

## Confrontation: Procedural-Criminal and Tactical-Criminalistic Aspects

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**ABSTRACT:** In the context of criminal prosecution, confrontation is an important element, particularly relevant for confirming and refuting the various versions exposed during the criminal prosecution. The main objective of confrontation is to elucidate the true circumstances of the case and eliminate significant inconsistencies identified in the previous statements of witnesses, suspects and accused. When the prosecuting officer decides to conduct the confrontation, it is imperative to show confidence in the ability of the participant who provided a truthful statement to withstand the psychological pressure associated with this procedure. The participant in the confrontation must be prepared and immune to any attempt by another participant to influence the modification or retraction of his statement. At the same time, in the phase preceding the confrontation, the criminal investigation officer must develop a strategic plan, including formulating the relevant questions, establishing the order of questioning of the participants and outlining the tactics to be applied within this procedure. Any violations or errors in the conduct of the confrontation can have a substantial impact on the completeness of the prosecution. From this perspective, elucidating the essence of the confrontation not only contributes theoretically, but also holds essential practical significance in the context of the effective and complete conduct of criminal prosecutions.

**KEYWORDS:** confrontation, prosecution action, evidentiary procedure, means of proof, evidence, contradictions, divergences, psychological influence, circumstances of the criminal case, statements, truth, assessment, hearing, criminal investigation body, psychological portrait, witness, party injured, suspected, accused, procedural quality

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### Introduction

In order to be the basis of the conviction of the criminal investigation body, the information communicated by those who, in various capacities, participated in the

commission of a crime must represent a faithful and complete reproduction of the circumstances of the commission of the acts (Ciopraga 1996, 322). For objective or subjective reasons, sometimes contradictions appear between the statements of the persons heard, regarding one and the same deed or factual circumstance (Aionitoaie, Berchesan, Butoi et al. 1992, 166). When it is found that there are contradictions in the statements given in the same case by the persons heard (by parties among themselves, between parties or main procedural subjects and witnesses, between witnesses, etc.), the confrontation is carried out, which is a procedure to be heard in order to clarify the contradictions that exist between the statements previously given by two or more people (Theodoru and Chiş 2020, 426).

Contradictions are the object of the confrontation (Niţă 2017, 173), whose role is highlighted when the need to clarify some facts or circumstances arises, especially in cases where the contradictions, ambiguities, inconsistencies in the statements of the person heard in a criminal case cannot be removed based on the examination of other means of proof, the confrontation remaining the only way to clarify, to clarify the uncertain aspects (Stancu 2007, 485).

Confrontation is an evidentiary procedure that consists in the simultaneous hearing of two people in whose statements, regarding the same circumstances, there are essential divergences (Osoianu, Ostavciuc, Odagiu et al. 2020, 200). The notion of "substantial contradictions" is not found in criminal procedural law, however, in practice, they are considered to be the contradictions between statements regarding the circumstances to be established and proven in criminal cases (Bashkatov et al. 2006, 235-236). Through confrontation, in addition to explaining the existing discrepancies in the statements of the persons heard in the same case, new data useful for solving the criminal case can be obtained. Confrontation is also considered a tactical means of verifying statements and clarifying the position of the perpetrator in relation to the act attributed to him (Dolea, Roman, Sedleţchi, Vizdoagă et al. 2005, 298).

Bercheşan (2002, 126-127) mentions that confrontation is still the same hearing. It consists of a complimentary evidentiary procedure in which, by way of derogation from the provisions of the criminal procedural law, the persons are questioned in each other's presence regarding facts, circumstances or issues where essential contradictions have arisen. Divergences between the statements of witnesses and other persons heard in the case may arise primarily due to objective and subjective factors that influence the process of perception, memorization and reproduction of information regarding the events. Secondly, the influencing of witnesses by interested parties in the case, through requests, promises, threats, corruption etc., should not be excluded either (Gheorghită 2017, 599).

