

## Types of Corruption Crimes in Sports in the Countries of the European Union Tipos de delitos de corrupción en el deporte en los países de la Unión Europea

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**Abstract.** Corruption crimes in sports have long gone beyond a national scale, having become a global problem. The aim of this research was to study the most common types of corruption crimes in the EU and to provide recommendations on the legislative regulation of combating sports corruption in the EU. The following methods were used in this study: the method of comparison and contrasting; the method of descriptive analysis; the anamnestic method; the forecasting method. The study established that the main forms of corruption crimes in sports are bribery or fraud. The most common types of them are match-fixing (33 cases), doping (24 cases), fraud (6 cases), legalisation (laundering) of criminal proceeds (4 cases). Corruption has the following influence on sports: discrediting of athletes; threat to the athlete's health; decreased popularity and spread of sports; decreased confidence of fans; a threat to the entire sports sector. Conclusions. It is advisable to adopt the EU Convention on combating corruption and bribery in sports, which will enshrine a list of the main types of corruption crimes in sports, the main threats from corruption crimes for sports, directions of state policy in the field under research, types of responsibility for these actions; the obligations of the EU member state to this regulatory legal act must bring the national legislation into compliance with it. This study is not comprehensive, and the proposal for the development of the Convention on combating sports corruption and bribery opens up prospects for further research in the field of regulation and management in sports.

**Keywords:** Corruption crimes, Sports sector, Match fixing, Doping, Bribery, Bribery in sports.

**Resumen.** Los delitos de corrupción en el deporte hace tiempo que han ido más allá de la escala nacional y se han convertido en un problema global. El objetivo de esta investigación fue estudiar los tipos más comunes de delitos de corrupción en la UE y proporcionar recomendaciones sobre la regulación legislativa para combatir la corrupción deportiva en la UE. En este estudio se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: el método de comparación y contraste; el método de análisis descriptivo; el método anamnésico; el método de pronóstico. El estudio estableció que las principales formas de delitos de corrupción en el deporte son el soborno o el fraude. Los tipos más comunes de ellos son el amaño de partidos (33 casos), el dopaje (24 casos), el fraude (6 casos), la legalización (blanqueo) de productos delictivos (4 casos). La corrupción tiene las siguientes influencias en el deporte: descrédito de los deportistas; amenaza a la salud del deportista; disminución de la popularidad y difusión de los deportes; disminución de la confianza de los fanáticos; una amenaza para todo el sector deportivo. Conclusiones. Es aconsejable adoptar la Convención de la UE sobre la lucha contra la corrupción y el soborno en el deporte, que consagrará una lista de los principales tipos de delitos de corrupción en el deporte, las principales amenazas de los delitos de corrupción en el deporte, las direcciones de la política estatal en el campo objeto de investigación. tipos de responsabilidad por estas acciones; Las obligaciones del Estado miembro de la UE con respecto a este acto jurídico reglamentario deben hacer que la legislación nacional se ajuste a él. Este estudio no es exhaustivo, y la propuesta para el desarrollo de la Convención para combatir la corrupción y el soborno en el deporte abre perspectivas para futuras investigaciones en el campo de la regulación y gestión en el deporte.

**Palabras clave:** Delitos de corrupción, Sector deportivo, Amaño de partidos, Dopaje, Soborno, Soborno en el deporte.

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### Introduction

Sport is one of the types of social relations, which is an integral part of people's lives in the modern world. At the same time, sports social relations should be considered at several levels:

- individual (personal sports activities);
- collective (sports events involving teams of individual communities);
- public (public sports organizations, schools);
- state (state sports committees, associations, organizations, schools that organize competitions at the state level and educate future athletes);
- international (international sports organizations, associations, committees that organize international competitions and ensure compliance with established rules).

While the sports sphere of an individual level depends

on the person who is engaged in it only, domestic and international processes, phenomena, as well as both positive and negative circumstances affect the sports social relations of other levels.

