

# Cybercrimes in the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe: current status and key drivers

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**Abstract** Some economies in the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe (FSU&CEE) are known as cybercrime hotspots. FSU&CEE economies have shown complex and varied responses to cybercrimes due partly to the differential incentives and pressures they face. This study builds upon literatures on white-collar crime, institutional theory and international relations (IR)/international political economy (IPE) perspectives to examine the low rates of prosecution and conviction of suspected cybercriminals in some economies in the FSU&CEE and variation in such rates across these economies. The findings indicate that cybercrime cases are more likely to be prosecuted and sanctions are imposed in economies that are characterized by a higher degree of cooperation and integration with the West. Cybercriminals are less likely to be jurisdictionally shielded in such economies. Our findings also suggest that a high degree of cooperation and integration with the West would lead to access to resources to enhance system capacity and law enforcement performance to fight cybercrimes.

## Introduction

Some economies in the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe (FSU&CEE) have become top cybercrime hotspots. According to Merchant Risk Council, six of the top ten economies from which most online frauds originated in the early 2000s were from FSU&CEE [99]. An estimate suggested that, in 2004, there were over 50 gangs of professional cybercriminals in these economies [42].

Cybercrime rings in some FSU&CEE economies have mastered complex tricks. Sophisticated frauds involving a complex fusion of strategy, technology, processes, and people such as cyber-extortion, distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks and hijacking users' searches and clicks are associated with these economies. Corruption,

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