The author Camil Suciuc mentions that the discrepancies can also be due to the insincere statements of some witnesses, who are either accomplices of the offender in the crime they were questioned about, or are accomplices in other crimes or are simply in bad faith. In the case of suspects/accused, discrepancies may be due

to the suspect/accused having committed the crime, although other suspects/accused or witnesses claim otherwise; the suspect/accused committed several crimes of which only one was discovered; the suspect/accused wants to escape criminal responsibility or wants to reduce it; the suspect/accused did not commit the crime, but takes it upon himself to escape another person; the accused cleverly uses the discrepancies in the statements of witnesses or other suspects/accused (Suciu 1972, 594-595).

Not every contradiction in testimony requires confrontation, because very significant discrepancies can be resolved by repeated hearings and other means, which sometimes more reliably establish the cause of their occurrence and make the necessary adjustments to the previously given testimony (Dulov 1973, 48). Many times, the contradictions between the statements of the persons heard can be removed by checking and collecting documents, performing searches, reconstructions, performing technical-scientific findings or expertise, listening to other people who have knowledge of the circumstances in connection with which they appeared. Therefore, the criminal investigation plan must provide for all possible activities leading to the removal of contradictions.

Only if, after exhausting these activities, the contradictions persist, the confrontation is organized. In this sense, it is recommended that the confrontation takes place, as a rule, among the last follow-up activities, when the definite conclusion has been reached that the contradictions cannot be removed in any other way (Aionitoaie, Berchesan, Butoi et al. 1992, 168).

At the same time, apart from removing the contradictions from the statements, during the confrontation it must be taken into account that:

- Participants in the confrontation can remember details they forgot;
- Participants in the confrontation can remember new facts;
- Even if during the confrontation each of the participants maintains their previous statements, from their behavior it can be understood which of them can be given more trust, and this can suggest the subsequent ways of verifying the statements of these participants. Apart from this, the behavior of people during the confrontation can contribute to the discovery of some of their character traits, which must be taken into account when choosing future hearing tactics;
- Sometimes, during the confrontation, the person who made false statements is forced to change his statements and thus he gets confused in his own statements, which allows him to be exposed. But if the suspect, the accused morally dominates the person with whom he is to be confronted, there is a risk that the latter, because of fear, will have to adapt his statements (Golunski 1961, 344);
- Carrying out this evidentiary procedure is important in order not to "lose" the evidence-statements of some people who for various reasons will not be able to participate in the substantive examination of the criminal case - advanced age, serious illness, death, going abroad, etc. (Osoianu et al. 2020, 202).

## Results and discussion

Depending on how fully and qualitatively the preliminary preparation is carried out, the successful performance of the criminal investigation depends. Confrontation is a tactically and psychologically complex evidentiary procedure. Frequently, conflict situations occur within it, there is still the risk of revealing the obtained data and of losing previously made testimonies. Precisely for this reason, in order to exclude such situations, we are going to pay sufficient attention to the preparation for the confrontation, it is necessary to be equipped with audio-video recording means, as well as with other means necessary to obtain and fix the information. Sidorov (2016, 304-309) pays great attention to the preparatory stage in order to carry out the confrontation. According to the author, "in the preparation process, the consecutiveness of hearing the participants in the confrontation is determined, the measures necessary to ensure security are identified."

In the specialized literature, it is mentioned that when conducting the confrontation, it is recommended that the number of criminal investigation officers, who conduct the confrontation, be equal to that of the confronted persons, so that each participant is supervised by a law enforcement officer. At the same time, it is necessary for these people to be advised on the issues that are the subject of the confrontation, so that they are prepared to accurately capture the reactions of those confronted when the main issue is discussed and their inappropriate behavior in some situations. In certain cases, when the confrontation is being prepared with the participation of the accused, who has an aggressive behavior or poses a danger to other people, additional security for the criminal must be ensured, in order to exclude some incidents (Gheorghiuță 2017, 603).

