

RESEARCH RESULTS – 2025 **(Summaries of completed research)**

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RESEARCH PROJECTS INITIATED BY THE INSTITUTE

Judit Szabó:

A case file analysis of child pornography cases closed prior to the indictment

In recent years, several institutional studies have examined certain law enforcement issues and criminological characteristics related to child pornography; however, these studies were limited to the analysis of criminal cases that had been concluded with final court decisions. These research findings do not provide an answer to the question of what characterizes criminal cases that do not reach the court stage. The aim of the research conducted this year was to examine criminal proceedings initiated and terminated on charges of child pornography, with a particular focus on crimes committed by minors. We have also set as a goal the examination of the characteristics of criminal acts committed by juvenile offenders in cases of child pornography.

The empirical analysis based on a case study method was grounded in a review of the legal framework and the relevant literature. As part of the case file review, we examined the records of 226 criminal cases involving child pornography that were closed between 2019 and 2024. The sample was created using random sampling based on five grounds for termination of proceedings (due to the selection of grounds for termination, child and juvenile defendants are overrepresented). In addition to conducting a descriptive statistical analysis of the data from 226 criminal cases, 429 defendants, and 140 victims, we also performed a qualitative analysis of the characteristics of the crimes underlying the proceedings.

Our findings shed light on the characteristics of the acts underlying proceedings that were dismissed due to the absence of a crime or a lack of evidence; however, most of our findings pertain to defendants under the age of eighteen – the focus of this study – as they accounted for more than four-fifths of the defendant sample. According to our findings, the offence of child pornography is closely linked to the phenomenon of so-called “sexting” – which is also popular among those under the age of eighteen – and to the problem of self-produced content, which already affects children under the age of fourteen, highlighting the urgent need for preventive measures beyond the scope of criminal law. The relatively high proportion of cases dismissed following the successful completion of a conditional prosecutorial suspension or the imposition of a reprimand suggests a clear intent by legal practitioners to utilize diversion for these cases – which involve motivational backgrounds distinct from those of adults – although the new statutory definitions likely provide fewer such opportunities than before.

Ildikó Ritter:

Causes of illicit substance misuse among public officials and persons performing public functions

The work environment of firefighters, police officers, correctional officers, and other law enforcement personnel is characterized by frequent emergencies and crises, and

their working hours and schedules differ from those of the general workforce, which can make it difficult to maintain family life and engage in leisure activities. As a result, maladaptive coping mechanisms may develop, including the misuse of substances such as pharmaceutical substances, alcohol, and illicit drugs as a means of relieving stress. This study examines the factors that lead public officials to become involved in the illicit drug market, whether on the demand or supply side. It was also examined the prevalence of intoxication resulting from drugs and/or alcohol and/or medications within the target population, as well as its characteristics and causes. The sampling frame consisted of case files from proceedings entered into the ENYÜBS database between 2021 and 2024 for crimes committed under the influence of illicit substances, alcohol, or psychoactive substances, and the sample consisted of case files from those same cases in which proceedings were initiated by an investigating prosecution service (N=229). Semi-structured sociological interviews with professionals helped validate the results of the document analysis and further refined the causal relationships identified.

The results of the study indicate that recreational drug use and abuse among professionals reflect the patterns of drug use characteristic of our society, whether we consider roles on the demand and supply sides. 9.4% of those affected were found to have alcohol and/or drug addiction, and a further 12.9% were, based on an analysis of multiple variables, identified as having an alcohol or drug problem.

The interviews confirmed that the social isolation of professionals struggling with problems at work and/or in their personal lives – and, in connection with this, the *erosion of loyalty toward the organization and toward one another* among staff members – had become a visible phenomenon; within the organization, the erosion of trust and the fear of internal investigations and their consequences have narrowed the opportunities for resolving and working through these problems, which could otherwise be created through communication and community activities among colleagues.

One likely consequence of this is that excessive use of recreational drugs (addiction) and/or burnout and depression caused by chronic stress led to suicide or other health problems in 4% of the sample, which resulted in their death during the proceedings.

László Tibor Nagy:

Security at Sporting Events: Experiences and Lessons Learned

Hungary has become a leading host of major sporting events. Hungary has hosted the World Aquatics Championships, the UEFA European Football Championship, the UEFA Europa League Final, Formula 1 races, and the World Athletics Championships, and Hungary will soon host the UEFA Men's Champions League Final at Puskás Arena on May 30, 2026. At the same time, organizing such large-scale sporting events to a high standard involves a massive undertaking, extensive preparations, and a great deal of behind-the-scenes work – not only in terms of sports management but also in terms of security. The aim of the research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical legal framework and practical activities, and to formulate recommendations aimed at further improving sports safety. Significant changes in the legal framework have been examined, particularly regarding the Sports Act (Act I of 2004), and we continuously monitor developments in domestic legal practice. Contacts are maintained with organizations responsible for the safety of sporting events (police, sports

federations, sports organizations, security firms), and we participate in meetings of the Committee for the Safety Assessment of Sporting Events and the Safety Committee of the Hungarian Football Federation, as well as other professional events related to sports safety.

