

CONTROVERSIES REGARDING THE PHRASE “CONTROL AUTHORITIES” IN THE VIEW OF LAW NO. 50/1991 ON THE AUTHORIZATION OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS

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Abstract

The present study analyzes the legal controversy surrounding the interpretation of the phrase “control authorities” within the meaning of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, with reference to the offence provided for in Article 24 letter (b). The main objective of the research is to clarify whether the prosecutor can be regarded as a “control authority” when ordering the temporary suspension of construction works, and to highlight the legal consequences of this interpretation on the typical elements of the offence.

The research method employed is a juridical–doctrinal and jurisprudential analysis, conducted through a comparative examination of legal texts, judicial practice, and doctrinal opinions.

*In our view, the legislator clearly distinguishes between administrative control authorities and judicial authorities (the prosecutor and the court), in which sense the prosecutor cannot be assimilated to a control authority within the meaning of the law. The implications of the research reveal the existence of a legislative gap *de lege lata* and suggest the need for an amendment *de lege ferenda* to separately criminalize the failure to comply with a temporary suspension ordered by the prosecutor, in order to ensure coherence and predictability of the criminal framework governing construction discipline.*

Keywords: *control authorities, criminal investigation body, prosecutor, offence.*

I. Preliminaries

The issue of environmental protection and, more broadly, of quality of life has been legally shaped since the earliest written regulations. Initially, legal provisions focused on the protection of historical monuments and their surroundings, the existence of such regulations being justified by the interest in safeguarding the common cultural heritage.¹

The evolution and dynamics of society have also been reflected at the level of regulation in this field. As human activities expanded and affected increasingly larger areas, the concept of quality of life and environmental protection began to occupy a growing place in the legislator’s attention. In

¹ See Mircea Duțu, *Treatise on Environmental Law*, 3rd Edition, C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 977.

this regard, the connections between environment and urban planning became stronger, leading to the emergence of new notions such as *urban ensemble* and *urban landscape*.

Over time, ecological requirements have also been added, progressively gaining greater importance. Zoning, servitudes, prohibitions imposed on individuals and even on authorities, and other similar measures have been gradually accepted in the name of the higher demand for collective well-being — including with respect to the natural environment.

This new dimension allows for the prefiguration of an integrated management approach, bringing together economic, financial, social, and increasingly environmental concerns, in line with the principles of sustainable development.

As rightly argued in the specialized literature, issues concerning the artificial environment cannot be regarded in isolation from those of the natural environment, both being of equal importance.²

Being regarded as a responsibility of local public authorities as well as of natural and legal persons, the protection of human settlements is regulated by Government Emergency Ordinance No. 195/2005 on Environmental Protection³ (hereinafter referred to as *the law*, n.n. R.I.) in two main ways: on the one hand, by establishing a series of obligations incumbent upon these main actors, and on the other, by setting forth ecological requirements concerning urban planning and land management.⁴

Territorial planning represents a set of complex activities of general interest that contribute to balanced spatial development, the protection of natural and built heritage, the improvement of living conditions in urban and rural localities, as well as the assurance of territorial cohesion at regional, national, and European levels. The fundamental purpose of territorial planning is to harmonize, throughout the entire territory, the economic, social, ecological, and cultural policies established at national and local levels, in order to ensure balanced development across different areas of the country. It aims to enhance the cohesion and efficiency of economic and social relations among these areas (Article 7 of Law No. 350/2001 on Territorial Planning and Urbanism⁵ as last amended⁶ by Government Ordinance No. 33/2023 on the postponement of certain deadlines in the field of urban planning and construction⁷).

The main objectives of territorial planning are as follows:

- a) balanced economic and social development of regions and areas, with due regard to their specific characteristics;
- b) improvement of the quality of life of individuals and human communities;
- c) management of the landscape—an essential component of natural and cultural heritage—and of natural resources in the spirit of sustainable development;
- d) rational use of land by limiting the uncontrolled expansion of localities and preserving fertile agricultural land;
- e) preservation and development of cultural diversity (Article 9).

