

## Illicit trafficking in firearms at European level: results of the analysis

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### Section n. 1

## Illicit firearms market in the EU



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## Introduction

- Firearms as vulnerable goods → available (easy to find), valuable (easy to sell with high profit)
- Firearms as durable goods → episodic trade (UNODC 2010)
- Firearms as a serious threat for the security
- Firearms market as a dual market:
  - Licit market
  - Illicit market

**GREY ZONE**



Fight against illicit trafficking in firearms as one of the EU priorities within the 2014-2017 policy cycle against serious and transnational crime



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## Supply of illicit firearms

### Firearms production:

- Licit production → licit firearms can be diverted to the illicit market
  - leakage from factories or surplus stocks
  - theft from stockpiles
  - theft from dealers or individual owners
  - transport diversion
  - firearms conversion



Reactivation of deactivated firearms  
Modification of semi-automatic firearms into automatic ones  
Conversion of replicas



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## Supply of illicit firearms

### Firearms production:

- Illicit production → rare if compared to the licit production
  - original designs produced by amateurs or employees of arm factories at home
  - illicit copies of existing designs produced in factories
  - handmade production in private residencies

### Firearms trafficked among illicit end-users:

- Sale and purchase of firearms already used
  - among criminals and terrorists
  - among amateurs



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## Supply of illicit firearms

#### ORGANIZED CRIMINAL GROUPS

- In addition to other illicit activities
- Strong expertise in the illicit trafficking (routes, contacts, services)

#### CORRUPTED OFFICIALS & PROFESSIONALS

- Poor control over the documents
- Poor control over the firearms

#### HOBBYISTS & AMATEURS

- Strong expertise in altering firearms
- Network of people interested in firearms



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## Demand for illicit firearms

- Why people want to buy an illegal firearm?
  - Not eligibility to access a legal weapon
  - Pianification of an illegal activity
  - Firearm not accessible on the legal market
- Main purposes:
  - Collection
  - Recreational
  - Instrumental
  - Criminal



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## Demand for illicit firearms

### CRIMINAL GROUPS

- Criminal purposes
- Instrumental purposes → symbolic value

### TERRORIST GROUPS

- Criminal purposes → growing threat
- Link with organized criminal groups

### INDIVIDUAL GUN OWNERS

- Collection purposes
- Recreational purposes



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## Modus operandi



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## Section n. 2

### Methodology to study ITF



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### Open sources as source of data

1. Absence of any systematized data
2. Absence of homogeneous official data available for all the 28 EU MSs



**Open sources as a complementary data-gathering approach**



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### Open sources

- Press releases and online articles
- Context: 28 EU MS
- Time span: January 2010 – March 2015
- Sources: Customs and LEA websites, EMM News Brief
- Objectives of the activity:
  - Collect articles related to seizures and gun crimes in the EU
  - Identify events from the collection
  - Extract relevant entities related to the events, such as actors, *modi operandi* and products



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## Scope of the research

### Explorative research

- Analysis of firearm seizures in the 28 EU MS
- Analysis of deadly and non-deadly shootings with firearms in the 28 EU MS
- Analysis of the deep web (online black market)



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## Section n. 3

### Firearm seizures



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## Results

### Scale of illicit market (2010-2015)

	Number of cases	Number of firearms
Small-scale	1893	1893
Medium-scale	1139	3848
Large-scale	243	12980
Total	3275	18721

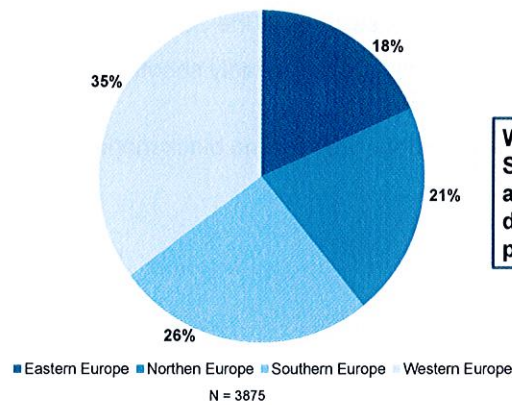
Small-scale: 1 or 2 firearms seized  
Medium-scale: from 3 to 9 firearms seized  
Large-scale: more than 10 firearms seized