In the process of investigating criminal facts, the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) can decide on the confrontation in the following cases:

- 1) The representative of the criminal investigation body assumes that the guilty person, under the influence of the statements of the witness (witnesses), the injured party or another accused or suspect, will provide the necessary statements and mention the true circumstances of the commission of the crime;

- 2) The prosecuting officer (prosecutor) really needs to compare the statements of two people because there are doubts about certain information. At the same time, the confrontation must be carried out even if the representative of the criminal investigation body understands that those interviewed will support their previous testimonies;

- 3) During the confrontation, the representative of the criminal investigation body, by presenting the same materials and objects to both participants, will be able to analyze their attitude towards these objects and documents;

- 4) The representative of the criminal investigation body has serious doubts in the statements of the parties, but does not have other evidence in the case, a fact that

may influence his conviction regarding the guilt or innocence of the perpetrator and the establishment of the circumstances of the criminal case;

5) It is necessary to remove the contradictions from the statements in case of an error of good faith of the interviewed persons, inconsistency in their testimonies, in particular, in the case of complex circumstances of the criminal case (Golovin 2015, 6).

As grounds for not carrying out the confrontation can be listed:

1) The presence of contradictions in the persons' statements does not influence the establishment of the circumstances of the crime, which determine its qualification, the establishment of the person's guilt and regarding other circumstances to be proven in the criminal trial;

2) The criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) is convinced of the correctness of the previously heard statements even if there are some contradictions between these statements and the statements of other participants in the trial, whether there is other sufficient evidence that allows the proper establishment of the circumstances of the case;

3) Carrying out the confrontation, by virtue of individual qualities of the person, may exceed the limits of the purposes and tasks of this evidentiary procedure, the representative of the criminal investigation body being convinced that he can have control over the created situation, he can master it;

4) Carrying out the confrontation between the participants in the crime can, instead of removing the contradictions, turn into a common understanding for the presentation of the same statements during the criminal investigation and when examining the case in court (Ibidem, 6-7).

Gavrilov and Zacatov (1978) explained the stages of preparation for the confrontation. Based on those mentioned by these researchers, we will present the algorithm of preparing for the confrontation, namely:

- The criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) studies the statements of the persons to be confronted, examines other materials of the criminal case;

- The causes of the appearance of contradictions, divergences between statements are to be clarified;

- The representative of the criminal investigation body studies the character of the relationships between the persons to be subjected to the confrontation;

- The criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) decides on the conduct of this evidentiary procedure;

- The plan regarding the performance of the confrontation is drawn up, the circle and the sequence of the questions to be asked are determined;

- The time and place of carrying out the criminal investigation action is established;

- The criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) selects the documents, objects, crime bodies, technical means, necessary to fix the progress and results of the confrontation (Gavrilov 1978, 120).

At the stage of preparing for the confrontation, the representative of the criminal investigation body performs an analysis of the initial data, determines the object of the criminal investigation action, consisting of actions, facts, circumstances, episodes regarding which it is planned to obtain statements from those involved in this evidentiary procedure. Even before the summons, the invitation of the persons is to be determined with certainty the object of this criminal prosecution action. In this sense, the representative of the criminal investigation body will study the materials of the case, those obtained through operative-investigative, archival etc. (Chervyakov and Bekshaeva 2019, 332).

In the process of studying the materials of the investigated case, the operative-investigative materials, the personal and archival materials, the criminal investigation body has the opportunity to identify:

- The purpose of the confrontation;
- The persons who will be summoned to be heard at the same time;
- The questions that will be used to reconcile divergent questions;
- The causes or motivation of the contradictions;
- The evidence and means of evidence that will be used;
- Contradictions that must be clarified during the confrontation (Pletea 2003, 255).

Also, the objective of the criminal investigation body at the stage of preparing for the confrontation, is to solve the questions related to the specialized knowledge, to determine the opportunity to obtain certain consultations from the specialists. In the opinion of Gura, in particular, "the assistance of specialists in the field of information technologies, economics and finance is needed". Or, in the case of certain criminal acts, it is necessary to know the basics of the economy, audit, accounting records, etc. (Gura 2013, 256).

Studying the personalities to be confronted is of great importance for the preparation and carrying out of this procedural and forensic tactical action (Gheorghiuță 2017, 603). Apart from this, the character of the relationships between the persons who will be subjected to the confrontation and the other participants in the criminal process must be analyzed. An equally important task concerns the establishment of psychological contact between the participants in this evidentiary procedure. In order to achieve this objective, the prosecuting body must collect all the necessary information regarding the qualities and personality traits of those interviewed. This information can be obtained from reading and studying the materials of the criminal case (Chervyakov and Bekshaeva 2019, 332).

