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On the Systematisation of Criminal Responsibility by and in Enterprises – Introduction and Overview**

The current volume of the European Integrations Studies consists of two parts. The first part contains the written versions of the presentations given at the third conference ‘Corporate compliance as a challenge for the design of legal consequences – towards a coherent system of sanctions in commercial criminal law’, while the second part contains those given at the fourth, final conference of the Humboldt Research Group Linkage ‘On the systematisation of criminal responsibility by and in enterprises’ (2020-2025) with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.¹

1. Corporate compliance as a challenge for the design of legal consequences – towards a coherent system of sanctions in commercial criminal law’

On 17 October 2022, the international conference “Corporate compliance as a challenge for the design of legal consequences – towards a coherent system of sanctions in commercial criminal law’ organized by the universities of Heidelberg, Germany, and Miskolc, Hungary, was held as part of the Humboldt Research Group Linkage ‘On the systematisation of

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** This study was prepared as part of the linkage project of the Humboldt Research Group "On the systematisation of criminal responsibility of and in enterprises" led by the University of Heidelberg and the University of Miskolc (2020-2025).

¹ The programme can be found at: <https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/en/apply/alumni-programmes/alumni-abroad/research-group-linkage-programme>.

Contributions from the first and second Humboldt meetings were published in *European Integration Studies* Vol. 17. No. 1. (2021) [<https://ojs.uni-miskolc.hu/index.php/eis/issue/view/33>] and Vol. 19. No. 2. (2023) [<https://ojs.uni-miskolc.hu/index.php/eis/issue/view/169>].

criminal responsibility by and in enterprises' (2020-2025) with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The main objective of the Humboldt Project is to systematise theoretical and practical experience and knowledge about the criminal liability of and within companies from a comparative law perspective in order to develop criminal policy responses to technological and social changes. The project aims to bring together academics, practitioners and students from Hungary and Germany, as well as other EU member states, to address a fundamental problem of modern economic criminal law, which is traditionally discussed in terms of individual issues. The aim is to identify deficits in criminal law doctrine and practice, which are to be systematically localised in academic discourse and addressed with dogmatic solutions, especially since no sufficiently solid structures have yet emerged in practice to deal with legal issues reliably.

The main focus of the event was "Corporate compliance in an intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective. Compliance programmes and measures are becoming increasingly important in our globalised world and are subject to a progressive process of legalisation, meaning that they are now largely no longer a matter of soft law. For example, it is now recognised that when sanctioning a legal violation by a company, a functioning compliance system necessarily leads to a reduction in penalties, and the absence of such a system must be considered an aggravating factor. This means that it is no longer at the discretion of company management to introduce and develop a compliance system. It is obliged to do so in the interests of the company. Compliance, which was adopted from the US legal system, requires integration and anchoring in national law and, with regard to criminal sanctions, in the criminal justice systems of the member state. This task has not yet been adequately fulfilled. Scientists and practitioners from three member states of the European Union addressed these issues: Germany (Universities of Heidelberg and Münster), Hungary (University of Miskolc) and Austria (Vienna University of Economics and Business). This topic of the conference fits perfectly with the current discussions on criminal law in the European Union and its member states. The great interest in the event is reflected in the total number of 150 conference participants.

The contributions to the third and fourth conference are published as part of European Integration Studies. The presentations were followed by

panel discussions about the areas in which further research projects are necessary.²

2. Green Criminology and Green Deal: Environmental and Climate Protection – An Urgent Task for Criminal Law’

On 4–5 March 2024, the fourth conference was held as part of the Humboldt Research Group Linkage project funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The subject of the congress in Miskolc, Hungary, was ‘Green Criminology and Green Deal: Environmental and Climate Protection – An Urgent Task for Criminal Law’.

The European Union attaches great importance to environmental protection. Based on the Green Deal and the 8th Environment Action Programme, the EU pursues a comprehensive sustainability policy. The aim is to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and to create a sustainable economy through measures in the areas of renewable energies, sustainable transport, circular economy, waste reduction and promotion of biodiversity, which will improve the well-being of citizens. Other objectives and measures of EU sustainability policy include: sustainable financing, sustainability reporting to ensure that companies report comparable information and communicate their sustainability performance effectively, and EU taxonomy to define which economic activities are considered sustainable and to determine which investments in environmentally sound projects are supported. Furthermore, the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive has been amended and expanded several times in recent years. The most important change is the strengthening of consumer rights with regard to environmental and social claims, in particular the prohibition of greenwashing, i.e. the ‘prohibition of misleading environmental claims’. Directive (EU) 2024/825, the ‘Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive’³, which came into force at the end of March 2024, introduced additional prohibitions and obligations for companies.

The European Union considers environmental and climate protection to be a new priority and calls for effective criminal, administrative and civil

² See Dannecker and Jacsó in this volume.

³ Directive (EU) 2024/825 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2024 amending Directives 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU as regards empowering consumers for the green transition through better protection against unfair practices and through better information (Text with EEA relevance), *OJ L*, 2024/825, 6.3.2024.

sanctions to protect human rights and the environment, in particular the foundations of life. However, if fundamental and human rights and environmental protection are to be guaranteed by legal measures, reference must be made to generally recognised values. The decision as to which means should be used to achieve effective protection of these values and the significance of criminal sanctions, in particular sanctions against companies, raises fundamental questions that were the subject of the conference.

The speakers from academia and practice came from four countries: Germany, where issues of criminal law environmental protection and, in particular, criminal law species protection are discussed in depth; Hungary, which has a long tradition of environmental studies at its universities, particularly in Miskolc; Austria, which repeatedly goes its own way when it comes to implementing EU law in criminal law; and Liechtenstein, an EEA state. The aim of this fourth conference was to provide a framework for a knowledge-based, interdisciplinary discourse (first section) and intradisciplinary discourse (second section) on green criminology and the European Union's Green Deal.⁴ The presentations were followed by two panel discussions. In the first one, the topic of 'Criminal climate protection as a challenge from a national perspective' was discussed, while in the second, 'National, European and International Research Perspectives' were considered. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion about the areas in which further research projects are necessary.

The contributions given at the two conferences and the 'Research perspectives and approaches for solutions' are published as part of European Integration Studies. We hope that this special edition will make a valuable and useful contribution to the academic discussion on the criminal liability of companies and the role of compliance systems. The contributions offer a variety of perspectives on current developments, challenges and approaches to solutions in this dynamic field of law.

We hope that this special edition will make a valuable contribution to the academic discussion on the criminal liability of companies and the role of compliance systems as well as to criminal law environmental and climate

⁴ A conference report can be found at Dannecker and Jacsó: Bericht über die internationalen Konferenz "Green Criminology and Green Deal". *Europäische Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsrecht (EuZW)*, 2024/24, pp. 1153-1158., Dannecker and Jacsó: Report on the international conference titled 'Green Criminology and Green Deal'. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Law*, 2025, 20(38), pp. 519-530; <https://doi.org/10.21029/JAEL.2025.38.519>.

protection. The contributions offer a variety of perspectives on current developments, challenges and approaches to solutions in these dynamic fields of law. The presentations and lectures will be followed by a presentation of the ‘research perspectives and approaches to solutions’ developed during the panel discussions at the two conferences. We hope that you will find these publications of interest and that they will stimulate further scientific exploration of the issues addressed, thereby contributing to further professional exchange.

This volume of European Integration Studies was published as part of the Humboldt Research Group Linkage On the systematisation of criminal responsibility by and in enterprises with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.’

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