

The Evolution of Criminal Policy in Romania and the European Union

Mihai Ștefănoaia

Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences, Ștefan cel Mare University Suceava, Romania

Abstract

The evolution of criminal policy in Romania and the European Union reflects a complex process of adaptation to profound social, political, and legal transformations. In Romania, the shift from a socialist-inspired legal system to a democratic one required substantial reform, culminating in the adoption of the new Criminal Code in 2009, designed to align national legislation with constitutional guarantees and international human rights standards. This reform not only sought to strengthen the fight against crime but also to modernize penal institutions by introducing alternative sanctions and reinforcing the principle of proportionality.

At the European level, criminal policy has gradually transcended national borders, focusing on harmonization and mutual recognition of criminal judgments across Member States, especially in combating cross-border crime, terrorism, and human trafficking. The European Union has played a central role in fostering judicial cooperation, while the European Court of Human Rights has contributed to the humanization of criminal law by setting higher standards for the protection of detainees' rights and ensuring fair trial guarantees.

Overall, contemporary criminal policy stands at the intersection of safeguarding public order and respecting human dignity, within a framework increasingly shaped by the interplay between national sovereignty and supranational European standards.

Keywords: criminal policy, proportionality, fundamental rights, European judicial cooperation, humanization of sanctions