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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF INVESTIGATIVE AND FORENSIC UNITS IN UKRAINE AND GERMANY

Investigative and forensic units are an essential part of the law enforcement system of any country, as they ensure the collection, preservation, and scientific analysis of evidence, which form the foundation for solving crimes and bringing perpetrators to justice. They also provide expert opinions that help investigators, prosecutors, and courts to reconstruct the circumstances of crimes and prevent future offenses. In Ukraine, the organization of forensic work is coordinated within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Police. The central body responsible for forensic support is the Forensic Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which supervises a network of scientific and research forensic centers (NDEKC) located in all regions of the country [1]. These centers perform a broad range of examinations, from fingerprint and trace analysis to digital forensics and DNA profiling. At the regional level, each police department operates criminal police units and investigative teams that respond to crime scenes, while major cities have specialized laboratories dedicated to ballistics, handwriting analysis, and cyber-forensics. The main tasks of Ukrainian forensic experts include documenting crime scenes using photography and 3D scanning, collecting and preserving physical evidence, conducting laboratory examinations, and providing expert testimony to support investigators and prosecutors. However, the system faces challenges such as insufficient funding, outdated equipment in some laboratories, a shortage of qualified experts, and the need to further align forensic procedures with European standards. Nevertheless, Ukraine has made progress by gradually introducing automated fingerprint identification systems, modernizing DNA laboratories, and taking part in EU-funded initiatives aimed at strengthening its forensic capacity [2].

Germany's forensic system reflects the country's federal structure, where law enforcement responsibilities are shared between the federal government and the sixteen federal states. Each state operates its own Landeskriminalamt (LKA), or State Criminal Police Office, which has its own well-equipped forensic divisions. At the national level, the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) coordinates state-level activities, develops methodologies, manages national forensic databases, and represents Germany in international cooperation within Europol and Interpol [3]. The German model is distinguished by its advanced technical infrastructure, use of robotic DNA analysis systems, biometric databases, and artificial intelligence tools for evidence evaluation. German forensic institutions actively collaborate with universities and research institutes, continuously develop new methods, and provide ongoing professional training to their experts through specialized academies. This model successfully combines decentralization, which gives states autonomy, with effective nationwide coordination and standardization, ensuring that forensic results are consistent across the country.

A comparison of these two systems shows that Ukraine and Germany share many common features, such as the existence of specialized forensic units within police structures, the performance of similar tasks related to evidence collection and examination, and the presence of personnel training systems. At the same time, there are significant differences. Ukraine's system is centralized under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while Germany operates a federal model in which LKAs have considerable autonomy but are supported and coordinated by the BKA. Germany is far ahead in terms of technical equipment, automation, and digitalization, while Ukraine is still in the process of modernizing its forensic infrastructure. Germany also has well-established mechanisms of international cooperation within the European Union, whereas Ukraine is still gradually integrating into European information exchange systems. Another difference is seen in personnel policy: Ukrainian experts are often overworked due to staffing shortages, while Germany invests heavily in continuous training and maintains stable staffing levels to ensure efficiency.

The German experience could be extremely valuable for Ukraine's ongoing law enforcement reform. Priority steps include

creating a stronger network of regional laboratories with modern equipment, implementing automated systems for DNA and digital evidence analysis, and building unified electronic databases for sharing forensic data between investigators and courts [4]. It is also important to strengthen international cooperation by increasing participation in Europol projects and EU cross-border operations, as well as to expand professional training programs to bring them in line with European standards. This would not only reduce the workload of Ukrainian experts but also raise the overall quality of forensic examinations and accelerate case processing.

Thus, while Ukraine and Germany pursue similar goals in the field of forensic science, the German model clearly demonstrates the benefits of a balanced federal approach, modern technology, and strong ties between science and practice [5]. The gradual adoption of these best practices could significantly improve the efficiency of Ukraine's forensic system, enhance the credibility of criminal proceedings, and increase public confidence in law enforcement and justice.

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