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## Results

### Share of seizures in the EU divided by macro-region (2010-2015)

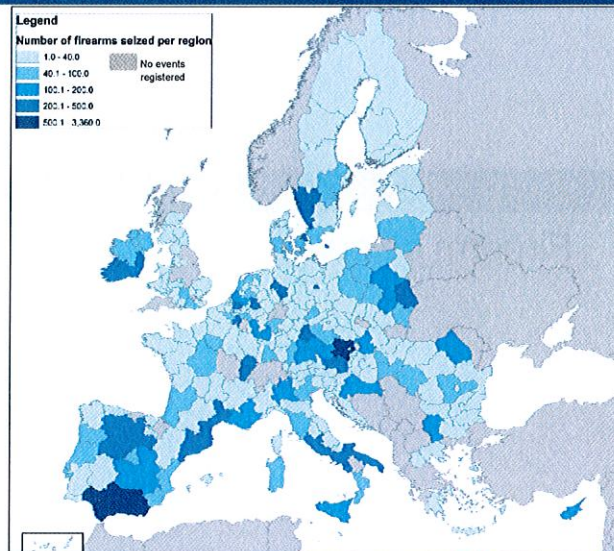


Western and Southern Europe as transit and destination points



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## Results



Number of firearms seized per region (2010 - 2015)

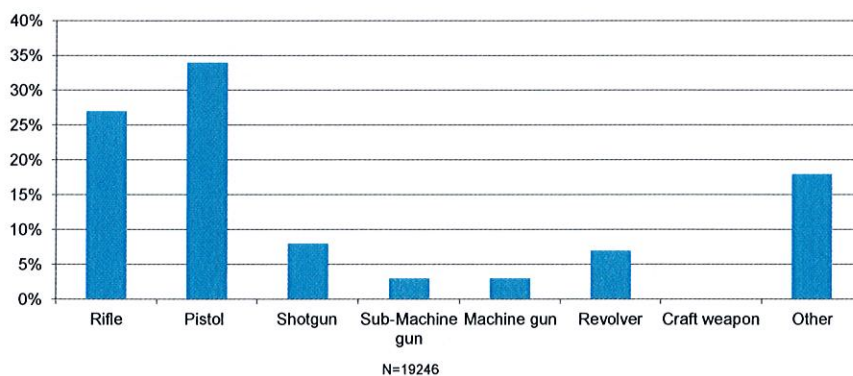
High numbers along the borders



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## Preliminary results

### Types of firearms seized in the EU (2010-2015)\*



AK-47 Kalashnikovs as one of the main rifle types seized in the EU

\*Firearms classification from UNODC

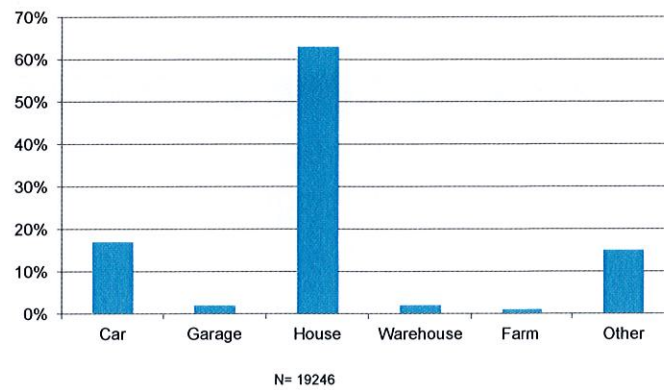


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## Results

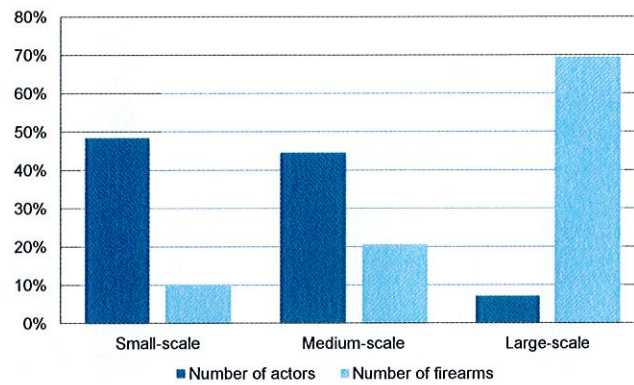
### Storage of firearms in the EU (2010-2015)



