

## CRIMINAL LAW. MAJOR CRIMES

Criminal law is a branch of law whose area of regulation is largely agreed upon in many countries. It refers to the rules imposed by the state prohibiting the behaviour which is considered to endanger the safety of the public. It is much less debated than civil law. However, the understanding of some notions and specific terms might still vary and often require more detailed explication. This is mainly due to the cultural background and traditions of the country. For example, most would agree upon the definition of a *crime*; however, *offense/offence*, another frequently used term, can be rather differently interpreted in many countries. Its meaning can often overlap with *crime*. However, what in British English is often called *release on parole* in American English is rendered as *release on probation* etc.

The tasks give you a chance to study the original legal texts. The first two tasks of the section focus on some general principles of criminal law. They apply in most Western countries.

■ **TASK 1.** Study Article 1 of the *Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania* and briefly describe the area of its regulation. Make use of the following key words: *criminal liability, defending rights and freedoms, public interests*.

■ **TASK 2.** The four key principles underlying the criminal law are often worded in Latin: 1) *nullum crimen sine lege*, or no crime without law; 2) *nulla poena sine lege*, or no punishment without law, 3) individualisation of punishment and 4) *in dubio pro reo*, or when in doubt, rule for the accused. Study them in the available sources (for example, the *Rome Statute of International Criminal Law*) and explain in your own words. Identify if they are compatible with the provisions of Article 2 of the *Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania*.

■ **TASK 3.** Study the following list of words referring to crimes. Find out their meanings and give Lithuanian equivalents. Divide the list into crimes/offences against a person and crimes/offences against property and fill in the table below. Be aware that sometimes they might involve both.

homicide—.....

manslaughter—.....

(attempted) murder—.....

assault—.....

shoplifting—.....

theft (also larceny)—.....

robbery—.....

burglary—.....

infanticide—.....

grievous bodily harm—.....

arson—.....

rape—.....

sexual harassment—.....

abduction/kidnapping—.....

embezzlement—.....

fraud (also cf. fraudulent statements)—.....

libel—.....

blackmail—.....

money laundering—.....

extort sth from/out of sb, extortion, extortionist, extortioner—.....

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forge (signatures, documents), forgery—.....

*Crimes against a person*

*Crimes against property*

homicide.....

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shoplifting.....

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■ **TASK 4.** The problems of *juvenile delinquency*, the age of *criminal responsibility* are issues often debated in various legal contexts. Browse any available sources and be ready to give an overview of the attitude to the age of criminal responsibility in different countries (including your own) and briefly account why this is a problem. Express your point of view.

■ **TASK 5.** Some crimes are discussed in terms of degree, usually considering their seriousness. The following five adjectives all refer to the scope or level of seriousness of the crime. However, they cannot be freely used with any word. Match each adjective with one or more of the following nouns/noun phrases: *crime, theft, burglary, bribery, corruption, bodily harm*. Be aware that in some cases more than one word is possible.

grievous.....

grand.....

petty.....

large-scale.....

extensive.....

minor.....