Plans and programs that may have significant effects on the environment are, prior to approval, subject to the requirement of obtaining an environmental approval (*aviz de mediu*), which has the status of a binding approval (its request and content being mandatory). This approval confirms the integration of environmental protection aspects, carried out in accordance with a specific

² Ernest Lupan, *Treatise on Environmental Protection Law*, C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009, p. 460.

³ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 1196 of December 30, 2005..

⁴ See Mircea Duțu, *op. cit.*, p. 977.

⁵ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 373 of July 10, 2001.

⁶ To date, the normative act has undergone 35 amendments.

⁷ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 769 of August 24, 2023.

procedure established by Government Decision No. 1,076/2004⁸, as last amended by Government Decision No. 1,281 of October 19, 2022, providing a derogation from the provisions of Article 31 paragraph (1) of Government Decision No. 1,076/2004⁹) and which constitutes an integral part of the procedure for the adoption of the respective plans and programs.

According to the Romanian legislation in force, the following urban planning documents are subject to environmental assessment for the issuance of the environmental approval: development programs for the component localities of communes and towns, general urban plans, zonal urban plans, and detailed urban plans.

With regard to the legal instruments for protecting the urban environment, the most effective are environmental and urban planning servitudes, as well as prohibitions and restrictions.¹⁰

In this study, as previously stated, we aim to clarify certain controversial aspects concerning the phrase “control authorities” within the meaning of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works.¹¹ The importance of this clarification lies in determining the conditions of typicality and, consequently, the constitutive elements of the offence¹², regulated by Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991, in situations where construction works continue after their temporary suspension has been ordered, during the criminal proceedings, by the prosecutor, in the case of buildings referred to in Article 3 paragraph (1) letter (b) of the same normative act.

Of course, in conclusion, we will also seek to formulate certain proposals for improving the legislative framework in this area.

II. Aspects of Judicial Practice

An examination of the case law generated by the interpretation of the notion of “control authorities” reveals that, over time, two main judicial opinions have emerged, and the solutions adopted in individual cases call for as swift a generalization as possible.

To begin with, it should be noted that the version of Law No. 50/1991 in force as of August 7, 1991 did not contain any criminal provisions; it only established administrative sanctions for non-compliance with its provisions, including the complementary measure of suspending construction works (Article 28).

The offence of continuing construction works after an order for their suspension was introduced by Law No. 125/1996¹³ for the amendment and completion of Law No. 50/1991, which, through Article 25¹, stipulated that: “The following acts constitute offences:

- a) the execution, without authorization or in breach thereof, of the works provided for in Article 3 letter (b);
- b) the continuation of construction works, without authorization or in breach of its provisions, after the suspension of the works has been ordered by the authorities that imposed the administrative fine.”

This condition was maintained by the legislator even after the subsequent amendment introduced by Government Emergency Ordinance No. 231/2000¹⁴, which introduced the possibility for the prosecutor or the court, during the criminal proceedings, to order the temporary suspension of construction works as a provisional measure.

⁸ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 707 of August 5, 2004.

⁹ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 1,022 of October 20, 2022.

¹⁰ Remus Ionescu, Andrei Ionescu, *Environmental Law. General Part*, Măiastra Publishing House, Târgu Jiu, 2021, p. 148.

¹¹ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 163 of August 7, 1991..

¹² For details regarding the constitutive elements of the offence, see Constantin Mitrache, Cristian Mitrache, *Romanian Criminal Law. General Part*, 3rd Edition, revised and expanded, Universul Juridic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, p. 163.

¹³ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 259 of October 24, 1996..

¹⁴ Published in the *Official Gazette of Romania*, No. 612 of November 29, 2000..

Some courts¹⁵, – when analyzing the offence provided for in Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991 — namely, the continuation of construction works after their suspension has been ordered by the competent control authorities — some courts have held that the act of the defendant, who continued construction works on the building after the prosecutor had issued an order for the temporary suspension of works, meets the constitutive elements of this offence.

In support of this view, it is argued that, pursuant to Article 24¹ paragraph (2) of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, the prosecutor or the court may order, ex officio or upon request, the temporary suspension of construction works throughout the duration of the criminal proceedings.

