

First in Latvia international conference on current events in combatting and investigating cybercrimes has taken place

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On 22 and 23 March this year Cybercrime Combatting Department of the State Police for the first time in Latvia organized an international conference on current events in combatting and investigating cybercrimes. The conference took place within the framework of the project EEZ/VP/2022/1 "Support to the State Police for acceleration and quality improvement of investigation of economic crimes in Latvia" and during it trends, innovations and challenges of the sector were discussed. Special attention was paid to enabling cooperation between partners as cybercrimes are of international and dynamic character therefore combatting of these crimes requires wide scope of cooperation and its coordination.

The international conference "Current events in combatting and investigation of cybercrimes" was organized in two rich in content days during which representatives from the State Police, Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Latvia, Financial Intelligence Unit, CERT.LV, Latvian Safer Internet Centre, as well as a widely represented range of international experts from different US law enforcement institutions, France, Eurojust, Europol shared their thematic views and experience in combatting cybercrimes, which was supplemented by scientifically practical approach from the lecturers of Riga Stradins University and Riga Technical University. 114 participants both from Latvia and foreign law enforcement institutions and organizations attended the conference in person. Simultaneous online broadcast was ensured, which was watched by 168 participants. The conference was opened by the Deputy Chief of State Police Andris Zellis, Chief Prosecutor of Prosecutor's Office of Riga Court Region of Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Latvia Armins Meisters and Chief of Cybercrime Combatting Department of Central Criminal Police Department of State Police Ruslans Grigs.

☞ When opening the conference, Ruslans Grigs said: "The last years' events in the criminogenic environment indicate of digital transformation of crimes. The current storm of cyber events includes both refined and carefully planned crimes and external hybrid threat, which we cannot forget about. For comprehensive prevention of cybercrimes technically sophisticated methods and innovative approach are required – which in turn obliges the State Police to be modern, adequately technically equipped and provided with western-oriented and creative employees. Having assessed the current events, the State Police has taken corresponding steps to combat the topical phenomena – last year along with the structural changes Cybercrime Combatting Department was established in the State Police, Central Criminal Police Department, competence of which is combatting cybercrimes and crimes in the field of high technologies."

🗨️ The first day's lectures and practical discussions were devoted to cybercrime trends and legal solutions, as well as digital proof and cross-border cooperation. Europol and Eurojust experts outlined activities and contribution of their organizations in combatting cybercrimes and strengthening Europe's security. The head of CERT.LV Baiba Kaškina spoke about how threat trends in the Latvian cyber space have changed under the influence of the geopolitical events at the same time acknowledging that the majority of them were successfully prevented: "Last year the source of the majority of cybercrime cases was Russia, as well as Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks carried out by hackers supporting Russia's aggressive regime were more visible and felt on everyday basis by the public. According to the data of CERT.LV the number of registered and processed incidents increased by 40%. Detection of vulnerability of IT systems in the state administration sector increased seven times and the total number of attacks has increased even four times. The year 2022 in Latvia's cyber space is reasonably believed to be the richest in challenges and having the biggest number of cyber attacks."

The second day of the conference was opened with "a storm of virtual currency", namely, with solving virtual currency issues, the topicality of which was acknowledged also by the large interest of participants in discussions. The participants of the conference discussed the impact of virtual currencies in committing cybercrimes, legal framework and practical issues, inter alia experience of French colleagues in the case of liquidating a mediator in the laundering of virtual proceeds from crime was presented.

While the concluding part of the conference was devoted to improving safety and prevention in the cyber space listening to foreign experience and introducing to international and national initiatives in combatting illegal contents on the Internet, as well as presenting innovative ideas for adjustment of technologies and analytical tools for the investigative needs. Each participant had a chance to take active part in the conference both asking questions during thematic discussions and doing an interactive task which acknowledged the crucial meaning of the reaction speed in investigating and solving cybercrimes.

Conference takes place in the framework of the European Economic Area financial instrument 2014-2021 period programme "International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime" project No.EEZ/VP/2020/1 "Support to the State Police for increasing effectiveness".

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