The ability to draw up a clear psychological portrait and study the traits and qualities of those who will be confronted is also an important task. By virtue of this fact, the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) will be able to obtain answers to a wide range of questions:

- Whether or not the persons between whom the confrontation is carried out are the ones they claim to be; corresponds their actual appearance to their behavior;

- What is the moral potential of the people subject to the confrontation, what are their life plans and values;
- What is the way of life, the level of education and professional training of the persons between whom the confrontation is carried out;
- What is the attitude of the confronted persons regarding the investigated criminal act;
- If the persons subject to the confrontation have a criminal past, have they previously been in the sights of the legal authorities or not, if so - then what was the purpose of the interest shown by the judicial authorities;
- In what circumstances, at what time and in what physiological or psychological state, under what conditions, the persons between whom the confrontation is carried out, perceived facts, events, circumstances with reference to which the confrontation is carried out, do they have any mental disabilities or physically at the time of the evidentiary procedure (Ibidem, 333).

It is important to pay special attention to the issue of determining the place and time of the confrontation. The selection of the place to carry out this criminal prosecution action depends on the concrete situation. In practically all cases, the confrontation is carried out in the duty office of the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor). In the opinion of Komosko (2028), the confrontation must be carried out in the office of the representative of the criminal investigation body for the following reasons:

- Carrying out the confrontation in the duty office of the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) requires minimal efforts regarding its conduct;
- The representative of the criminal investigation body does not waste time to travel to the place of confrontation and back;
- Working in a familiar and comfortable environment for him, the representative of the criminal investigation body is more confident, he can use the technical means at his disposal more effectively;
- The official framework, specific to the duty office of the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) positively influences the establishment of psychological contact between him and the participants in the confrontation;
- The framework, the official environment sets the participants in the confrontation towards a responsible and conscientious attitude in relation to the performance of this criminal prosecution action (Komosko 2018, 103-104).

The duty office of the representative of the criminal investigation body is not the only place where the confrontation can be carried out. It can also be deployed in other rooms. The author V. A. Bîcov, for example, is of the opinion that "in the case of certain categories of crimes, the confrontation can also be carried out at the location of one or more perpetrators, especially when one of them, for reasons of health, cannot present at the headquarters of the criminal investigation body. In this case, the confrontation is carried out at the location of the sick person, in the premises of the medical institution or at home" (Bîcov 2013, 47-48).

In relation to this fact, the mention of the author A. B. Soloviov is current that “in case of carrying out the confrontation outside the service office of the representative of the criminal investigation body, it is necessary to ensure a specific official atmosphere and to exclude any circumstances that would jeopardize the order of carrying out this prosecution actions” (Soloviev 2006, 160).

An important aspect of confrontation preparation is determining the timing of the confrontation. As Stelimah (2016, 99-109) claimed, “premature confrontation may not achieve the desired result, or it will exert a negative influence on the prosecution. Also, the late confrontation will be meaningless: the accused will already know the testimony of the witnesses or other accused, and he, making certain conclusions, will change his statements.”

Confrontation is also justified in cases where the prosecuting officer (prosecutor) has collected enough evidence to correctly assess the statements of the participants. But we also have situations when carrying out the confrontation is rational even at the initial phase of the research. For example, the confrontation between the injured party and the suspect is welcome immediately after the apprehension of the perpetrator. Favorable conditions for obtaining true statements can also be created due to the mental state of the person detained immediately after committing the crime, the spontaneous nature of the detention, as well as due to the lack of information about the evidence held by the criminal investigation body.

There are also cases when the confrontation is carried out with the aim of unmasking the person who makes knowingly false statements. In this case, the determination of the time to carry out the criminal prosecution action depends on several circumstances. First of all, the representative of the criminal investigation body is to establish with certainty which of those interrogated is hiding the truth. On the basis of this moment, the tactics of carrying out the confrontation are established. Also, the preparation, the moral state of the participant in good faith to state the truth face to face with the participant in bad faith also influences the selection of the time for the confrontation. Situations can often arise when witnesses, injured parties, weak-willed perpetrators refuse to participate in the confrontation. In such cases, the representative of the criminal investigation body must convince the persons concerned of the need to participate in this criminal investigation action, in the presentation of the information necessary for the criminal case by those in good faith (Chervyakov and Bekshaeva 2019, 333-334).