Corruption is one of such social negative phenomena, which has become an integral component of social relations in many countries of the world, in particular, in the EU countries. It poses a serious threat to the security and economic and financial interests of both individual countries and the EU as a whole (EUR-Lex, 2020; Tavolzhanskyi et al., 2023). The sports sector is no exception — it is even indicated that corruption has become synonymous with sports, as its negative impact goes beyond sports events and affects sponsorship (Dodds et al., 2018), the general reputation of sports organizations (e.g. FIFA (Forster, 2016), the International Olympic Committee (Frenger et al., 2019)) using the example of contractual competitions among

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German athletes) and discredit sport as a whole (Reniță, 2019). Corruption in sports organizations has long gone beyond a national scale, having become a global problem (Shchokin et al., 2023).

**Aim.** In view of the relevance of this research, as well as the unresolved issues related to manifestations of sports corruption, the aim of this research will be to study the most common types of corruption crimes in the EU and to provide recommendations on the legislative regulation of combating sports corruption in the EU. The aim involved the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- classify corruption crimes in sports;
- establish the public danger of corruption in sports;
- analyse regulatory legal acts and norms of criminal legislation establishing responsibility for corruption crimes in sports, European countries in the field of combating corruption and bribery in sports.

### Literature review

Negative phenomena in sports, in particular corruption, fraud and manipulation as separate manifestations of corruption are currently the subject of research in articles, monographs, which study certain aspects of this negative socially dangerous phenomenon: the causes and consequences of fraud in sports in dynamics (from 2010 to 2020) (Vanwersch et al., 2022), the possibility of legal regulation of countering illegal influence on sports competitions (Yefimov et al., 2021), the consequences of unsportsmanlike conduct in sports for participants and spectators (Elendu & Dennis, 2017), the emergence of corruption in sports in the world (Canepelle et al., 2021).

The works that contain developments on the prevention, fight, and counteraction of corruption offences in sports occupy a particularly important place among such studies: Philippou (2022a) studied the problems of countering bribery and corruption in international sports organizations; Giel et al. (2023) investigated the impact of deterrence factors on match-fixing and the possibility of applying this factor to fight against this manifestation of corruption in sports; Bondarenko et al. (2022) the significance and problems of practical application of international legal acts in the field of fighting corruption in sports to combat this negative phenomenon. An opinion is even expressed regarding the expediency and effectiveness of psychotherapy and drug treatment of bribers and corrupt persons in sports to prevent corruption in the studied area (based on the study of the history of the development and causes of corruption in athletics) (Kamis et al., 2016).

In the field of practical counteraction to the studied negative phenomena in sports, evidence bases are being developed for national police at the level of individual states in order to combat the manipulation of results and violations of healthy competition in sports competitions (Kiemle-Gabbay et al., 2023). Blackshaw (2018) studied the role of the arbitral tribunal to counter manipulation in sports. Reniță (2019) indicates that manipulations in sports as a manifestation of corruption, as well as other acts of

corruption in this area encroach on a number of social values and reduce the value of sports competitions in general. Breuer and Forrest (2018) are also quite harmful for the economy as a whole.

A large number of studies on history of development, causes, assessment of consequences, the negative impact of sports corruption, the development of effective means of countering and fighting this phenomenon both at the national and international levels (at the level of the EU) does not indicate that all problems in the area under research are solved. Therefore, one of the main directions of research in this area should be the study of individual components (types) of corruption crimes both at the national level of the EU countries and at the international level, as well as the determination of the main and most effective means of combating these crimes.

It is necessary to understand the essence and nature of corruption in order to comprehensively solve the problem of combating it in any sphere, including sports. Corruption in the field of sports has turned into a global problem of national and international public policy, because sports has become a high-cost business since the last century, worth \$141 billion annually. This is the result of excessive deamateurization, medicalization, politicization, and commercialization of sports at various levels. At the current stage, these four trends have given rise to the fifth, the most socially dangerous — the criminalization of sports (for more details, see Figure 1).