When there are indications of the commission of an offence, the temporary suspension of works is ordered by the prosecutor who, in relation to the offence provided for in Article 24 letter (a) of Law No. 50/1991, is assimilated to a control authority, given that he is entrusted with supervising the criminal investigation concerning the offence.

It has also been argued that, although Article 24 letter (b) of the Law refers expressly to “control authorities,” since, in the case of works provided for in Article 3 paragraph (1) letter (b) of the same normative act, the suspension of works may only be ordered by the judicial authority upon the request of the control authority, the failure to comply with the prohibition imposed by the judicial authority to continue the execution of the works meets the constitutive elements of the offence provided for in Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991.

In this context, it has been considered that if the legislator intended to criminalize the conduct of a person who continues to execute the works referred to in Article 3 paragraph (1) letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works after their suspension has been ordered by the control authority, then *a fortiori* it must have intended to criminalize the conduct of a person who continues to execute those same works after their suspension has been ordered by the judicial authority.

Other courts (the majority), whether sitting as panels for rights and liberties¹⁶, preliminary chamber panels¹⁷, or as trial courts have adopted an opposing view, holding that the offence is committed only when the construction works are continued after the suspension has been ordered by the competent control authorities — other than the prosecutor — namely, those expressly provided for by law (e.g., the local police or the County Construction Inspectorate).

In support of this view, it has been argued that, according to Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, it constitutes an offence — punishable by imprisonment from 3 months to 1 year or by a fine — to continue construction works after their suspension has been ordered by the competent control authorities, in accordance with the law.

Since the legal provision expressly refers to the suspension of works ordered by the competent control authorities, the material element of the offence is defined by the continuation of works after such suspension has been ordered by those authorities.

The notion of *control authority*, within the meaning of Law No. 50/1991, derives from the provisions of Article 27 of the same act, which stipulates that: “The presidents of county councils, mayors, and control authorities within local and county public administration bodies have the duty to monitor compliance with the rules on the authorization of construction works within their administrative-territorial units and, depending on the nature of the legal violations, to impose sanctions or to refer the matter to the courts or to the criminal investigation bodies, as the case may be.”

III. Reception and Commentary on the Addressed Issue

¹⁵ Braşov District Court, Criminal Judgment No. 1.343 of September 11, 2023, available at www.rejust.ro.

¹⁶ Suceava District Court, Order of October 1, 2025, available at www.rejust.ro.

¹⁷ Bucharest District Court, 2nd District, Order of August 12, 2025, available at www.rejust.ro.

In support of the first judicial viewpoint, it may further be argued that Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works clearly distinguishes between the authorities competent to order the suspension of construction works, as follows:– for acts constituting contraventions, the measure is ordered solely by the authorities competent to establish and sanction such contraventions, pursuant to Articles 26 and 27 of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works; – for acts constituting offences, the measure is ordered by the prosecutor or the court, in accordance with Article 24¹ paragraph (2) of Law No. 50/1991.

This distinction is explicitly confirmed by the provisions of Article 32 paragraph (4), which state that the competent control authorities, as provided by law, may request the criminal investigation bodies seized of the case and, as the case may be, the court, to order the temporary suspension of construction works throughout the criminal proceedings. This provision clearly refers to situations in which the control authorities themselves cannot order the temporary suspension of works — namely, in cases involving the commission of an offence.

Consequently, the prosecutor is the authority legally empowered to investigate the offences provided for in Article 24 of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works. Therefore, he also holds the competence to exercise control over compliance with the legal provisions in this field (whose violation gives rise to criminal liability). Moreover, under Article 24¹ paragraph (2) of the same law, the prosecutor is likewise legally competent to order the temporary suspension of construction works during the course of criminal proceedings.

In our view, the second interpretative orientation is closer to the legislator’s intent, given that the provisions of Article 24 of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works criminalize two distinct types of conduct under letters (a) and (b).

