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INFORMATIZATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES AS A POSITIVE FACTOR IN ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTIVITIES

Olga A. Gracheva (a), Irina N. Vishnevetskaya (b), Pavel A. Matushkin (c)*
*Corresponding author

(a) Saratov State Law Academy, 1, Volskaya Str., Saratov, 410056, Russia, letsik91@mail.ru
(b) Saratov State Law Academy, 1, Volskaya Str., Saratov, 410056, Russia, irina-vishnevetskaya@yandex.ru
(c) Saratov State Law Academy, 1, Volskaya Str., Saratov, 410056, Russia, foxbox003@gmail.com

Abstract

The article deals with combating corruption using information technologies, which currently prevails in the Russian Federation. Corruption-related crimes are reported to have a clearly expressed upward tendency, as confirmed by statistics, and law enforcement agencies are not always able to counteract such crimes effectively. The key anti-corruption measure at present is stated to be the development of digitalization, through the improvement of existing information technologies, as well as the creation of new electronic platforms that have a positive impact on the anti-corruption activities of law enforcement bodies. The current information systems used by law enforcement agencies and their positive impact on combating corruption have been analyzed. Anti-corruption measures with the use of digital technology and information systems by law enforcement agencies in their activities are proposed. The article touches on the variety of forms of combating corruption through informatization of law enforcement bodies, which confirmed their positive effect in their work, as well as measures for preventing corruption offenses. The authors conclude that the digitalization of the economy and the state apparatus needs to use a comprehensive set of measures, combining innovative and technological measures with social and economic methods of impact, reducing contacts between officials and citizens, the optimal digitalization of highly corruptive areas at the legislative level.

Keywords: Anti-corruption activities, information technologies, informatization, law enforcement bodies

1. Introduction

Corruption has been and remains one of the most urgent issues of modern Russia and a serious threat to national security, an obstacle to the development of civil society, which damages the economic development of the country and undermines public confidence in the government. Despite the fact that the methods of combating corruption crimes have been improving in recent years, the issues of combating corruption by criminological and other means, remain relevant.

An analysis of statistical data published on the official website of the General Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation shows that about 30,500 and 31,000 corruption crimes have been registered in the country over the past three years (2018 – 30 495, 2019 – 30 991, 2020 – 30 813). In 2020, 929 crimes of this type were detected by investigators of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation (+4.6 %), 22772 (–3.9 %) by police officers, and 2205 (–10.7 %) by prosecutors. In their structure, bribery offenses (Art. 290, 291, 291.1, 291.2 of the RF Criminal Code) constitute 14,548 crimes; their number increased by 4.9 % against the last year's data, abuse of office (Article 285 of the Criminal Code) constituted 2,197 crimes, their number decreased by 4.4 % compared to the previous year's data. One in three corruption offences is petty bribery (–2.5 %, 5.3 thousand).

These data, as well as the public resonance associated with corrupt practices, demonstrate directly both the large-scale work carried out by law enforcement agencies in this area, and the urgency of the problems of combating this type of crime and the need for further research and improvement. The above-mentioned data, as well as the public response to corrupt practices, clearly demonstrate the scale of the work carried out by law enforcement agencies in this area, as well as the relevance of combating this type of crime and the need for further research and improvement.

One of the key anti-corruption measures is the development of digitalization, by improving existing information technologies as well as the creation of new electronic platforms. It seems that the measure, which has proven to be effective abroad, can also bring our society closer to achieving the main goal of restraining corrupt practices at a socially tolerant level in our country.

In the age of innovation, nanotechnology and the digitalization of the economy, it is time for Russia to adopt this anti-corruption trend.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of digital transformation of law enforcement has become an urgent issue for a long time. Issues of introducing information technology into law enforcement activities were being discussed in the 90s (Ozhiganov, 1995). However, only a few years later, following the trends of modern society, the concept of legal informatization of Russia has acquired a new sense.

