

# **Corporate Criminal Liability for Environmental Offences: A Comparative Analysis between the UK Common Law and the EU Romano-Germanic Legal Systems**

**Ştefan-Ciprian Raicea**

Phd Student, Faculty of Law, University of Craiova, Craiova, Romania

## **Abstract**

Corporate criminal liability for environmental offences plays a central role in ensuring effective environmental protection and promoting sustainable development. This paper provides a comparative legal analysis of the approaches adopted by the United Kingdom's common law system and selected European Union Romano-Germanic legal systems, with particular reference to Germany, France, and Italy. The purpose of the study is to assess how different models of corporate liability address environmental harm and to evaluate their effectiveness in terms of deterrence and compliance. The research methodology is based on a comparative analysis of statutory provisions, relevant case law, and European Union environmental directives influencing national legal frameworks. The analysis demonstrates that the UK model, grounded in the identification doctrine, offers conceptual clarity but faces significant enforcement challenges in complex corporate structures. By contrast, Romano-Germanic systems rely on codified frameworks that emphasize organizational fault and combine criminal, administrative, and civil sanctions, resulting in greater enforcement flexibility. The results indicate that no single model is fully adequate to address contemporary environmental challenges. The paper argues that an optimal framework would integrate elements from both traditions, combining clear attribution of corporate fault with robust regulatory and sanctioning mechanisms. Such a hybrid approach would better serve the objectives of deterrence, accountability, and environmental compliance within the context of EU environmental governance.

**Keywords:** corporate criminal liability; environmental offences; comparative law; EU environmental law; corporate accountability