Project SAFTE
Terrorist Access to Illicit Gun Markets in Europe

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“Organized Criminal Groups and Terrorists’ Access to Firearms”
Context

- Increased use of firearms by terrorists in Europe

- Differences between various types of terrorist groups
  ➔ Contemporary terrorist actors rely heavily on access to criminal gun markets

- Limited research on illicit firearms trafficking
  • Problems of data collection and analysis
  • Case-bound intelligence picture
  • Very little research on terrorist access to illicit gun markets
Project SAFTE (1)

- **SAFTE**: Studying the Acquisition of illicit Firearms by Terrorists in Europe

- **Goals:**
  
  - Improve the knowledge and expertise on:
  
    - illicit firearms markets in the EU
    - networks used by terrorists to access these markets
    - policies that have been developed, at national and EU level, aimed at preventing and combatting this phenomenon
Project SAFTE (2)

- **Phase one: 8 in-depth country studies**
  - Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom

- **Phase two: Synthesis**
  - Comparative analysis
  - Recommendations

- **Method:**
  - In-depth study with qualitative research methodology
  - Use the knowledge of law enforcement officials
  - Use the research expertise of specialised researchers
Project SAFTE (3)
Terrorist access to criminal gun markets (1)

- Diverse criminal gun markets across Europe
- Closed markets
  - Connections and trust
  - Availability in function of criminal hierarchy
- Crime-terror nexus
  - Merging environments
  - Use of criminal skills
- Reflection of availability on local market
Terrorist access to criminal gun markets (2)

- Preference vs. availability
- Pre-existing connections
Terrorist access to criminal gun markets (3)

- Different supply mechanisms
  - Cross-border smuggling
  - Exploiting legal loopholes
    - Reactivation of deactivated firearms
    - Conversion of blank firing guns
  - Thefts
  - Embezzlement, internet, etc
Recommendations

→ Structural, comprehensive and proactive approach

- Close legal loopholes
- Enhance operational capacities and cooperation
- Invest in intelligence picture