Ianovschii (2011, 247-248) concludes that “this prosecution action is effective in cases where it is carried out unexpectedly for the person who makes knowingly false statements. The participant in bad faith, assuming about the performance of the confrontation, does not need to know the day and time of its performance. In this case, the “surprise factor” will intensify its psychological influence on the person who knowingly made false statements.” It is also important to determine the circle of participants in the confrontation. This prosecution action can be carried out between the injured party and the accused, between the witness and the accused,



between two accused, two witnesses etc. Along with the nominated persons, other participants in the criminal process may also be brought into the confrontation. Thus, if the confrontation is carried out with the participation of a minor, the pedagogue and the child's legal representative will participate in this criminal investigation (Ianovschii 2011, 247-248).

Accomplishing the confrontation with the direct participation of minors can somehow affect the results of the criminal case if their personal qualities and age peculiarities are not taken into account. That is why, in order to avoid these unfavorable moments, the criminal investigation body must carefully study the individual peculiarities, the level of individual development, the volitional qualities of the adolescent prepared for confrontation, then his attitude towards the committed act. Plenary awareness of these moments avoids wasting time in vain, and foreseeing in a broad perspective the possible manifestations of behavior of the minor during the planned confrontation, helps those interested to place themselves with a well-prepared lesson in the undoubted selection of tactics related to the performance of this follow-up action criminal (Rusu 2004, 135).

Often, at the time of the confrontation, the teenagers who, during the questioning, unmasked the co-participants in the crime can change their previous statements, they can answer in silence to the new "shooting" of questions, and they can even refuse to carry out this act of criminal investigation altogether. And this is either from the fear of being ripped off by the co-participants, or from the want of soul injury, or from the ambition not to "taint" oneself, or from the fear of losing any vestige of authority in front of one's peers. In such cases, when listening to the child, it is useful to find the most accurate expression in order to neutralize the causes of the "friendly" behavior that immediately suits someone, to dispel fears and instill in him the conviction that leads him to realize the absolute necessity of carrying out this criminal prosecution action (Rusu and Pop 2005, 80). If the need arises to explain the materials of the forensic expert report, the expert (specialist) will also participate in the confrontation. If a person who does not know the language in which this criminal investigation is carried out is involved in the confrontation, the participation of a translator will be ensured. In case of necessity, in order to determine the results of the confrontation, carried out with the application of technical means, the representative of the criminal investigation body trains a forensic specialist in carrying out this evidentiary procedure (Chervyakov and Bekshaeva 2019, 334).

In some cases, the participation of other specialists (economists, accountants, technologists etc.) may be necessary to carry out the comparison. As V. N. Comissarov claims, "in the process of the confrontation there is a mutual emotional influence of the participants in this criminal prosecution action" (Komissarov 1980, 104). In the opinion of L. A. Tabacova, "the psychological influence of one participant in the confrontation on the other can have positive results - lead to the clarification of the causes of differences and their removal - as well as negative results

- when under the influence of his opponent, one of the participants changes his statements in the meaning of falsification, thereby aggravating the existing divergence between the statements” (Tabakova 2018, 24-26).

The criminal procedural law provides for the possibility of conducting the confrontation at the initiative of different participants in the criminal process (injured party, accused, defender etc.) under the conditions in which they have submitted steps in this regard. In this sense, the decision belongs to the criminal investigation body. Appreciating the approach taken, he decides if the contradiction to which attention is drawn is a substantial one and if, in order to remove it, it is really necessary to carry out the confrontation (Jitariuc 2022, 192; Obraztsov 2001, 159). In the process of carrying out the confrontation in cases with many episodes, it is of enormous importance to prepare for the presentation of all materials: accounting documents, photographs, extracts from minutes, criminal bodies etc. These materials must be systematized based on the fact that, at the appropriate time, the representative of the criminal investigation body can immediately present them to the participants in the criminal investigation action, without wasting time searching for them.