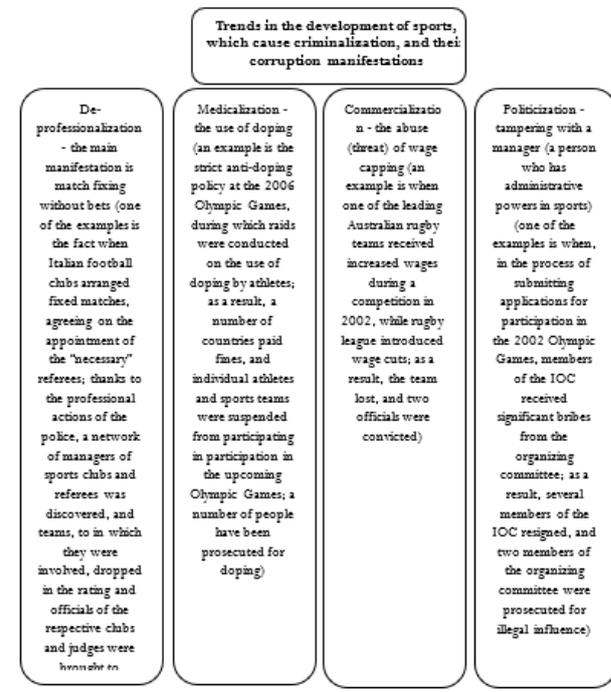


Figure 1. Trends in the development of the sports sector that led to its criminalization (Source: author's development based on studied sources)

Corruption and bribery are one of the most widespread and dangerous manifestations of the criminalization of the sports industry. Sports corruption is defined as any illegal, immoral or unethical activity aimed at intentionally

distorting the results of a sports competition in order to obtain personal financial gain or the benefit of other parties involved in this illegal activity (Andreff, 2016). In other words, corruption in sports is an unreasonable public expectation that sports will be fair and honest. The essence of corruption crimes in sports is somewhat different from such offences in other spheres. Although the motivation to commit corruption and bribery in sports does not fundamentally differ from other areas of corruption crimes, it is still mainly a selfish motive, enrichment.

## Methodology and methods

This study was carried out in a clear sequence, following the stages of studying the problem, based on the logic of the presentation of the material, for achieving the determined aim and fulfilling the research objectives. These stages were:

- outlining the topic and defining the boundaries of the research;
- search and selection of literature and sources;
- selection and study of statistics;
- analysis of the material presented in the selected sources and evaluation of the results of these studies;
- identification of unresolved problems related to types of corruption crimes in EU countries;
- determining the aim of the article;
- drawing conclusions and providing practical recommendations for solving the problems selected for research;
- outlining the prospects for further research in the specified area.

This study used data on the main trends that led to the criminalization of the sports sphere in European countries, which turned sports corruption into a global problem (over the past 5 years). The classification of corruption crimes and bribery in sports was studied, the main corruption crimes in sports were identified, and their general characteristics were given. Statistics on corruption crimes in 11 EU countries were used for this purpose, including the selection of the most common types of corruption crimes and the most corrupt sports. So, the most widespread and, accordingly, the most dangerous corruption crimes in sports were identified, as well as the main threats posed by corruption to sports at the national and international levels.

The legal framework of the research was made up of the provisions of international and national legal acts aimed at combating manipulation in sports competitions (Council of Europe Convention against Manipulation of Sports Competitions, as well as national laws and provisions of the criminal legislation of certain European states). The national criminal legislation of 27 European countries was reviewed in order to analyse the provisions of national legislation that establish criminal liability for corruption crimes in sports.

The study employed the following methods:

- the *information analytical method* was used to analyse information and draw conclusions regarding the types of corruption crimes in the field of sports;

- systemic approach* was used to analyse individual manifestations of corruption and bribery in sports;

- comparison and contrasting* was used for the comparative analysis of the national legislation of individual EU countries with each other and with the norms of international EU legislation regarding criminal responsibility for corruption crimes in sports;

- descriptive analysis* was used to systematize, classify, and generalize information on types of corruption crimes in the field of sports and other manifestations of unsportsmanlike conduct, which are types of corrupt activities and bribery in sports;

- the anamnestic method* was used to collect data on the most widespread types of corruption crimes in the sports sphere in the EU countries;

- the forecasting method was used to develop proposals and recommendations regarding the prospects of EU countries' cooperation in combating and preventing corruption crimes in the field of sports.