Thus, letter (a) incriminates the execution, without a building permit or in violation thereof, of the works referred to in Article 3 paragraph (1) letter (b) of the Law, except for the cases expressly exempted. This provision concerns a specific category of works carried out on all types of historical monuments provided by law, on constructions located within protected monument zones and protected built areas established by law, or on constructions of particular architectural or historical value established through approved urban planning documentation.

The performance of such works on the mentioned buildings, given their special importance arising from their historical or architectural value, was expressly designated by the legislator as attracting the most severe form of **liability — criminal liability**.

The second offence provided for in Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, namely that referred to in Article 24 letter (b), consists in the continuation of construction works after their suspension has been ordered by the competent control authorities¹⁸.

With regard to the meaning of the phrase “control authorities” within the offence set out in Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, a grammatical and systematic analysis of the legal provisions reveals that the legislator made a clear distinction between, on the one hand, the judicial authorities (the prosecutor and the court), which carry out activities within criminal proceedings concerning the offences provided for by this law, and, on the other hand, the control authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with construction discipline. The duties of each category of authorities are explicitly stated, and their competences are therefore strictly delimited by law.

From the content of Articles 27 and 28 of Law No. 50/1991, it is apparent that these provisions identify the control authorities responsible for supervising compliance with construction discipline and define their sphere of competence, namely:– control authorities within local and county public administration bodies, which are required to monitor compliance with the legal provisions on the

¹⁸ The notion of *authority* (or *organ*), in its broad sense, designates a person or a group of persons who contribute to the exercise of the functions of the State. Every authority has specific duties which it performs within a legally defined scope of competence. For further details, see George Antoniu, Nicolae Volonciu, Nicolae Zaharia, *Dictionary of Criminal Procedure*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1988, pp. 204–207.

authorization of construction works within their administrative-territorial units and, depending on the violations found, to impose sanctions or to refer the case to the courts or criminal investigation bodies, as appropriate; – control authorities designated within the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, which are required to supervise compliance with the legal provisions governing the authorization of construction works and, depending on the infringements found, to impose sanctions or to refer the case to the courts or criminal investigation bodies, as appropriate; – the control authorities of the State Inspectorate for Constructions.

These control authorities have the competence to establish the commission of the contraventions mentioned in Article 26 of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works and, at the same time, to order—together with the imposition of the administrative fine—the suspension of works, accompanied by either measures for bringing the works into conformity with the building permit or measures for the demolition of works executed without a permit or in breach thereof.

From the provisions of Articles 24¹, 27, 28, and 32 paragraph (4) of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works, it follows that the control authorities, depending on the nature of the legal violation found, may: – impose the administrative fine and order complementary measures, – refer the matter to the civil courts when the violation constitutes a contravention, or – request the criminal investigation bodies seized of the case and, where applicable, the court, to order the temporary suspension of construction works throughout the duration of the criminal proceedings, in cases where the offences provided for in Article 24 of the Law have been established.

By correlating these provisions, it can be concluded that the legislator made a clear distinction between, on the one hand, the control authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with construction discipline — which may impose administrative fines and, at the same time, order the complementary measure of suspending construction works — and, on the other hand, the criminal investigation bodies or the court, which may order the temporary suspension of works within the framework of criminal proceedings.

From the wording of the aforementioned provisions, it is evident that the legislator did not intend to include the criminal investigation body within the scope of the competent control authorities. Had that been the legislator's intention, no distinction would have been made within the same legal text between the control authority and the criminal investigation body — a distinction that clearly results from Article 32 paragraph (4) of Law No. 50/1991, which provides: “In the situations referred to in Article 24, the control authorities may request the judicial bodies to order the measures mentioned in paragraph (1). The control authorities competent under the law may request the criminal investigation bodies seized of the case and, where applicable, the court, to order the temporary suspension of construction works throughout the criminal proceedings.”

We believe that the reasoning according to which the criminal investigation body should be assimilated to a control authority, on the grounds that it has powers relating to the supervision of the criminal investigation, is not applicable and would, in fact, constitute an analogy to the detriment of the defendant¹⁹. Considering that, from the corroborated interpretation of all the legal provisions cited above, it follows that the control activity referred to by the legislator concerns compliance with the discipline in the field of authorization of construction works or of works related to transport infrastructure of national interest, it becomes evident that equating the supervision of the criminal investigation with the control of construction activities regulated by Law No. 50/1991 would amount to a genuine addition to the law.