The introduction of information technology in the activities of law enforcement agencies is the influence of social practice. The introduction of information technology in the activities of law enforcement agencies is the influence of social practice. Since corruption has become a new social phenomenon in society, the legislator entrusted the prosecutor's office and other law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation with the task of combating it. Such an arrangement of tasks and

approach from the perspective of several law enforcement agencies in the current legislation of the Russian Federation implies a systemic way to achieve them.

Information and technical means are actively used by law enforcement bodies of the Russian Federation to solve the tasks in their daily activities, but there is currently no unified methodological and legal support for the use of such means for storing, processing and transmitting information.

We think that it is possible to bring the system of law enforcement agencies and their anti-corruption activities to a completely new level only in the context of the development of information technology.

3.   Research Questions

The subject of the study is the norms of the current legislation of the Russian Federation, as well as materials of their implementation; official statistics data; foreign and domestic practice in combating corruption through the use of information technologies.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to analyse the information systems adapted and implemented in law enforcement agencies, to prove their positive impact on anti-corruption activities, as well as to improve the practice of introducing informatization in law enforcement activity.

5.   Research Methods

The basic methods of the study were comparative, dynamic analysis, which were based on a critical examination of the anti-corruption policies of law enforcement agencies. The use of both general-scientific and private research methods made it possible to demonstrate the results of the computerization of law enforcement activities.

6.   Findings

Today, information technology is actively used by people. It is often noted in the specialized literature that the digitalization of a state administration and other spheres has become a worldwide trend, and the legal system of the Russian Federation is not an exception, as all its structural elements are influenced by digital technologies (Ovchinnikov, 2019).

The state program "Digital Economy" was worked out according to the decree of the President of the Russian Federation in 2017. Under realization of this national project, it is primarily planned to form the optimal conditions for the proper development of the digital economy in our country through the digitization of all areas of public and state life. Therefore, the main goal was to solve problems of a socio-economic nature, including corruption.

The fact that the use of information technology in combating corruption is one of the priority tasks of the Russian state, is also confirmed in the address of the President of the Russian Federation

V.V. Putin to the Federal Assembly, where it is clearly defined that "the digitalization of the entire system of state government, improving its transparency is a strong factor in combating corruption".

According to the Federal Law "On Counteraction to Corruption", corruption is not only the receiving and giving of a bribe, but also abuse of official authority, commercial bribery, abuse of authority, etc. by both individuals and legal entities.

Business communities also have expectations that with digitalization, corruption will be defeated, as digital technologies make managerial activity more transparent and every official's decision can be reviewed and assessed for correctness by the expert community (Gref, 2021).

According to statistics, corruption crime tends to grow every year. This state of affairs can be explained from various perspectives. On the one hand, the state anti-corruption policy itself may be ineffective; on the other hand, on the contrary, law enforcement agencies often disclose this category of cases and make those results public.

It is worth noting that political economy studies regularly conducted in foreign countries confirm the threats caused by corruption in the form of economic damage to the state. Theoretical and practical aspects of the use of digitalisation in combating corruption have been actively researched by foreign scholars (Adam & Fazekas, 2021; Andersen, 2008; Nasr, 2014). Andersen's (2008) study finds that in most countries that have implemented an e-government platform, there has been a substantial change of anticorruption rates.

It is worth noting that an analysis of anti-corruption experience in different countries reveals that the use of information technologies during criminal investigations can significantly save money to conduct effective investigations. One cannot but agree with this, as the goal of informatization of law enforcement agencies is to simplify the clerical system, to reduce the number of errors, and to raise the efficiency of employees at their work.

Based on the etymology of the concept of informatization and as interpreted in encyclopedic dictionaries, it should be understood to mean the use of information technologies for the formation and implementation of information resources and electronic document exchange.

