



UNODC



GLOBAL  
FIREARMS  
PROGRAMME

Countering Illicit Firearms  
Trafficking and Related Crimes

# Firearms Trafficking: Policy Implications and Responses in Europe

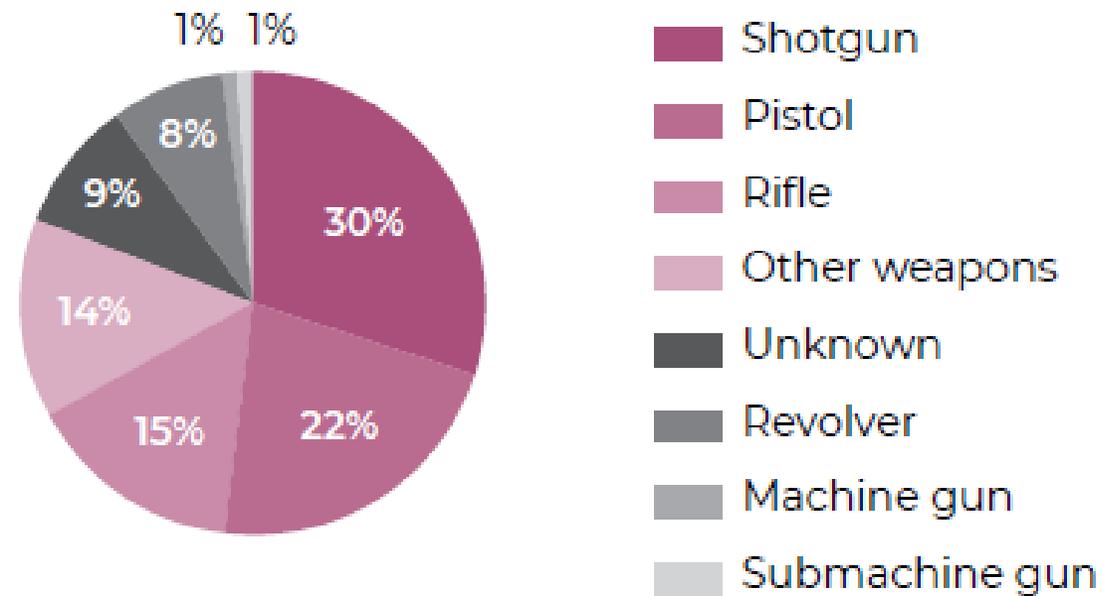
Illicit Trafficking in Firearms, their parts,  
Components and Ammunition  
to, from and across the European Union

- **Methodology**
- **Seizure data**
- **Demand and supply**
- **Arms flows**
- **Modus operandi**
- **Policy implications**

- **Combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods**
- **Data sources:**
  - Illicit Arms Flows Database
  - Data from previous research projects
    - Especially Project SAFTE and Project DIVERT
  - Cross-regional expert meeting (UNODC, Vienna, 7-8 Oct 2019)
  - Expert interviews
  - Literature review
  - Online search for trafficking cases (to illustrate modus operandi)