Moreover, within the offence provided for in Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991, the legislator refers to the continuation of construction works after their suspension has been ordered, whereas in the content of Articles 24¹ and 32 paragraph (4) of the same act, the legislator expressly

¹⁹ Remus Ionescu, Andrei Ionescu, *General Theory of Law*, 3rd Edition, revised and expanded, Măiastra Publishing House, Târgu Jiu, 2021, p. 216.

assigns to the prosecutor and, respectively, the court, the power to order the temporary suspension of construction works during the criminal proceedings.

The use of distinct terminology in successive legal provisions within the same chapter demonstrates the dichotomic vision of the legislator regarding the liability established by Law No. 50/1991 for the protection of the construction regime, quality, and discipline in construction — namely, through distinct mechanisms for addressing administrative offences (contraventions) and criminal offences.

Thus, in the case of the execution or demolition, in whole or in part, without authorization, of the works referred to in Article 3 — except those mentioned in paragraph (1) letter (b) — by the investor or the contractor, or in the case of execution or demolition in violation of the building permit and technical project, the law establishes administrative liability. In such cases, the specific control authorities, upon imposing the administrative fine, are required to also order the complementary measure of suspending the works, together with the adoption of measures to bring the works into compliance with the permit provisions or to demolish the unauthorized works, in accordance with Article 28 paragraph (1).

Conversely, when the works referred to in Article 3 paragraph (1) letter (b) are carried out in the same unlawful manner — either without authorization or in violation of its provisions — criminal liability arises, triggering the initiation of a criminal investigation followed, where applicable, by referral of the case to the court.

The measure that the prosecutor or the court may order, according to the law, during the criminal proceedings is the temporary suspension of construction works for the duration of the investigation — until all aspects of the case are clarified and it is determined whether or not criminal liability is to be established.

The two measures have different purposes and legal nature, are ordered by different authorities, and operate within distinct frameworks of liability — administrative (contraventional) and criminal — their only similarity being that both involve the suspension of construction works on a given property.

By criminalizing the act of continuing construction works after their suspension has been ordered by the competent control authorities, the legislator sought to address situations in which the application of administrative liability proved insufficient to achieve the objective pursued by Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works — namely, ensuring compliance with construction discipline — because the offender persisted in unlawful conduct, continuing the works despite the imposition of a fine and the complementary measure of suspension.

The offence of continuing construction works after their suspension, as defined in the Law, includes as a constitutive condition that the works are continued after the suspension has been ordered by the authorities that imposed the administrative fine.

The simultaneous existence of (i) this offence, in the configuration described above, and (ii) a separate legal provision empowering the prosecutor or the court to order the temporary suspension of construction works as a provisional measure, clearly demonstrates the legislator's intention. It intended to criminalize — through Article 24 letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991 — only the conduct consisting in the failure to comply with a suspension ordered by the administrative control authorities, subsequent to the contraventional procedure, not the failure to comply with a temporary suspension ordered by the prosecutor or the court during criminal proceedings.

Finally, an additional argument supporting this interpretation lies in the fact that judicial authorities (the prosecutor and the courts) have their competence strictly defined by law, and cannot

be assimilated to administrative control bodies without breaching the principle of legality and the separation of powers.

With regard to this institution, we recall that²⁰, this institution represents the extent to which a judicial authority (the prosecutor, the judge of rights and liberties, the preliminary chamber judge, or the trial court) exercises its legal prerogative to resolve criminal law disputes—in other words, the scope of its jurisdiction. This is the objective aspect of the notion of criminal competence, as it derives from the objective necessity of delineating the sphere of criminal activity among various judicial bodies.

From this perspective, competence is also legislatively enshrined in the Codes of Criminal Procedure, which regulate this demarcation by distributing—according to specific criteria—criminal cases among the various courts. Based on this legal allocation, the criminal competence of a given judicial authority represents the totality of criminal cases that it is legally empowered to hear and adjudicate.

