

# Levels and limits of interaction between subjects of combating criminal offenses in Ukraine

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**Abstract.** The article emphasises that effective interaction between subjects of combating criminal offences, in particular between law enforcement agencies, is one of the key prerequisites for building an effective criminal justice system in Ukraine.

It is proven that the consideration of the levels and boundaries of interaction between subjects of combating criminal offences demonstrates that it covers not only horizontal (between agencies of the same level) but also vertical (between central, regional and local structures), functional (between agencies with different competences) and international relations.

The emphasis is on the modernisation of interaction between the National Police of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Prosecutor's Office and other agencies and units by creating integrated information systems, joint response teams, unified methods of pre-trial investigation and electronic document management.

It has been found that successful interagency interaction is impossible without increasing the level of trust both at the institutional and interpersonal levels. It has been emphasised that to ensure proper counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine, it is necessary not only to interact with agencies in its traditional sense but also to build a holistic, synergistic, flexible model of cooperation that takes into account current security challenges, digital capabilities, international experience and the needs of society. This involves not only updating technical means and regulatory frameworks but also the formation of a new legal culture – a culture of partnership, trust, mutual responsibility and a common desire for justice and lawfulness.

**Keywords:** levels, boundaries, interaction, subjects of counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine, operational response, strategic level, organisational boundaries, problems.

**Problem statement.** In the system of combating criminal offences in Ukraine, coordinated interaction between various entities that perform functions of preventing, detecting, stopping, and investigating crimes and bringing perpetrators to justice is of key importance. This interaction is multi-level, has clearly defined boundaries of competence for each participant and is based on the principles of legality, specialisation, subsidiarity, coordination and information exchange. Understanding the levels and boundaries of interaction allows ensuring the effective functioning of the mechanism of combating crime without duplication of powers, abuse or conflicts of jurisdiction, as well as with a special emphasis on the needs of national security, its institutional support and the effective functioning of the law enforcement system.

**State of the study.** In domestic scientific thought, V. B. Averyanov, O. F. Andriyko, O. M. Bandurka, Yu. P. Bytyak, A. V. Bondar, K. L. Bugaychuk, S. S. Vitvitsky, V. M. Garashchuk, A. D. Grigorenko, S. M. Gusarov, Yu. S. Grinchuk, M. G. Isakov, I. V. Ishchenko, I. Yu. Kaylo, I. D. Kazanchuk, V. Yu. Kobrynsky, V. V. Kolesnikov, T. O. Kolomoiets, V. K. Kolpakov, A. T. Komzyuk, O. V. Kostyrenko, K. B. Levchenko, O. M. Muzychuk, A. O. Sobakar, V. V. Sokurenko, V. P. Tymoshchuk, N. P. Khrystynchenko, I. M. Shopina and other scientists. However, despite the considerable interest of the scientific community in the researched issues, scientists have actually ignored problematic issues related to the levels and boundaries of interaction between subjects of combating criminal offences in Ukraine.

**Purpose and objectives of the study.** The purpose of the article is to investigate the levels and boundaries of interaction between subjects of counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to

the following tasks: to consider the strategic, operational-managerial, tactical and local levels of the studied interaction; to investigate the legal, organisational, informational and ethical boundaries of the relevant interaction; and to pay attention to the problems associated with the boundaries of interaction between subjects of counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine.

**Scientific novelty of the study.** The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that in the process of preparing the article, the author not only identified and thoroughly analysed the characteristic levels and boundaries of interaction but also outlined the problematic aspects that occur in practice.

**Presentation of the main material.** The first level of interaction is between law enforcement agencies. The main subjects of this interaction are the National Police of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, customs authorities and others. Interaction at this level takes place in the process of joint documentation of crimes, operational and investigative activities, procedural guidance, conducting investigative (search) actions, expert studies, etc.

The boundaries of this interaction are determined by legislation, in particular the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine and the laws of Ukraine "On the National Police", "On the Prosecutor's Office", "On Operational and Investigative Activities", etc. For example, the prosecutor coordinates the activities of law enforcement agencies within the framework of a pre-trial investigation and also carries out procedural guidance, which establishes the limits of his intervention in the activities of pre-trial investigation bodies.

It should be noted that interaction between law enforcement agencies is a key component of the system of combating criminal offences in Ukraine. Its effectiveness directly affects the quality of detection, fixation, and investigation of crimes, as well as the validity of bringing the guilty to criminal liability. In modern conditions of increasing crime, in particular organised, transnational, cybercrime and war crimes, the need for coordinated, well-coordinated and rapid actions of law enforcement agencies has become more relevant than ever [1, p. 5].