It is necessary that from the beginning the issue of fixing the results of the confrontation should be thought and resolved. In the process of preparation for carrying out this criminal investigation action, the representative of the criminal investigation body identifies the appropriate technical means that will be used (camera, video camera etc.). The author V. N. Nareadchikov mentions that “the preparation of document forms, writing instruments, personal computer, audio-video recording means is also attributed to the technical assurance of the confrontation” (Naryadchikov 2019, 108-113).

## Conclusions

On the basis of the research conducted, we can come to certain conclusions in relation to the essence and tactics of carrying out the confrontation.

First of all, the confrontation represents an independent criminal prosecution action, which consists of the simultaneous hearing of two previously heard persons, with the presence of both, from the category of witnesses, injured parties, suspects, accused, on the same circumstances of the criminal case, in the analysis and comparing the information communicated to remove substantial discrepancies in their content in order to establish the truth in criminal cases.

Secondly, the confrontation is a complex criminal investigation action, the correct performance of which is possible only through the lens of the representative of the criminal investigation body reporting its essence and importance, first knowing its specifics and delimiting it from other criminal investigation actions.

Thirdly, the effectiveness of the confrontation largely depends on the quality of its preparation by the representative of the criminal investigation body. However,

the preparation begins from the moment of taking the decision regarding the rationality of the confrontation, accompanied by the technical assurance of the conduct of this evidentiary procedure, ending with the drawing up of a plan, which substantially eases the work of the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) in carrying out this criminal investigation action.

Fourthly, the achievement of the main objective of the confrontation - the removal of substantial divergences from the statements of the persons who were previously heard - is possible only in the case of carrying out this criminal prosecution action in strict accordance with the provisions of the law with the skillful use of certain tactical procedures. The harmonious combination of the provisions of the law with the scientific recommendations of a tactical order guarantees the achievement of the desired result. The differentiation of tactical procedures, specified in the specialized literature, facilitates the identification of the appropriate tactical rules in accordance with the circumstances of the concrete criminal case. The specificity of the tactical procedures in the case of the confrontation carried out with the participation of minors is explained by their psychological peculiarities. The application by the criminal investigation body of specific tactical procedures in the case of confrontations with minor participants contributes to obtaining appropriate information from them and establishing the truth in criminal cases.

Fifthly, the representative of the criminal investigation body must be aware of the psychological "environment" in which the confrontation takes place. The state of conflict is an indispensable component of every confrontation. The purpose of confrontation is to remove this state. By virtue of this fact, it is extremely important for the criminal investigation officer (prosecutor) to know the psychological characteristics of the participants in the confrontation, to apply an appropriate psychological influence on them, to exercise control over the psychological influence exerted by the participants in the confrontation on the representative of the body of criminal prosecution, control of the situation during the execution of this criminal prosecution action.

It is also necessary to review some shortcomings encountered in the practice of criminal investigation bodies in the process of conducting the confrontation. One of the most widespread errors is the non-confrontation, for the "fear" of the criminal investigation body to obtain some undesirable results in relation to the evidence already collected in the criminal case, while the situation created in the criminal investigation tells us about its necessity. However, such an error can determine the distortion of the truth or the emergence of difficulties in the process of establishing it. Another "gap" related to the performance of the confrontation consists in the insufficient application of technical-scientific means, a fact that will inevitably reflect negatively on its results.

Also, we would recommend the representatives of the criminal investigation body to refrain from carrying out confrontations between minors and adults,

because in such cases the presence of a psychological influence on the part of the latter is inevitable. Conducting confrontations between minors and adults can be accepted only in cases of extreme necessity, when other ways of establishing the controversial circumstances of the criminal case have been applied, but without result. The clarification of these aspects is of substantial importance for the proper and rapid discovery of crimes, for unmasking the perpetrators and bringing them to criminal liability.

## Acknowledgments

Article developed on the basis of the Institutional Project the Universal Character of University Research as a Guarantor of the Promotion of European Educational Values, implemented in collaboration by the Danubius University of Galați (Romania) and the International Free University of Moldova. Key action (Direction) III – Legal studies, implementation period: 2022-2026.

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