On November 12, 2025, to mark the Jubilee Celebration of Hungarian Science, we held an all-day professional and scientific conference on sports safety at OKRI.

Safety at sporting events has improved significantly in recent years due to changes in the regulatory environment, infrastructure investments, technical advancements, educational initiatives, growing professional experience and knowledge, and, last but not least, a new safety philosophy. However, further legal and technical improvements are needed to enhance safety at sporting events. This includes a reconsideration of the regulations governing the classification of sporting events based on security risk, since the police currently provide security services for high-risk matches – which pose the greatest risks and generate the highest revenues for organizers – as a public service, i.e., free of charge; at the same time, the number of such high-risk classifications remains minimal, with only four such decisions issued in the 2024/25 season. It would be appropriate to establish detailed legal regulations governing the way security personnel conduct searches of spectators, as current legislation does not specify this precisely and does not allow physical pat-down searches. In our view, therefore, the current practice of conducting clothing searches by means of touching is based on an interpretation of the law that is overly broad, expansive, and therefore impermissible. Today, the most common problems at sporting events are caused by the illegal use of pyrotechnics, the throwing of dangerous objects onto the pitch, and unauthorized entry into areas restricted to spectators. Although they are on the decline, racist chants by fans still occur from time to time, not to mention obscene and offensive shouts. Reducing the number of police officers deployed on-site remains an important task, which requires strict and consistent monitoring of event staff, the removal of unauthorized personnel, and the development of a network of spotters who play a significant role in gathering information and facilitating communication. Continuous attention must be paid to preventing ticket fraud, installing high-resolution camera systems and modern access control systems, and ensuring the separation of rival fan groups at all major sports venues.

Nevertheless, violence at sporting events is a multifaceted social phenomenon whose emergence, development, and manifestations are closely linked to deeper processes taking place within society. Effective curbing of this problem, alongside decisive action, is only possible through consistent compliance with the law. Effective action requires the cooperation of all parties involved and should by no means be viewed as merely a police matter. Based on international experience, it can also be predicted with a high degree of confidence that if violence is successfully eliminated from the vicinity of sports venues, it will resurface elsewhere in connection with other events – a situation that can only be changed by a reduction in the overall level of violence in society.

Tünde A. Barabás – Szandra Windt:

Identifying Companies and Victims in the Exploitation Phase to Disrupt the Financial Business Model of Adult and Child Labor Trafficking (INVERT International Project)

The INVERT project sought to disrupt the financial models of human trafficking and to enhance the effectiveness of the justice system. The project was implemented over a period of 27 months with funding from the European Commission's Internal Security Fund, in partnership with three EU member states – Hungary, Italy, and Belgium.

The toolkit developed as part of the project, called INVERT SUITE, includes user-friendly risk assessment modules designed to help identify victims and companies involved in exploitation. The corporate and victim-centered program provides practical support to prosecution services and law enforcement agencies, particularly in contexts affected by organized crime. The software package is available in Hungary as well; it is accessible free of charge in English, but its implementation requires management approval.

The project placed special emphasis on the protection of child victims and strengthened the knowledge of law enforcement officials by developing training materials: through training sessions organized by OKRI, Hungarian law enforcement officials (police officers, labor inspectors, and prosecutors) were able to learn about the complex nature of forced labor, as well as international, European, and Hungarian laws and case studies. The research focused on the characteristics of labor trafficking and ways to reduce its prevalence. Testing the risk indicators developed during the project has contributed to improving the effectiveness of investigations and strengthening cooperation among various government agencies, developing an innovative toolkit to combat labor exploitation, increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement, and strengthening the protection and support of victims. The project's closing event took place on September 19, 2025, at which Hungary was represented by two prosecutors in addition to researchers from OKRI. The event was also attended by the European Commission's project manager, who highlighted the novelty and practicality of the toolkits presented; for this reason, the Commission intends to showcase them at the meeting of EU national coordinators in December 2025 and recommend their implementation in the member states.

Gabriella Kármán – Ildikó Ritter

Falsification of Medicines – A Guide for Legal Professionals

For the past twelve years, abuses involving counterfeit, falsified, or unauthorized medicines have been classified as criminal offenses in Hungary. Criminal statistics record such a small number of cases that not only the general public but even legal practitioners lack sufficient understanding of the specific characteristics of the phenomenon, the legal framework – which spans multiple branches of law – required to conduct proceedings, and the relevant legal practices.

