others: Framework Decision 2001/413/JHA on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment, Directive 2013/40/EU on attacks against information systems, Decision 2000/375/JHA to combat child pornography on the Internet, Directive 2011/93/EC on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and Directive 2009/24/EC on the legal protection of computer programmes.

The authors of this monograph on the topic of '*Computer Crime in the European Context*' [original title in Slovak '*Počítačová kriminalita v európskych súvislostiach*'] are members of the Faculty of Law, Pan-European University in Bratislava (Slovak Republic). The monograph is the final outcome of the research project VEGA '*Present and Future of Cyber-crime: Criminological and Criminal Aspects*' [original title in Slovak '*Súčasnosť a budúcnosť boja proti počítačovej kriminalite: kriminologické a trestnoprávne aspekty*'] No. 1/0231/15, carried out at the Pan-European University in Bratislava. The head of the research project was a young research fellow, JUDr. et PhDr. mult. Libor Klímek, PhD. The monograph was reviewed by renowned specialists in the field of criminal law, namely prof. JUDr. Jaroslav Ivor, DrSc. (Faculty of Law, Pan-European University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic) and prof. JUDr. Ivan Šimovček, CSc. (Faculty of Law, Trnava University in Trnava, Slovak Republic).

The authors deal with the highly attractive topic in the field of criminal law as well as international law and European Union law. Europe has been very active in combating computer crime. It has been establishing new and more efficient elements of harmonisation of criminal law as well as international co-operation in criminal matters. One area is the harmonisation of Member States' legislation combating computer crime, dealing with substantial as well as procedural issues.

The monograph is based on an in-depth analysis of the available literature, relevant legislation, relevant case-law, European Union documents, etc. In addition, the authors introduce their own opinions resulting from their previous works as partial outcomes of the

research project. This work is the apex of Slovak research in the field of computer crime.

The authors use standard research methods applicable in legal research, in particular as regards criminal law, and more specifically analysis and synthesis. It is welcomed that the work uses the comparative method on many issues dealt with therein.

The monograph consists of three parts and each part is divided into separate chapters. Part I is devoted to the fundamental basics of computer crime. It includes the definition of the term computer crime (Chapter 1), it introduces the fundamental basics towards legislation to combat computer crime in the European Union (Chapter 2) and the methodology of the work (Chapter 3). Part II assesses the forms of computer crime in the legal order of the European Union and the Slovak Republic. Special attention is focused on fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment (Chapter 4), attacks against information systems (Chapter 5), child pornography on the Internet and solicitation of children for sexual purposes (Chapter 6) and violation of legal protection of computer programmes (Chapter 7). Part III deals with institutions of the European Union combating computer crime, namely Eurojust (Chapter 8), Europol (Chapter 9), the European Cybercrime Centre (Chapter 10) and the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (Chapter 11).

In these chapters, the authors suggest the perspectives for further development in the areas of computer crime and they introduce their opinions *lex ferenda* in relation to the legal order of the Slovak Republic.