The law enforcement system of Ukraine includes several main institutions: the National Police of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the Office of the Prosecutor General, prosecutor's offices, etc. Each of these structures has its own functional specialisation; however, in many criminal proceedings their powers overlap or require joint participation to achieve a result.

Forms of interaction between law enforcement agencies are exchange of operational information; joint conduct of investigative (search) actions; creation of interdepartmental investigative and operational groups; participation in interdepartmental meetings; coordination of strategic directions of work; preparation of joint plans and analytical documents; and participation in joint trainings and exercises. This interaction is based on legislation, in particular, the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine and the laws of Ukraine "On the National Police", "On the Prosecutor's Office", "On the Security Service of Ukraine", and "On operational and investigative activities", as well as on interdepartmental orders and regulations.

Another important form of interaction is participation in joint operational developments, for example, regarding the activities of transnational criminal groups. In such cases, the efforts of several structures are combined for the purpose of long-term documentation of criminal activity, identification of financial connections, implementation of covert investigative (detective) actions, etc. The success of such operations depends on the level of trust between units, consistency of goals, prevention of information leakage, as well as on organisational discipline [2, p. 52].

An equally important role in interaction is played by the exchange of information and analytical resources. This applies to databases on wanted persons, criminal proceedings, objects of operational interest, stolen property, weapons, vehicles, drug trafficking, etc. In practice, the effectiveness of interaction is significantly reduced if there is no access to current information or if the databases are closed. Therefore, a promising direction for development is the creation of a single information environment with a differentiated level of access, which will allow timely receipt and use of the necessary data within the framework of criminal proceedings.

Interaction is also manifested in issues of operational response, for example, in cases of terrorist threats, mass riots, and emergency situations. In such cases, interdepartmental coordination is activated, in particular through situation centres, joint headquarters, and anti-crisis

groups. Coordination of actions takes place not only at the level of central executive bodies but also in the regions, where joint working groups are created under the leadership of the head of the regional military administration, the head of the regional prosecutor's office, etc. [3, p. 110].

It should be noted that effective interaction between law enforcement agencies does not occur automatically but requires systematic institutional support, support from management, the creation of interdepartmental working mechanisms, training of personnel and the use of strategic planning tools. The result of such interaction should be not only the disclosure of crimes but also the strengthening of public trust in the law enforcement system, the reduction of corruption, and the eradication of conflicts between structures, as well as an increase in the efficiency of the criminal justice system as a whole.

The levels and boundaries of interaction between law enforcement agencies in Ukraine are determined primarily by the structure of the system of bodies that combat criminal offences, their functional responsibilities, scope of competence and regulation. Effective interaction is possible only if the clearly defined powers of each body and an agreed mechanism of cooperation within the relevant jurisdiction are observed [4, p. 6].

At the strategic level, interaction is implemented through interdepartmental coordination of security policy, which is formed at the level of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the National Security and Defence Council, relevant ministries (in particular, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine), as well as the Prosecutor General's Office.

Within this level, decisions are made on the main areas of law enforcement reform, resource allocation, coordination of state programmes to combat crime, cyber threats, terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, etc. Interaction at this level is declarative and programmatic in nature, but it is what determines the framework and guidelines within which entities operate on the ground [5, p. 119].

At the operational-management level, practical coordination takes place between the central offices of law enforcement agencies – the National Police of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Border Guard Service, and National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine – as well as units of the Prosecutor's Office. It provides for the signing of interdepartmental memorandums, joint orders, instructions, creation of joint coordination centres, holding meetings of managers, distribution of functions in the investigation of certain categories of crimes, exchange of analytics, statistics, and participation in interdepartmental working groups. At this level, a mechanism for coordinating decisions between bodies whose jurisdictions may partially overlap or complement each other is established. At the tactical level, direct interaction of investigators, detectives, operational officers, procedural managers, experts and analysts is implemented within the

framework of specific criminal proceedings. The most common forms are the creation of joint investigative groups, exchange of operational information, conducting joint investigative (search) actions, access to databases, and involvement of specialists from other bodies [6, p. 87]. The boundaries of this interaction are clearly regulated by the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine and other special laws.

At the local (territorial) level, law enforcement agencies interact within the same region, district, or territorial community. In this case, coordination meetings chaired by the heads of regional prosecutors' offices, regional police departments, or the Security Service of Ukraine play an important role. At this level, actions are coordinated in cases of special operations, ensuring public safety and order during mass events and local crime prevention. The boundaries of interaction here depend on the local context but must comply with national standards and be subordinate to the strategic goals of law enforcement policy [7, p. 329].