In recent years, the National Institute of Criminology has conducted several studies on the topic of counterfeit drugs. We have carried out extensive monitoring of

procedural practices related to this crime, and the results have consistently pointed to anomalies in the application of the law, particularly regarding classification, delimitation, investigation, and evidence, and within that, primarily in the areas of appointing experts and evaluating expert opinions, as well as in assessing the gravity of the offenses.

We shared the research findings with professional and law enforcement agencies involved in the fight against counterfeit medicines, as well as with the National Intellectual Property Office, which coordinates the efforts of these agencies. As a result of these collaborations, we were asked to develop methodological recommendations for law enforcement officials based on our findings, with the aim of promoting consistent law enforcement practices and fostering professional cooperation.

With this guide, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon, summarize the challenges and issues involved in applying the law in this area, and offer guidance on dilemmas that can be resolved on a professional basis, as well as on questions that arise in day-to-day legal practice.

The document has been prepared as a working paper in the form of methodological recommendations and will be submitted for review to professional and law enforcement agencies and authorities involved in the fight against counterfeit medicines, as well as to the National Intellectual Property Office, which coordinates the efforts of these bodies.

Anna Kiss:

Relations between Investigating Authorities and the Prosecution Service

The aim of the research was to demonstrate how the traditions of the past continue to influence preliminary proceedings (investigations) and how the relationship between the investigative authorities and the prosecution service has evolved over the past fifty years under the three Criminal Procedure Codes, while also examining the solutions adopted in the 1896 Code on Criminal Procedure. Another objective of the study was to determine the role of the prosecution service in preliminary proceedings: when it is granted supervisory authority and when it is granted managerial authority.

The theoretical part of the study defines, on the one hand, the respective areas of responsibility between the prosecution service and the investigative authority, and, on the other hand, the respective sets of tools. According to the research, the investigation focuses on the collection of data – rather than primarily on evidence – in a relatively informal manner. Given the greater expertise and resources available at this stage, this phase is characterized by prosecutorial powers typical of supervisory functions in the relationship between the investigative authority and the prosecution service. The key concept in this section is detectability, which addresses the conditions under which a criminal act may come to the attention of the investigating authority and the steps required for the authority to successfully uncover all aspects of that act. Unlike a preliminary investigation, a formal investigation is conducted under the direct supervision of a prosecutor and involves gathering the evidence necessary to bring charges against a specific individual. The key concept in this stage is provability, which already indicates what evidence will be admissible at trial.

In addition to clarifying theoretical issues through a review of the literature, the research also focused on examining legal practice; to this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The findings of the study: criminal proceedings remain a process structured in stages, in which a specific cognitive process takes place – one that, while partly consistent with general principles of epistemology, also differs from them. In the various domestic procedural codes, the roles of the investigative authority and the prosecution service vary from case to case; furthermore, the relationship between the two authorities is not consistent. Lawmakers often draw on solutions from the past, but these are sometimes superseded by everyday legal practice.

József Kó:

Trends in victimless crimes – statistical analysis

The aim of the study was to examine how victimless crimes are reflected in crime statistics: as individual offenses, or whether they share common characteristics that allow this group of crimes to be distinguished from a criminological perspective.

One of the most widely accepted definitions of a victimless crime was first proposed by Edwin M. Schur in 1965. According to this definition, a victimless crime is any illegal act that is largely based on a consensual agreement between two parties and involves no complainant. Although several offenses fall into this category, the list most commonly includes prostitution, gambling, drug use, homosexuality, and pornography. These acts are not punishable in every country.

There are crimes in Hungary as well that fall into the category of victimless crimes. In the course of our research, we examined the data on these crimes recorded in criminal statistics; however, most of these offenses appear in criminal statistics with such low frequency that they cannot be analyzed independently using statistical methods. In the end, we examined four criminal acts or categories of criminal acts in detail:

- Drug-related crimes
- Budget fraud
- Corruption offenses
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (its inclusion here is debatable, but based on its characteristics, it fits into this category)

We looked for characteristics that distinguish these crimes from those of other offenses. Based on the analyses, it can be concluded that significant differences can be identified.

In the case of victimless crimes, public opinion regarding individual acts is not uniform. In general, they are characterized by high latency. Their frequency differs from that of other actions. The downward trend observed following 2013 – which was evident in the case of other crimes – did not materialize for victimless crimes; in fact, in many cases, the number of reported incidents actually increased. In the case of victimless crimes, proceedings are generally initiated not on the basis of a complaint but at the initiative of the investigating authority. The frequency of detected cases depends significantly on the authorities' level of activity and their attitude.

Although the concept of victimless crimes did not originate in criminology, further examination of them – beyond the statistical overview provided by this study – may be of interest from a criminological perspective and could yield findings that are worth paying attention to, not only by law enforcement agencies but by society as a whole.