## Results

Corruption and bribery in sports are not the most widespread area of corruption crimes. But the dynamics of these crimes in individual countries leads to the idea of the need to start countering this phenomenon. The most cases of sports corruption in the EU were recorded in France, Great Britain and the Republic of Bulgaria (see Table 1). Among them, the majority was committed in football: France - 7, Italy - 7, Malta - 5, Bulgaria - 5, Great Britain - 5; slightly less - in athletics, tennis, cycling: France - 5, Italy - 4, Malta - 4 (Manoli, 2018).

Table 1.  
The number of corruption crimes in sports in selected European countries

Country of Europe	The number of corruption crimes in sports (as of 2019)
France	16
United Kingdom	15
Republic of Bulgaria	14
Italy	10
Malta	9
Sweden	7
Cyprus	5
Spain	4
Austria	4
Finland	3
Germany	3

(Source: author's development based on studied sources)

It is almost impossible to find the reasons for such widespread corruption in the sports sphere without determining the reasons for developing this type of corruption. Corruption crimes in the field of sports are not a homogeneous negative phenomenon, but a collective concept that includes a number of illegal socially dangerous acts that have signs of corruption and bribery. Corruption crimes in sports can be divided into groups (classified) according to a number of criteria:

- type of corruption crime in sports (specially targeted bribery, extortion, embezzlement, etc.);

-type of activity in sports (purchasing, production, licensing, administration, etc.);

-place (setting) and time of commission (country, region, city, workplace); the level at which corrupt activities are carried out in sports (international, regional, etc.) (for more details, see Figure 2) (Sokurenko, 2019).

Crime in sports in European countries includes a number of corruption crimes that can manifest themselves at different levels (administrative, political, economic) and in crimes of different focus (self-interested, violent, political, etc.). Types of corruption crimes in sports and their characteristics are provided in Table 2 (Sokurenko, 2019; Kaznacheeva, 2019).

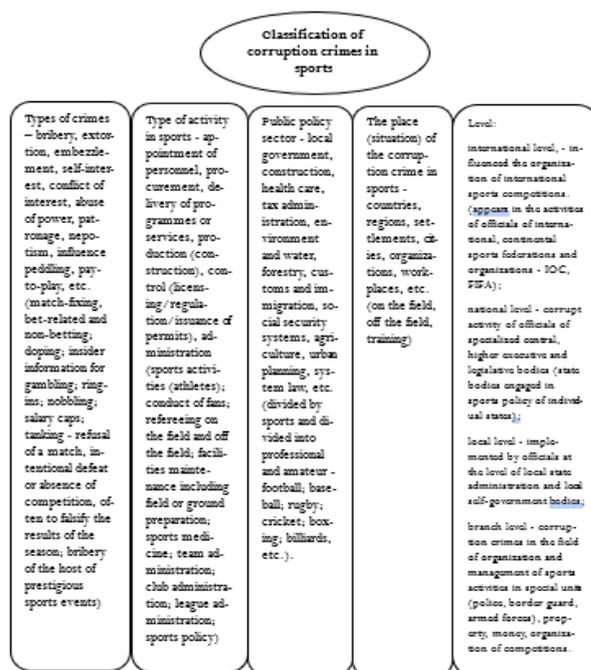


Figure 2. Classification of corruption crimes in sports (Source: author's development based on studied sources)