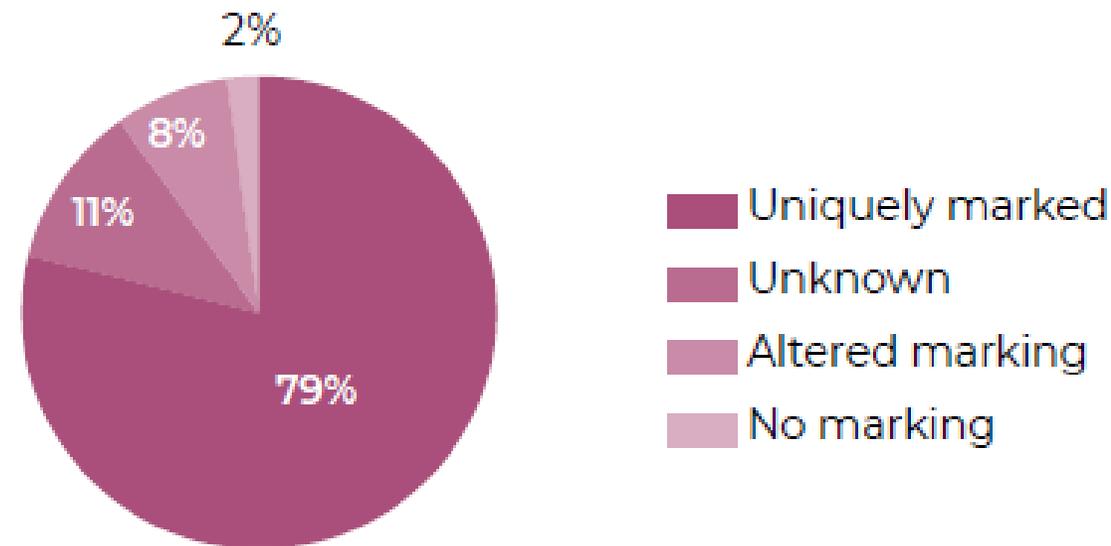
- **16 EU MS reported to IAFQ on firearms seizures in 2016-2017**
  - Varying levels of details and completeness
  - Most seizures within national territory
- **Total numbers:**
  - 50,000 seized firearms & 800,000 rounds of ammo in 2016
  - 40,000 seized firearms & 350,000 rounds of ammo in 2017

**FIGURE 1: Distribution of seized firearms by type in 16 European Union Member States, 2016 - 17**



Source: IAFQ

**FIGURE 2: Distribution of seized firearms by type of marking in 10 European Union Member States, 2016 - 17**



Source: IAFQ

## *INFOGRAPHIC 1: Main actors with demand for illicit firearms within the European Union*

Intent for criminal use	No immediate intent for criminal use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Armed robbers</li><li>• Drug criminals</li><li>• Groups specialized in logistical preparation of assassinations</li><li>• Mafia Organizations</li><li>• Outlaw motorcycle gangs</li><li>• Terrorists</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collectors and other individuals with emotional reasons</li><li>• Individuals with perceived need for self-protection</li></ul>

- **Price differences between and within Member States**
- **Differences in criminal access**
  - Eroding of closed character of illicit gun markets in some MS
- **High demand of EU firearms across the globe**
  - Criminals, non-state armed groups, ...
  - Mainly diversion in third countries after legal export from EU

- **No general trend of increase or decrease in illicit arms flows**
- **Mainly intra-regional flows**
  - Western Balkans: source and transit
  - Between EU Member States
- **Potential future sources:**
  - Ukraine
  - Middle East & Northern Africa

## - **Ant trade**

- Mainly by vehicles, but also by boat
- Consolidated smuggling routes (together with other goods)

## - **Exploiting legal differences**

- Blank firing weapons, deactivated & AEW, Flobert, components
- Postal & fast parcel services
  - online or straw purchasers
- Legal acquisition followed by ant trade
  - professional & non-professional perpetrators

- **Illicit manufacturing & conversion**
  - Relatively high numbers of seized parts & components
    - 4,800 item in 2016 & 1,700 items in 2017
  - 3D printing: vigilance required
- **Fraudulently obtained export licenses**
- **Internet**
  - Open web vs. darkweb
  - Postal & fast parcel services
  - Impact of Covid-19?

- **Close loopholes and harmonize legislative and regulatory frameworks**
- **Improve export risk assessments to prevent diversion**
- **Strengthen law enforcement and border control capacities**
- **Promote effective criminal justice approach**
- **Reinforce international cooperation and information exchange**
- **Improve knowledge on illicit arms flows by better data collection & analysis and by prioritizing investigations into origin of firearms**



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Thank you for your attention.

**Nils Duquet**

E-Mail: [nils.duquet@vlaamsparlement.be](mailto:nils.duquet@vlaamsparlement.be)  
@nduquet