Criminal competence thus refers to the lawful authority granted to a judicial body to rule on motions, applications, complaints, appeals, or any other submissions concerning acts or measures restricting fundamental rights and liberties, on the legality of the indictment and the evidence supporting it, as well as on the legality and soundness of non-indictment solutions, and to try and resolve a given criminal case. The competence of judicial bodies constitutes an essential element arising from the principle of legality, which is itself a cornerstone of the rule of law.

Material competence (*ratione materiae*) is determined by the subject matter of the criminal case, namely the act committed and defined by the criminal law, which has given rise to the legal conflict forming the object of the proceedings before the court or the judge of rights and liberties, as is the situation in the present case.

In recent Romanian criminal doctrine, Mihail Udroi explains this concept as follows:

“It is the form of competence determined by the subject matter of the criminal case (the offence that generated the criminal law conflict), by reference to which it is established which of the judicial bodies of different ranks may conduct the investigation or trial of a given criminal case, and which court hosts the judge of rights and liberties or the preliminary chamber judge who is to rule in accordance with the competences assigned by the Code of Criminal Procedure.”²¹.

IV. Conclusions

The clarification of the issue addressed is of significant importance, particularly from the standpoint of the premise situation of the offence regulated by Article 24 letter (b) of the Law. In our view, this offence presupposes two cumulative conditions: (i) the existence of an order to suspend construction works; and (ii) the suspension must have been ordered by a competent control authority.

Since criminal investigation bodies do not qualify as competent control authorities, for the reasons already explained, at least one of these two cumulative conditions is not met.

²⁰ See Virgil Rămureanu, *The Criminal Jurisdiction of Judicial Authorities*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1980, p. 37, cited in Remus Ionescu, “A View on the Material Competence of the Judge of Rights and Liberties to Hear and Decide on the Proposal for Preventive Arrest,” *Dreptul* Journal, No. 3/2019, pp. 147–153. .

²¹ See M. Udroi, *Criminal Procedure. General Part*, C.H. Beck Publishing House, Bucharest, 2018, p. 183..

Given that the legal provisions expressly refer to the suspension of works ordered by competent control authorities, the material element of the offence is defined by the continuation of works after their suspension by such control authorities.

A systematic interpretation of the Law clearly indicates that the prosecutor cannot be regarded as a control authority within the meaning of Law No. 50/1991 on the authorization of construction works. The wording of the relevant provisions itself shows that the Law expressly distinguishes between control authorities and criminal investigation bodies. Since there is no other provision within the statute suggesting that criminal investigation bodies are encompassed by the notion of control authority, it logically follows that such an interpretation cannot be admitted.

Accepting an opposite interpretation would result in attributing an autonomous meaning to the term “control authority” as used in Article 24 letter (b), contrary to the meaning explicitly assigned to the same term in Article 27 of the same Law, without any logical or systematic indication that the legislator intended such a divergence.

Such an interpretation would moreover be unforeseeable and would contravene the principle of legality, specifically its *lex stricta* component.

The fact that Article 24¹ paragraph (2) of the Law provides that the prosecutor may, ex officio or upon request, order the temporary suspension of construction works during criminal proceedings does not justify the conclusion that such a measure could satisfy the conditions required to constitute the premise situation of the offence under Article 24 paragraph (1) letter (b) of Law No. 50/1991.

From the foregoing, it may be concluded that de lege lata, there exists a legislative gap, as the legislator has not criminalized the conduct consisting in continuing construction works after their suspension has been ordered by criminal investigation bodies. This gap cannot be filled by analogy in the application of substantive criminal law, for the reasons already explained.

Therefore, de lege ferenda, it would be appropriate for the legislator to expressly criminalize this conduct — that is, the continuation of construction works after a temporary suspension has been ordered by the prosecutor.

Finally, the doctrinal clarification of this issue remains of great significance. If the reflections presented herein serve as a foundation for further legal and policy-oriented reasoning and legislative guidance, then both their purpose and the intellectual passion from which they arose will have found their fulfilment and justification.

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