Table 2. Types of corruption crimes in sports

Type of corruption crime in sports	Essence (concept) of corruption crime
Bribery	forcing or inciting athletes, auxiliary sports personnel who participate in a sports competition, officials in the field of sports to collude regarding the result of an official sports competition (contractual match) or regarding their provision of exclusive sports information or entering into such activities with them
Illicit enrichment	receiving money, securities, other property, using property-related services, receiving other benefits and advantages as a result of actions (bribery, conspiracy), or unauthorized use of exclusive sports information by athletes, persons of auxiliary sports personnel participating in a sports competition, officials in the field of sports
Betting on sports	betting on the results of an official sports competition by athletes in which they or their team participates, by auxiliary sports personnel who participate in a sports competition, by officials in the field of sports, aimed at improperly changing the course of an official sports competition or its result; violation of the ban on betting on sports related to the manipulation of an official sports competition with obtaining an illegal benefit as a result
Match-fixing	influencing the results of official sports competitions through bribery, coercion or instigation or entering into a conspiracy regarding the results of an official sports competition with the aim of obtaining an illegitimate benefit for oneself or a third person or obtaining an illegitimate benefit for oneself or a third person as a result of such actions, which is most common in team sports (football, hockey, basketball, etc.)
Abuse of power	implementation of personnel policy by officials in the field of sports (allocation of positions in sports management bodies in federations, clubs, state authorities, local self-government, etc.) in their own interests, in the interests of third parties, with the aim of enrichment or receiving other benefits
Legalisation (laundering) of criminal proceeds	laundering through sports clubs and federations of income received from crimes committed outside the sector of physical culture and sports or in it (the prerequisites are the oligarchization of professional sports and the negligence of law enforcement agencies)
Fraud	management of property, sports property complexes, budgetary and extra-budgetary funds, targeted allocations, using deception or abuse of trust
Agency fraud	acquisition by deception or abuse of trust of athletes' property by their agents (real or pretended) under the pretext of mediation in concluding contracts with sports clubs
Fraud of athletes	committing illegal actions against agents, related to the non-payment of fees stipulated by the agency agreement when concluding a contract with a sports club
Event ticket fraud	takes place in case of the ticket limit, which does not correspond to the existing demand (not related to match-fixing) for objective reasons (the capacity of the sports arena, hall, significant number of tickets booked for foreigners, etc.)
Dope	the use of doping by athletes, which affects (may affect) the results of sports competitions — as a rule, the achievement of the highest sports results and related awards (the presence of a prohibited substance, its metabolites or markers in the athlete's sample; the use or attempted use of a prohibited substance or a prohibited substance method by the athlete; refusal or avoidance of sample collection; unavailability for out-of-competition testing; falsification of doping tests; possession of prohibited substances or methods; trafficking in prohibited substances or methods; administration of prohibited substances to athletes). nobbling is a form of doping — a reduction in an athlete's ability to perform. ring-ins – replacing an athlete or animal with another one with better performance
Bribery of lower-level administrators or athletes	a private act of conduct that involves payment for misconduct or unsportsmanlike conduct
Nepotism	Provision of better conditions of study, training, priority right to selection for competitions and overestimation of overall grades due to family ties in sports (with athletes or officials, administration, etc.) intentional infliction of bodily harm not caused by the environment of sports competition;
Violent crimes in sports (conditionally corrupt)	violent crimes committed against athletes outside the context of a sports competition, but in connection with sports activities and/or other conduct at sports competitions; criminal violence at the quasi-sports competitions (underground fights)
Political crimes in sports (conditionally corrupt)	violent political crimes of a terrorist nature, the objects of which are (may be) athletes during competitions, as well as outsiders who are in the place of sports events; non-violent political crimes, which involve a sports theme in its commission, as a rule, to cover ongoing political criminal activity (boycotts of sports competitions, disinformation of the population about sports events, etc.)

(Source: author's development based on studied sources)

The most widespread and, therefore, the most dangerous types of corruption crimes in sports in the EU countries are match-fixing (33 cases), doping (24 cases), fraud (6 cases), legalization of criminal proceeds (4 cases) *According to the data from the EU countries as a whole, cases of corruption in sports have been recorded* (Manoli, 2018). For example, according to Europol, the criminal proceeds from match-fixing related to betting is estimated to be around €120 million per year in 2021 (EUROPOL, 2022). Organized criminal groups are often involved in corrupt criminal activities in sports, which cooperate with individual criminals in this field and ensure such activities at the transnational level. Such criminal groups rarely aim specifically for financial gain — most often they use their illegal activities to launder their illegally obtained assets and are a kind of engine of corruption in the field of sports (EUROPOL, 2021).

The most corrupt sports in Europe is football, especially in the lower leagues and in smaller countries. For example, during an operation carried out with the support of Europol in 2023, the Spanish National Police arrested 17 members of an organized criminal network engaged in sports corruption, including the president and players of a club that plays in the fifth division of the Spanish football league (EUROPOL, 2023b). In November 2022, 23 members of a betting syndicate were arrested on suspicion of fixing football matches in the Royal Spanish Football Federation, the National League of Gibraltar, and the Andorran League (several football players suspected of using their positions to manipulate results games in which they participated were also among those arrested) (EUROPOL, 2023a).