László Tibor Nagy:

Legal practice in the field of disorderly conduct

The aim of the study was to examine the crime of disorderly conduct (Section 340 of the Criminal Code) from legal, social, and criminological perspectives in Hungary, with particular attention to judicial practice. In the course of our research, we analyzed criminal statistics, the legal framework, and the relevant literature, as well as crimes recorded between 2019 and 2024 through an empirical case study. Act CXXV of 2000 established the offense of disorderly conduct, effective as of January 4, 2001, with the aim of maintaining order at public events, particularly in response to widespread disorder at sporting events – especially soccer matches – and to take effective action against sports hooliganism. It is also important to ensure that these events proceed without disruption because, given the large crowds, the consequences of disturbances at such venues are less predictable, posing a significant risk to both life and limb as well as property safety. The statutory definition has undergone several changes and has been expanded to include new basic elements and types of conduct. Nevertheless – although the number of reported crimes has risen slightly – such incidents are not very common, with typically 10 to 20 cases per year; the highest number was 42 cases in 2024. According to our study’s data, most disorderly conducts occurred in the capital (at Puskás Arena in District XIV and Groupama Arena in District IX, followed by Zalaegerszeg, Debrecen, and Miskolc) in May and June, on Saturdays, around 7–8 p.m., during soccer matches. Among all sports, basketball games rank second. More than half of the incidents occurred on the playing field of sports facilities (including instances where objects or pyrotechnic devices were thrown from the stands onto the field). The vast majority of offenses violated Section 340(2) of the Criminal Code, primarily involving unauthorized entry into areas restricted to spectators; among the aggravated cases, almost all involved group offenses. In more than 90% of reported cases, the perpetrator was identified; however, there is no doubt that a high rate of undetected incidents occurs, particularly when dangerous objects (e.g., so-called “reusable cups - re-cups” and pyrotechnic devices) are thrown onto the field, as well as at lower-tier sporting events. The perpetrators used physical violence only to a negligible extent, taking into account the subsidiary nature of the facts of the case. The vast majority of the defendants had no prior criminal record and made full confessions. The most common defenses they offered were that they regretted their actions, that they did not cause any injury, that they simply went along with the crowd, or that they did not know their conduct constituted a crime. Many people wanted to get close to the players, take selfies with them, and congratulate them. The most commonly imposed sanction was a reprimand by the prosecutor. One might ask whether it is necessary to criminalize such acts. In addition to criminal liability, the main arguments in favor of this approach are the prevention and deterrence of the escalation of such acts, as well as the fact that it allows not only for criminal sanctions, but also the ordering of a range of procedural measures – such as, where appropriate, pretrial detention or arrest.

Ágnes Solt:

Changes in the attitudes of enforcing judges towards the benefits of parole and reintegration custody over the past 10 years

We first examined the practice of parole in 2016, using in-depth interviews conducted with judges. The primary reason for repeating the study was that practices had changed radically during the intervening period. The number of inmates granted parole is now less than one-third of those eligible for parole. As relevant regulations become stricter, the number of people excluded from this benefit is also increasing year by year. However, this drastic change cannot be attributed solely to changes in the legal environment. The explanation can be attributed to a wider range of factors.

The socio-political pressure, which has increased significantly in recent years, has had a noticeable impact on judicial practice. Perhaps the most significant and earliest change was the tightening of practices at correctional facilities. There were two clearly identifiable forms of this. On the one hand, opportunities for inmates to earn commendations and rewards – as well as the frequency of such opportunities – were drastically reduced by order from above; at the same time, internal controls were tightened, with the result that the number of disciplinary offenses and punishments actually increased rather than decreased. As a result, demonstrating good behavior in the institution – which is one of the conditions for parole – has become difficult. This may be remedied in the future by the credit system introduced in March 2024, which is intended, among other things, to replace the current reward system. Another aspect of the tightening of regulations was that correctional facilities were recommending parole for a much smaller proportion of inmates; however, the facility's recommendation carries significant weight in the judge's decision-making process.

The two measures had statistically measurable consequences. At the same time, prosecutors specialized in the oversight of the execution of sentences and the enforcement courts have also tightened their practices; when considering parole for inmates, they now apply more criteria and conduct more detailed reviews than before, meaning that, in practice, more factors may ultimately be viewed negatively.

The analysis is based on interviews with enforcing judges and the results of a questionnaire; we were unable to ascertain the position of the prison service.

Overall, our research has shown that – in line with trends in domestic criminal justice policy – the practice of granting parole is becoming increasingly strict, affecting a smaller and smaller percentage of inmates.

Szandra Windt:

Characteristics of perpetrators of trafficking in human beings, with a special focus on female perpetrators

Over the past decade, there has been a significant shift in the profile of human traffickers: women are playing an increasingly prominent role in crimes that were previously predominantly committed by men. According to the international literature, women typically play minor, operational roles in human trafficking and forced labor crimes; they often have a history of victimization; and they typically commit these

crimes together with their partners. Based on experiences in Australia, women are involved at every stage of the process, from managing brothels to recruitment.