In addition to levels, it is necessary to consider the boundaries of interaction, which are conventionally divided into legal, organisational, informational, and ethical. Legal boundaries are determined by laws and regulations, in particular, the powers of the State Bureau of Investigation to investigate crimes committed by law enforcement officers. Going beyond the limits of such competence may lead to the recognition of evidence as inadmissible.

Organisational boundaries are related to hierarchy and structural subordination: for example, police units cannot directly interfere with the work of National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine or State Bureau of Investigation without legal grounds. Informational boundaries are determined by the regime of access to official, operational or secret information: data exchange between structures is permitted only if the conditions of confidentiality, protection of personal data, and preservation of the secrecy of the pre-trial investigation are observed. Ethical boundaries are related to professional integrity, in particular, preventing manipulation of evidence, pressure on related bodies, and rivalry instead of cooperation [8, p. 163].

It is also worth noting that in practical activities, the boundaries of interaction are not always properly observed. A formal approach to cooperation is often observed when interaction is reduced to the transmission of formal requests or duplication of information.

Another problem is the organisational closure of structures, which generates distrust, competition between departments, and sometimes sabotage of joint investigations. Therefore, one of the key challenges for the law enforcement system is the formation of a new culture of interaction, based not only on duties but also on shared responsibility for the safety of citizens, respect for each other's powers, and effective exchange of knowledge and resources.

In the future, the development of this interaction should include the creation of permanent interdepartmental platforms, analytical centres, and information and communication systems, as well as regular joint training of employees of different bodies with an emphasis on the

practice of interdepartmental cooperation. Improving the levels and boundaries of interaction is not only a technical task but also an institutional condition for building a strong, professional and responsible criminal justice system in Ukraine.

It is also important to implement an integrated electronic data exchange system between all law enforcement bodies – the so-called "electronic interaction platform", where information on criminal proceedings, searches for persons, weapons circulation, physical evidence, forensic examinations, etc. will be synchronised. Such a system should operate in compliance with the principles of security, confidentiality and delimitation of access levels.

It should be noted that effective interaction between subjects of counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine depends on compliance with clear boundaries of the powers of each of them, the requirements of the law and the availability of proper coordination of actions. At the same time, it is important that such interaction does not violate human rights, the principles of impartiality, objectivity and the rule of law. Ensuring transparent, structured and responsible interaction is a guarantee of increasing public trust in the criminal justice system and effective counteraction to crime in Ukraine.

Thus, the levels and boundaries of interaction between subjects of counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine cover a wide range of forms and areas of cooperation, which must be constantly adapted to new security challenges. Improving this interaction is possible only under the conditions of a comprehensive approach that combines legal regulation, management decisions, institutional capacity, technical modernisation and the development of a culture of trust between all participants in this process.

**Conclusions.** Thus, effective interaction between the subjects of countering criminal offences, in particular between law enforcement agencies, is one of the key prerequisites for building an effective criminal justice system in Ukraine. In modern conditions, when the country is faced with multidimensional challenges – from large-scale armed aggression to widespread manifestations of organised and cybercrime – the need for coordinated, systemic and institutionally mature interaction acquires strategic importance.

It has been proven that the consideration of the levels and boundaries of interaction between the subjects of countering criminal offences demonstrates that it covers not only horizontal (between agencies of the same level) but also vertical (between central, regional and local structures), functional (between agencies with different competences) and international relations.

Attention is focused on the modernisation of interaction between the National Police of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, prosecutors' offices and other bodies and units by creating integrated information systems, joint response teams, unified methods of pre-trial investigation and electronic document management. At the same time,

an important condition for effective interaction remains compliance with human rights and freedoms, procedural guarantees, prevention of abuse of power and non-transparent influence.

It has been found that successful interagency interaction is impossible without increasing the level of trust at both the institutional and interpersonal levels. For this, it is necessary to implement interdepartmental educational programmes, create joint analytical and operational centres, and develop mechanisms for strategic forecasting and risk assessment.

It has been emphasised that to ensure proper counteraction to criminal offences in Ukraine, it is necessary not only to have interaction between agencies in its traditional sense but also to build a holistic, synergistic, flexible model of cooperation that takes into account current security challenges, digital capabilities, international experience and the needs of society. This involves not only updating technical means and regulatory frameworks but also forming a new legal culture – a culture of partnership, trust, mutual responsibility and a common aspiration for justice and lawfulness.

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