It is necessary to note that, the legislation does not currently contain a definition of the concept. However, in the repealed law "On information, informatization and information protection", the term informatization was defined as "the organizational, socio-economic, scientific and technical process of creating favourable conditions to meet the information needs and to enforce the rights of citizens, public bodies, local self-government authorities, organizations, public associations on the basis of forming and using information resources".

According to current Law No. 149-FZ of 27.07.2006 "On informatization, information technologies and information protection", information technologies are processes, methods of searching, collecting, storing, processing, providing, distributing information and methods of implementing such processes and methods, while information system is a set of information contained in databases and information technologies and technical means ensuring its processing. To maximize the effectiveness of law enforcement bodies in combating corruption, a great variety of information systems have been developed and adapted in practice.

Information systems used in practice by law enforcement agencies to combat corruption can be divided into three main types: information and reference systems, expert systems and automated image processing systems.

Thus, the information and reference system is an automated system designed to collect and store data, which allows the quick retrieval of information in an interactive mode upon users' request. These commonly include reference legal, automated information and reference, information retrieval systems and data banks.

In order to effectively combat corruption and corruption-related offences, law enforcement agencies most frequently use the following automated information and reference systems, such as the automated information and reference system "Svodka", "Narcobusiness", "Gastroler", "Spetsapparat", "Airport", "Dossier Fraudster" and others. The listed above systems have an individual function and are used in particular areas of law enforcement activities. For example, the automated information search system "Kriminal-I" provides law enforcement agencies with information on offences committed by foreigners and non-citizens, as well as with records of offences committed against them.

As for expert systems, such programs are designed to partially replace a specialist expert, which combine the knowledge of specialists in various fields. In their professional activities to combat corruption crime, law enforcement agencies most often use such expert systems as "Narcoex", "Octopus". Automated image processing systems include compositional portrait drawing systems and information fingerprinting systems. Automated composite portrait systems are designed for the creation of subjective portraits of individuals suspected of committing crimes by experts with the participation of eyewitnesses (e.g., the Photorobot and FaceManager systems, AIPS "Portrait").

Automated fingerprint information systems have recently become particularly popular with law enforcement agencies, allowing them to obtain promptly the necessary reference and verification data on detainees, unidentified criminals, convicts, wanted individuals, etc.. Automated fingerprint information systems accumulate large amounts of fingerprint information in electronic format.

Thus, law enforcement officers are now effectively dealing with corruption offences by using already implemented and existing information systems.

According to the above-mentioned aspects, it is possible to identify the primary measures to combat corruption crimes. First, it is the transition to an electronic system of decision-making, allowing simplified document management and thereby ensuring the transparency of such decisions. Secondly, to maximize the openness of law enforcement activity through a more intensive implementation of the digitalization process. Thirdly, involvement of mass media both for commenting on the facts of corruption and for creating an anti-corruption ideology and propaganda of anti-corruption activity. Moreover, the normative consolidation of the process of digital evolution. However, some authors believe that haste in this, on the contrary, will slow down the development of digitalization, overregulating and overloading it with rules (Gref, 2021).

In general, the anti-corruption policy of the state is largely predetermined by the achievements of scientific and technological progress. This is evidenced by the majority of studies by modern authors considering methods and forms of using the latest technologies in the fight against corruption-related

crimes, analysis of approaches to combating corruption from the perspective of information technologies in foreign countries, anti-corruption policy of the information state.

7. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the article does not cover all the forms of combating corruption through informatization of law enforcement agencies, the existing information systems that have confirmed their positive effect in the activities of law enforcement agencies were analysed, as well as the most common measures for the prevention of corruption crimes.

We believe that if the positive effects of digital technologies are to be maximized, their balanced development is necessary. Under the conditions of the digitalization of the economy and the state apparatus, it is necessary to use a complex set of arrangements combining innovative and technological measures together with socio-economic methods of impact, minimizing contacts between officials and citizens and optimizing the digitalization of particularly corruptive areas at the legislative level.

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