The aim of our research was to categorize Hungarian female offenders, with a special focus on their social networks and social roles. We employed several methods in our research: a review of the literature, statistical analysis, document analysis, and in-depth interviews. The interviews took place at the Rákospalota Juvenile Reformatory with two girls who were being held in pre-trial detention for the crimes of human trafficking and forced labor.

We identified three types of female offenders in the 90 cases analyzed. One group consists of young girls who exploit their peers, using their connections within institutions (such as residential child care institutions) to coerce and pressure their peers into providing sexual services. Despite their involvement in serious crimes, these girls are particularly vulnerable and are (were) often victims themselves. The cases examined also involved so-called “Madam”-type perpetrators – organizers of prostitution – who, often with the involvement of their family members and under their direction, typically carried out sexual exploitation. The largest group consisted of women who, together with their male relatives, committed the crimes of human trafficking and forced labor; these cases involved exploitation for sexual, labor, and other purposes. At the same time, they did not commit the crimes of human trafficking and forced labor solely with their male partners; evidence was also found of collaboration between the mother “assisting” her son and her opposite-sex siblings. These women are mostly actively involved in the exploitation: they supervise the victims, deceive them, handle money and advertisements, and coordinate with clients. They often started out as victims themselves, and due to loyalty and emotional ties – and sometimes under duress – they became perpetrators in order to provide for their families. Based on the cases examined, women are not merely passive participants, but often play a key role in organizing and sustaining the exploitative system.

Katalin Tilki:

Investigation and enforcement practice of violation of legal liabilities relating to keeping dangerous animals and dangerous dogs (Section 359 of the Criminal Code)

The investigation was based on criminal cases from 2014 to 2023 provided to us by the county prosecution services that involved offenses falling under Section 359 of the Criminal Code. A total of 22 cases were reviewed. In most cases, final court judgments were handed down; in a few cases, however, the investigations were closed and the filing of charges was postponed. There was one case in which the animal’s owner had passed away, so the criminal proceedings were discontinued.

Based on the investigation, it can be concluded that reports were generally filed by the police or citizens, and that the owners of the dogs attacked and government agencies were listed as the reporting parties.

In the majority of the cases examined, the dangerous animals involved were primarily common snapping turtles, various species of snakes and crocodiles, and scorpions; in a few cases, the animals involved were dogs (Staffordshire terriers).

In most cases, the courts placed the defendants on probation or imposed fines on them. A small number of defendants were sentenced to suspended prison terms for multiple offenses. Generally, the misdemeanor of violating obligations regarding the keeping of dangerous animals [Section 359(1)(a) of the Criminal Code] was committed in conjunction with the felony of environmental damage [Section 242(1)(a) of the Criminal Code].

The vast majority of those who committed these acts were men between the ages of 19 and 27 and 32 and 39, most of whom had graduated from high school or vocational school. It should be noted that the perpetrators included an animal caretaker, a former animal catcher, and a wildlife rescuer.

These cases have shown that older people enjoy keeping animals, but are unaware of which animals they are allowed to keep. It is evident that some snake owners lack experience in this area, while others, even if they do have sufficient experience, do not have adequate knowledge of potential bites and the physiological effects of venom. A common problem is that the animal owner realizes too late that keeping dangerous animals requires knowledge and skills that he or she does not possess.

During criminal proceedings, it can be difficult to identify animals and assess their level of danger and whether they require a permit.

It is important to inform the public about which animals are dangerous or moderately dangerous; which ones can be kept as pets; what permits are required to keep them; what regulations must be followed; and what conditions must be provided.

RESEARCH PROJECTS INITIATED BY THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICES

Gabriella Kármán – Orsolya Bolyky – Petronella Deres:

The practice of appointing experts in cases against life and limb

Improving the efficiency and timeliness of criminal proceedings is a stated objective of recent criminal law legislation. Technological advances raise increasingly complex issues that require specialized expertise during investigations; therefore, obtaining expert opinions is often an essential part of the evidence-gathering process. The issue of expert evidence in relation to the efficiency of criminal proceedings is a topic that has received relatively little attention in the literature, even though the prevalence and significance of expert involvement in such proceedings are beyond doubt; at the same time, the costs and time required for such involvement are widely recognized as critical factors in terms of efficiency. Streamlining the appointment of experts has been a priority for all professional groups – including investigators, prosecutors, judges, and experts – in recent years.

This year, the Office of the Prosecutor General submitted a research proposal titled “*The practice of appointing experts in cases against life and limb*”. The purpose of the study was to examine the justification for appointing a medical examiner, primarily in cases involving crimes against physical integrity.

