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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EXPERT SERVICE OF THE MIA OF UKRAINE AND THE ENFSI

International cooperation in the field of forensic science plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness, reliability, and credibility of criminal investigations in a globalized world. In this context, the interaction between the Expert Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) is of particular importance, as it facilitates the exchange of knowledge, implementation of international standards, and enhancement of professional competence. The relevance of this topic is обусловлена the need to integrate

Ukrainian forensic institutions into the European scientific and legal space, improve the quality of forensic examinations, and strengthen trust in expert conclusions at both national and international levels.

The ENFSI was founded in 1995 with the purpose of improving the mutual exchange of information in the field of forensic science. This, as well as improving the quality of forensic science delivery in Europe have become the main issues of the network. Besides the general work in the fields of quality and competence management, research and development and education and training, different forensic expertizes are dealt with by 17 different Expert Working Groups. ENFSI therefore has been recognized as the monopoly organization in the field of forensic science by the European Commission [1].

ENFSI is governed by an executive branch consisting of a five-member Board and a Secretariat. There are also two standing committees or advisory groups; one for Quality & Competency, and another for Research & Development. Individual forensic disciplines are represented by various Expert Working Groups [2].

ENFSI has developed successfully from its beginning; the number of members has increased steadily over the years, from 11 member laboratories in 1993 to 75 in 2026.

These laboratories cover a broad range of forensic expertise fields and come from 41 countries geographically spread across Europe: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Republic of Northern Macedonia, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom [3].

Ukraine is a member of ENFSI represented by the The State Scientific Research Forensic Center (SSRFC) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine (since 2002), since 2017 – Kyiv Scientific Research Institute of Forensic Expertise of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine (KFI), National Scientific Centre "Hon. Prof. M.S. Bokarius Forensic Science Institute" (NSC FSI), since 2021 - The Ukrainian scientific and research Institute of special equipment and forenscic expertise (ISEE SSU) [3].

Under the auspices of this international organization and the U.S. Department of Justice, measures were implemented to accredit the laboratory of the Forensic Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in accordance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17025. This work involved the development of a training system for qualified forensic experts; equipping laboratory complexes at a modern level; and the introduction of a quality management system for forensic examinations. As a result of the audit, in 2012 the State Research Forensic Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine was issued an accreditation certificate confirming the competence of the State Center's laboratories in accordance with the requirements of DSTU ISO/IEC 17025. Today, a number of structural units of the Forensic Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine are certified under this standard; however, work in this area is ongoing with the aim of certifying all forensic laboratories of the Forensic Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine [4].

Ukrainian specialists of the Expert Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine regularly participate in annual meetings of ENFSI working groups, webinars and conferences, among the latter are: Annual Meeting ENFSI 2025, which was held as part of a major European forensic event (EAFS 2025), the theme of which was: "Reflections on Forensic Science: Looking back to look forward". November 1, 2024 A representative of the explosives laboratory of the SSRFC of the Ministry of Internal Affairs took part in the 25th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Fire and Explosion Investigation. December 2, 2024 they took part in the 52nd meeting of the Working Group of the European Network of Forensic Institutions (ENFSI) on DNA research [5].

In general, membership of the Expert Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine represented by the SSRFC of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, other domestic subjects of forensic expertise is extremely important, since it allows:

– recognition of the results of the conclusions of Ukrainian forensic experts by international and/or foreign courts;

– proper control over compliance with the quality of forensic examinations in accordance with international requirements (DSTU ISO / IEC 17025:2006);

– involvement of Ukrainian forensic experts in the work of international expert commissions;

– use of global and European expert methods when conducting forensic examinations;

– ensuring international standards of judicial activity;

– increasing the effectiveness of the results of forensic activity through close cooperation with relevant global and European expert institutions;

– constant monitoring of the latest developments, methods and equipment in order to increase the efficiency of the work of forensic experts, exchange of experience of experts with colleagues, implementation of the best world achievements in the practice of forensic experts of the Expert Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine [4].

Thus, the membership of The State Scientific Research Forensic Center (SSRFC) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in ENFSI is important, and today the Expert Service of the MIA of Ukraine has significant achievements in the training of forensic experts and in equipping laboratories at a modern level. Work is ongoing to bring other laboratories of the regional scientific centers of the Expert Service of the MIA of Ukraine up to this standard. This has a positive impact on organizational, material and technical, scientific, and methodological activities.

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