Corruption in tennis is less widespread, which is explained by the smaller number of athletes participating in the competition and service personnel (EUROPOL, 2021). But the real number of corruption crimes in all sports is much higher than recorded, because corruption crime in the field of sports is characterized by a high latency (Leheza, 2022). The consequences of sports corruption affect individual athletes, sports teams, public and state sports

organizations, international sports committees, as well as spectators and fans. In particular, corruption crimes in sports discredit the athletes themselves, which negatively affects the sports industry as a whole; pose a threat to the athlete's health (in case of doping); contribute to decreased popularity and spread of certain sports; reduce the trust of fans in individual athletes, sports and sports organizations; pose a threat to the entire sports sector and all types of competitions.

We can assume that the spread of corruption crimes by types of offences and by sports is determined by two factors at the same time: on the one hand, the time of occurrence, duration of development, and the wider spread of some sports compared to others (for example, if we compare football and tennis), and on the other hand, the state experience of combating and countering certain types of corruption crimes and the existence of norms establishing responsibility for them. After all, not the last role in the fight against corruption in all spheres is the criminalization of such actions and a clear definition of responsibility for them. Moreover, there is every reason for such criminalization.

Taking into account the prevalence and public danger (which are the main reasons for the criminalization of an illegal act) of corruption crimes in sports have caused the state and the legislator to pay attention to the need for legal regulation of existing relations in professional sports. In 2014, the EC multilateral Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions was adopted in order to reduce the risk of manipulation in the sports sector as a manifestation of corruption and fight against this phenomenon. In accordance with this Convention, the national criminal legislation of the participating countries had to be amended accordingly, but the vast majority of European countries in their national criminal legislation did not provide for special norms that would establish responsibility for manipulation in sports or other corruption crimes in this field (see Table 3 for more details).

Table 3.  
Responsibility for corruption crimes in sports in selected countries

Country	The norm providing for criminal liability for corruption crimes in sports
Austria	Art. 146 of the Criminal Code - Fraud Art. 147 of the Criminal Code - Serious fraud
Belgium	Art. 504bis of the Criminal Code – Passive and active corruption
Republic of Bulgaria	Art. 307b of the Criminal Code - Fraud in sports Art. 307c – Bribery
Cyprus	Art. 24 of the Cyprus Law on Sports Organizations Art. 209 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
Czech Republic	Art. 331 of the Criminal Code - Receiving a bribe Art. 332 of the Criminal Code - Corruption Art. 333 of the Criminal Code – Indirect corruption
Denmark	Section 279 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
Estonia	Art. 209 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
Finland	Chapter 30, section 7 of the Criminal Code - Economic crimes Chapter 30, section 8 of the Criminal Code - Receiving a bribe in business Chapter 36 section 1 of the Criminal Code - Fraud and other deception Chapter 36 section 2 of the Criminal Code - Aggravated fraud
France	Art. 445-1 of the Criminal Code – Active bribery Art. 445-2 of the Criminal Code – Passive bribery
Germany	§ 265c of the Criminal Code – Fraud in sports betting § 265d of the Criminal Code – Manipulation of professional sports competitions
Greece	Art. 32 of Law 2725/1999 – Receiving a bribe; Giving a bribe
Republic of Moldova	Art. 242-1 of the Criminal Code - Manipulation of an event, which is recognized as encouraging, influencing or instructing a participant in a sports event Art. 242-2 of the Criminal Code - Betting
Ukraine	Law “On Preventing the Influence of Corruption Offences on the Results of Official Sports Competitions” of November 03, 2015 Art. 3693 of the Criminal Code – Illegal influence on the results of official sports competitions