In addition to analyzing statistical data on the appointment of experts, the study employed an empirical methodology; it examined the experiences of investigative authorities at the national level using a questionnaire, and analyzed the assignment of experts and the use of expert opinions in the scope of the crimes under investigation by processing criminal case files, with a focus on the aspects of efficiency and effectiveness. The presentation of the findings and their comparison with real-world practice took place during a focus group discussion with the participation of investigators, prosecutors, and experts from the National Institute for Forensic Sciences.

According to the findings of the study, law enforcement agencies and authorities involved in the criminal justice system are currently making a conscious effort to streamline the appointment of experts. At the same time, it would be advisable to establish as a starting point that, in cases that are easier to assess (where the facts are straightforward and have been established, the evidence is available, the injury can be assessed based on medical records, or where the fact to be proven is common knowledge), it is generally not necessary to appoint a forensic expert. In contrast, in cases involving more serious methods of commission, as well as acts carried out using instruments or physical force, the likelihood of more serious injuries occurring, along with the need to reconstruct the act and investigate the circumstances surrounding the injury, generally justifies the involvement of a medical expert.

By summarizing findings based on a nationwide sample survey and highlighting best practices, this research aims to contribute to the streamlining of the process for appointing medical experts.

Anna Kiss:

The preparatory procedure as a means of rescuing cases ‘lost’ in the absence of suspicion

The aim of the research is to determine whether the preparatory procedure can salvage cases that would otherwise be "lost" due to a lack of suspicion – that is, whether they can provide grounds for ordering an investigation or, conversely, rule out the need for one. This dual objective gives rise to the research hypothesis that the role of the preparatory procedure lies, on the one hand, in their ability to salvage cases that might otherwise be lost and to advance the proceedings to the stage where suspicion is established – that is, to lay the groundwork for the investigation; and, on the other hand, it is capable of preventing unnecessary investigations.

The research highlighted the problems with the preparatory procedure from both a theoretical and a legislative perspective, but it also revealed the difficulties that have arisen in practice and raised further questions regarding its applicability.

Research findings: The research report identified legal-theoretical, legislative, and practical issues on the one hand, and concluded on the other hand that the research did not confirm the hypothesis.

Problems identified by the research:

- 1) From a legal theory perspective, the preparatory procedure faces the “accusation” that this stage of criminal proceedings does not meet the requirements of the rule of law.
- 2) There are also legal grounds for criticizing the preparatory procedure: the text of the law itself is not consistent with the ministerial justification. The legislation states twice that the purpose of the preparatory procedure is to determine whether there is reasonable

suspicion of a criminal offense, yet the ministerial justification does not reflect this; rather, it states that the purpose of establishing the preparatory procedure is to integrate covert information gathering (CIG) – previously conducted outside the framework of criminal proceedings – into criminal proceedings.

- 3) A legal critique of the preparatory procedure:
 - a) the practical application is not consistent with the objective set forth in the legislation;
 - b) the stages of the proceedings overlap; for example, in some cases, motions for court-authorized covert measures are filed while the case is in the preparatory procedure phase rather than the investigation phase; based on feedback from prosecutors, there have been several instances where the investigating authority continues to “hold” the case in preparatory procedure and, although the conditions for an investigation are met, does not order one.

In summary, the research did not confirm, on the one hand, that the preparatory procedures are capable of laying the groundwork for an investigation, nor, on the other hand, that this stage alone could prevent unnecessary investigations.

Renáta Garai – Katalin Tilki:

The procedure for prosecuting offences subject to private prosecution, interpretation of notification, denunciation and private prosecution

All private prosecution cases involve offenses that can be prosecuted upon private complaint; however, only some offenses subject to private complaint are actually prosecuted privately; moreover, due to additional exceptions provided for by law, this is only true under certain conditions. In the context of the procedures for private prosecution, the following were discussed, among other things: grounds for exclusion, the victim, the private prosecutor, the counter-plaintiff, and the role of prosecution; private prosecution investigations; the duties of the courts of first, second, and third instance; and the rules governing appeals and the termination of proceedings.

A “report in the public interest” draws attention to a situation the rectification or elimination of which serves the interests of the community or society as a whole (it may include recommendations; there are strict procedural rules, and in the case of anonymous reports, the law allows authorities to disregard them). In contrast, the term “other report” as used by the police raises questions, as it does not concern the public interest but primarily serves the interests of the person filing the report, and its adjudication does not fall under the jurisdiction of any other authority, particularly courts, administrative authorities, or proceedings for administrative offenses or criminal offenses. A report is therefore the communication of some fact, data, or event – that is, the transmission of information to professionals in the form of a notification or submission. A complaint is a statement that describes a specific criminal act, seeks to hold the perpetrator accountable, and expressly requests the initiation of criminal proceedings. A complaint filed by a person authorized to do so, as well as any oral or written statement in which that person seeks to hold the perpetrator criminally liable, shall be considered a private complaint (this may even be included in the report of the police officer handling the case).

The definitions used by various law enforcement agencies have been examined across a broad spectrum, and although there are identical or similar elements, the

process of defining these terms raises numerous problems and dilemmas because the definitions are by no means uniform and their legal effects may also vary. The content of the report may pose difficulties not only from a procedural law perspective, since the essential elements (the conduct constituting the offense) of several criminal offenses under the Criminal Code are linked to the existence of a report or complaint, its falsity, or its absence (breach of the obligation to report child protection concerns, misleading an authority, perjury, false accusation, bribery, counterfeiting of medicines, violation of waste management regulations, misuse of firearms or ammunition, money laundering, espionage, etc.).

József Kó:

Typical techniques of committing budget fraud depending on the geographical location of the offence, the specificities of each region of Hungary, the relationship between the methods of committing fraud and the location of the offence

In the course of the research, we analyzed statistical data on reported cases of budget fraud. For this analysis, we used data from the period 2013–2024. We used mathematical and statistical methods to analyze the spatial distribution of the data and the spatial patterns of the detected events. Due to the relatively small sample size and the very significant geographical disparities, the statistical methods did not yield valid or reliable results. Examining the distributions proved to be a suitable method for analyzing the data. Based on this, we can draw the following conclusions.

The geographical distribution of budget fraud largely corresponds to the spatial distribution of businesses. Where there are more businesses, there are more cases. The registration of transactions is primarily based on the registered offices of the companies involved. An analysis of the crime scenes and the perpetrators' places of residence yields the same result.

Between 30% and 35% of the registered transactions are related to Budapest. The counties with the highest incidence rates include Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Csongrád, and Pest. The counties least affected were Vas, Nógrád, and Tolna. The number of cases of budget fraud is roughly the same in the country's other counties.

Reports play a significant role in investigations. In approximately 55% of cases, proceedings are initiated based on reports from the public. Changes in the willingness to report incidents can significantly affect the frequency of reported cases in a given year.

The methods used also correspond to the geographical pattern of occurrence. In most cases, the perpetrators use methods that are already known. A common tactic used to avoid detection is to appoint strawmen or nominee directors to lead companies involved in illegal transactions. In many cases, it is homeless people or “company executives” who have no involvement in illegal activities who get caught. Such crimes are typically committed within an organized criminal group or criminal organization. Uncovering the perpetrators who are actually running the organization is often a difficult task.

The emergence of a new method in a given field suggests that there will likely be others who try it as well. Word is spreading among acquaintances about the methods used by the perpetrators. It is likely that new cases will emerge in connection with each investigation.

Eszter Sárík – Renáta Garai:

The analysis of prosecutorial motions in terms of the legal detriment in cases of confessions by juvenile defendants [Section 422 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure]

The prosecution may, in the indictment, make a recommendation regarding the severity or duration of the punishment or measure if the defendant admits to committing the crime at the preliminary hearing and waives the right to a trial. This legal provision encourages defendants to plead guilty by stipulating that the court may not impose a sentence more severe than the one proposed by the prosecutor.

Excluding crimes committed by juveniles on a large scale (e.g., theft, disorderly conduct), we examined data on 313 criminal proceedings and 492 defendants (often resulting in cumulative sentences) for the year 2024, primarily from the perspective of sentencing practices.

Based on the investigation, it can be concluded that the application of penalties and measures is by no means uniform across the country, even in cases involving identical offenses. We analyzed the crimes under consideration based on their specific characteristics and sought to explore in detail the reasons underlying the differences in sentencing practices. Without claiming to be exhaustive, it can be noted that, for example, in cases of *robbery*, 50% of sentences involved placement in a reformatory, 24% were suspended sentences, and 15% were prison terms to be served; in cases of assault, 24% each were placed on probation or received suspended prison sentences, 22% were sentenced to reformatory education, and 20% were sentenced to imprisonment. Although probation is typically reserved for juveniles, it was ordered in only 15% of cases (74).

When we analyzed the cases from the perspective of sentencing, it became apparent that the prosecution deemed sanctions involving deprivation of liberty necessary in 24% of robbery cases, 34% of cases involving violence against a public official or a person performing a public duty, 42% of assault cases, 47% of extortion cases, 65% of robbery cases, and 83% of sexual assault cases. Overall, the prosecution considered reformatory education (167; 35%) and suspended prison sentences (153; 32%) acceptable, but there were also plenty of motions for imprisonment (60; 13%), while community service appeared in only 5% of cases (24), making it a “minority” option.