Ireland	Section 6 of the Criminal Procedure Code – Obtaining benefit or causing loss by deception
Italy	Art. 1 of Law 401/1989 – Fraud in sports competitions
Latvia	Art. 212-1 of the Criminal Code - Manipulation in sports
Lithuania	Art. 182-1 of the Criminal Code - Manipulation of sports competitions
Luxembourg	Art. 310 of the Criminal Code - Receiving/giving a bribe
Netherlands	Art. 326 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
Republic of Poland	Art. 46-48 of the Sports Law - Bribery (active/passive)
	Art. 8 of Law 50/2007 – Passive corruption
Portugal	Art. 9 of Law 50/2007 – Active corruption
	Art. 10 of Law 50/2007 – Trading in influence
	Art. 11 of Law 50/2007 – Criminal conspiracy
	Art. 254 of the Criminal Code - Receiving a bribe
	Art. 255 of the Criminal Code – Giving a bribe
Romania	Art. 256 of the Criminal Code - Obtaining unlawful benefits
	Art. 257 of the Criminal Code – Trading in influence
	Art. 6 and 61 of Law 78/2000 – Corruption crimes
	§ 221 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
	§ 328 of the Criminal Code - Accepting a bribe
Slovakia	§ 332 of the Criminal Code - Bribery
	§ 336 of the Criminal Code – Indirect corruption
	§ 375 of the Criminal Code - Violation of the foreigners' rights
	Art. 211 of the Criminal Code - Fraud
Slovenia	Art. 294 of the Criminal Code - Criminal association
	Art. 295 of the Criminal Code - Criminal conspiracy
Spain	Art. 286 bis of the Criminal Code – Fraud (active and passive)
Sweden	Chapter 17, section 7 of the Criminal Code - Bribery
	Chapter 20 section 2 of the Criminal Code - Receiving a bribe
	Section 42 of the Gambling Act – Cheating
Unlighted Kingdom	Criminal Law Act 1977 - Criminal conspiracy
	Anti-corruption Act 1906 - Corruption

(Source: author's development based on studied sources)

It is obvious that there are no special rules on responsibility for corruption crimes in sports in the vast majority of the criminal legislations of the EU countries (with the exception of Germany, the Republic of Lithuania and Latvia, Ukraine, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Bulgaria, and Cyprus). Instead, taking into account the spread, public danger and consequences of sports corruption, appropriate changes should be made to the current national criminal legislation, as well as appropriate laws should be adopted that will regulate relations in combating and fighting against sports corruption.

Comparing the data on the number of manifestations of corruption in the field of sports (Table 1) and the data on the establishment of criminal liability for corruption in the field of sports by individual countries, we can note that the number of such crimes is greater in those countries where there are no special norms in the criminal legislation establishing for such specific manifestations of corruption: responsibility for giving and receiving bribes in the general sense is provided for in France, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden. In view of this, the reason for the greater prevalence of certain corruption crimes in the sports sphere in some countries becomes obvious. First, this is due to the wide distribution of certain game sports, which depends on the specifics of the development of this sphere of social relations at the national level. Secondly, the reason is insufficient regulation by the state and the absence of special norms or legal acts that would regulate certain types of activity in the sports field (for example, bookmaking activities that can have an impact on contractual matches), as well as the absence of special criminal law norms (in criminal legislation) that would establish responsibility for illegal influence or manipulation of the results of sports competitions. This proves the expediency and necessity of establishing criminal liability for corruption crimes in the field of sports at the level of the national legislation of individual

countries. At the level of the European Union, it is advisable to adopt a more general legal document on combating corruption and bribery in sports along with the above-mentioned Convention. The reason is that the manipulation of sports competitions is not the only and not the most socially dangerous corruption crime in sports. It should indicate the main types of corruption crimes in sports, the main threats from corruption crimes to sports at the national and international levels, as well as the main directions of state policy to combat this dangerous phenomenon.

In view of the above analysis, the main directions in countering and fighting corruption in the field of sports should be the following: regulation of bookmaking activities at the state level by adopting the relevant normative legal act; establishing the "rules of fair play" (Fair Play) and the obligation to observe them by both sports organizations and athletes; establishment of criminal liability for corruption crimes in the sports sphere; creation of separate divisions of law enforcement agencies in the field of combating corruption in sports and their interaction with national special authorized anti-corruption entities; coordination and encouragement of sports organizations and athletes, organizers of sports competitions and sports betting operators to cooperate in anti-corruption activities; raising the level of awareness, educational and professional training, scientific research activities in the field of combating manipulation in the sports field.