Comparing the prosecutor’s motions with the course of court proceedings following the absence of a confession or a stubborn denial, it can be said that juvenile defendants do not necessarily fare better by requesting a trial, as they often receive more severe sentences, even though the passage of time and the protracted nature of the proceedings would otherwise work in their favor.

Eszter Sárík – Orsolya Bolyky – Petronella Deres – Gabriella Kármán – Anna Kiss – Ildikó Ritter – Judit Szabó – Szandra Windt

The distinction between lobbying and corruption in the law and practice of the EU Member States

The terms “lobbying” and “corruption” are often used interchangeably, since influencing others is the common goal of both activities; however, while corruption is illegal,

primarily serves the interests of an individual or a small group, and typically involves the offering of bribes or favors, lobbying is legitimate, intended to promote the interests of a larger group and the public, and its primary form is the gathering of information. In our analysis – in addition to reviewing European Union regulations – we examined lobbying regulations in seven countries: Germany, France, Lithuania, Finland, Ireland, Croatia, and Spain were included in the sample. In the countries studied – with the exception of Spain – lobbying activities are regulated by law.

A prerequisite for transparency in lobbying is a publicly accessible registry that ensures transparency, enabling citizens to find out which individuals or organizations are engaged in lobbying activities. However, these registries are not integrated into the same institutional framework; for example, while in France they operate under the auspices of the Authority for the Transparency of Public Life, in Finland they operate under the auspices of the National Audit Office. Violations of lobbying regulations result in sanctions in every country surveyed – where lobbying activities are regulated by law – ranging from fines of varying amounts to removal from the lobbying registry. German legislation is unique in that a criminal offense has recently been established (§ 108f StGB) aimed at punishing the exercise of influence by members of parliament even when it is done for the benefit of third parties in exchange for payment. The rules differ, however, regarding how long the so-called “*cooling-off*” period lasts in certain countries; for example, in Croatia, one may legally engage in lobbying activities 18 months after leaving the public sector, whereas in Germany this period is 7 years. It should be noted, however, that the mere absence of regulations regarding the *cooling-off* period does not provide relevant information about the legal system in question; for although Lithuanian law does not include this legal institution, its legal practice is exemplary according to the OECD report. However, the institution of the lobbying agreement is a unique feature of Lithuanian legislation. It is important to note that, among the countries analyzed, Spain was the only one where – although a draft bill was introduced in 2022 – there is no legal regulation of lobbying; at the same time, the issue of codification was back on the agenda in 2025, and the draft legislation includes institutions familiar from other EU member states.

TASKS COMPLETED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION

Katalin Tilki:

Sanctioning practices of nature conservation authorities or nature conservation management bodies, in particular with regard to fines (Research commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture)

The study was conducted at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture. It was based on government documents that the Ministry of Agriculture had requested and made available to us. Nineteen government agencies in Hungary issued decisions between 2020 and 2024 imposing fines for violations of nature conservation regulations or

invasive species regulations, or issuing warnings. A total of 860 documents were analyzed during the research.

In the cases that formed the basis of the research and in which the perpetrator's liability was established, government agencies imposed nature conservation fines. During the period under review, no decision was issued requiring the payment of a fine for invasive alien species.

In these cases, administrative proceedings were most often initiated by national park authorities, government agencies, and the Airport Directorate of the National Tax and Customs Administration.

The subject of the proceedings was generally a protected area or an animal or plant covered by the Washington Convention (CITES).

The most common types of violations included failure to comply with reporting and marking requirements for various species; as well as driving vehicles in protected natural areas; as well as trampling and damaging grasslands; and various technical off-road sports activities.

The authorities imposed nature conservation fines primarily on individuals and, to a lesser extent, on legal entities. Government agencies typically ordered the individuals subject to the proceedings to pay amounts ranging from 10,001 to 50,000 forints and from 100,001 to 500,000 forints. Although we had assumed that legal entities would be subject to higher fines, the research revealed that they too were required to pay fines within the above-mentioned range, with the amount most often falling between 100,001 and 500,000 forints.

The authorities generally issued a warning when no sanction had been imposed on the person subject to the proceedings within one year, and when the administrative violation committed was deemed to be of minor significance.

With regard to decisions requiring restoration to the original condition, it can be noted that, in these cases, land-clearing work, plowing, logging, and grass removal generally took place in protected areas of national significance, protected natural areas, and Natura 2000 sites.

Government agencies filed charges primarily for the crime of environmental damage (Sections 242 and 243 of the Criminal Code), and in a few cases for the misdemeanor of illegal fishing (Section 246 of the Criminal Code) or the crime of illegal hunting (Section 245(c) of the Criminal Code).

Administrative proceedings can be completed more quickly and yield better results than criminal proceedings. The fine imposed is sufficient to deter the person subject to the proceedings from committing the same act again. In addition, the authority may require the offender to restore the property to its original condition and remedy any deficiencies.