## Discussion

The analysis of certain aspects of corruption crimes in sports gave a clear understanding that the problems of determining the types of corruption crimes in sports and countering these manifestations are a necessary and urgent task of social policy in the field of sports and criminal law policy of both individual European states and the

international community of the EU. In view of the public danger of bribery and corruption crimes in sports (influence both on the popularity of sports and on financing or sponsorship in this field (Dodds et al., 2018)), the position regarding the need to develop an evidence base for the national police of individual EU states to combat manipulation as a form of sports corruption deserves support (Kiemle-Gabbay et al., 2023).

The position that the most common types of corruption crimes in sports are doping, illegal equipment, grafting, bribery, and illegal grounds for betting is inaccurate (Desiata, 2023). The statistics indicate a slightly different state of affairs.

The opinion that the causes of cheating in sports as a manifestation of corruption are personal qualities that become pathological and lead to dishonesty is quite controversial (Kamis et al., 2016). Therefore, the possibility of using psychotherapeutic and medicinal treatment of such pathologies in the EU countries seems questionable in terms of expediency, moral and ethical perspective, and from the standpoint of legality. Although some psychological aspects of corruption, which influence the commission of bribery and corruption crimes by officials (Dragan et al., 2020) should be taken into account when developing measures to combat sports corruption in EU countries.

One cannot fully agree with the position that the reasons for committing corruption crimes in sports are fundamentally different from other corruption crimes. It is noted that the motivation for corruption in this area is not, for example, poor working conditions or low wages. It is believed that that social guarantees and working conditions for athletes are much better than in other professions, and the salaries are quite high (Leheza, 2022). But these factors cannot be dismissed either, as both working conditions and wages are not equally good and high in all sports, as this sphere of corruption is also determined by the wrong policy in this field, the desire to get rich, and a selfish motive - getting quick and easy money thanks to fixed matches, doping, fraud (Kyprianou, 2020; Shablysty & Anisimov, 2021).

The position to create a unified system of combating corruption and bribery in sports, which will consist of three main elements: clarification of the concept, assessment of risk factors, and assessment of management (Philippou, 2022b) deserves support. But it is also necessary to take into account the problem of the introduction of international (sovereign) norms into national legislation, because different countries have different approaches to the implementation of measures to combat corruption in various spheres, which is determined by their culture, mentality, history, and politics (Dei et al., 2021). Therefore, not a single, but a universal system for all EU countries should be created.

## Conclusions

The conducted research leads to the conclusion that corruption in the field of sports is a heterogeneous phenomenon that manifests itself in a variety of corruption crimes.

Bribery or fraud (rarely violence) are the main forms of committing such crimes. The most widespread types of corruption crimes in sports are match-fixing, bribery, fraud, legalization of criminal proceeds, and doping. The high level of corruption in the sports field in these countries is due, on the one hand, to the wide distribution of certain types of sports and, on the other hand, to the lack of special norms establishing responsibility for corruption crimes in this area. The dangerous influence of corruption on the sports sector both at the national and international level is manifested in the discrediting of athletes, which negatively affects the sports industry as a whole; a threat to the athlete's health is created; the popularity and spread of certain sports is decreasing; fans' trust in individual athletes, sports and sports organizations decreases; a threat is created for the entire sports sector and all types of competitions.

National and international legislation of the EU does not fully meet the needs for combating and countering corruption crimes in sports. At the EU level, it is advisable to adopt a more general normative legal document - the Convention on Combating Corruption and Bribery in Sports, which should contain a list of the main types of corruption crimes in sports, the main threats from corruption crimes for sports at the national and international levels, the main directions of state policy to combat this dangerous phenomenon, as well as to determine the main types of responsibility for these actions. The EU member states signatories to this legal act should be obliged to bring their national legislation into line with it, as currently the criminal legislation of only some European countries provides for liability for manipulation in sports. The main direction of combating corruption in the field of sports is state regulation of relations in this field and ensuring its legitimate functioning by national specially authorized bodies.

This study is not comprehensive and does not solve all the problems related to the identification of certain types of sports corruption and ensuring appropriate countermeasures. On the other hand, the proposition for the development of the Convention on Combating Corruption and Bribery in Sports opens up prospects for further research, which will contribute to the improvement of international and national legislation in the sphere of regulation and management in sports.

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