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## Results

### Share of actors and share of firearms seized in the EU (2010-2015)



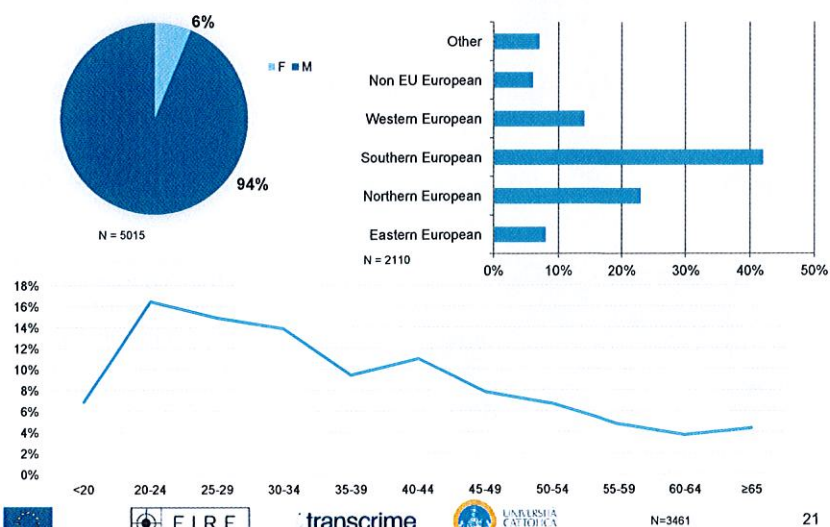
**Very few actors responsible for the highest number of firearms seized**



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## Results

### Main characteristics of the actors in the EU (2010-2015)



N=3461

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## Section n. 5

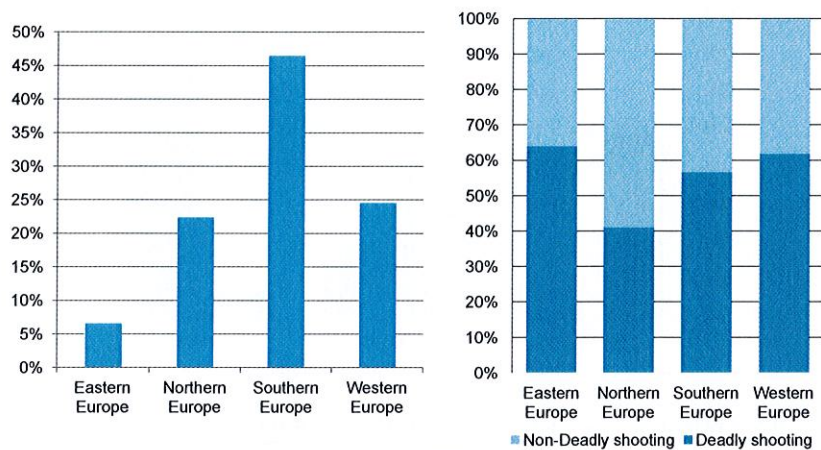
### Deadly and non-deadly shootings



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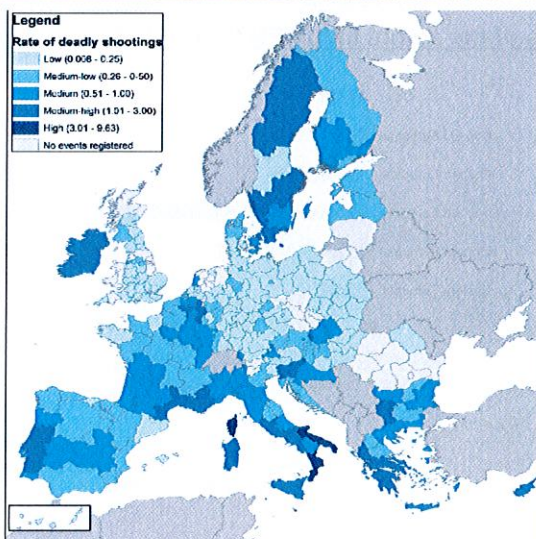
## Results

### Deadly and non-deadly shootings per macro-region (2010-2015)



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## Results



Rate of deadly shootings per 100,000 inhab. per region (2010 – 2015)

High concentration in countries with:

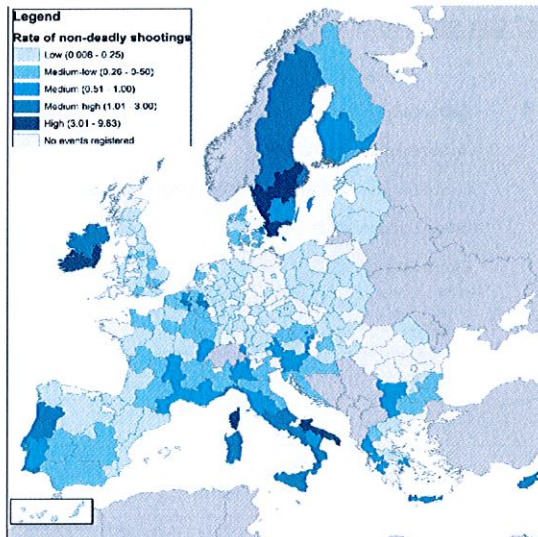
- traditional OCGs
- gangs
- specific incidents



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## Results



Rate of non  
deadly  
shootings per  
100,000 inhab.  
per region  
(2010 – 2015)

High concentration in  
countries with:  
- traditional OCGs  
- gangs  
- specific incidents

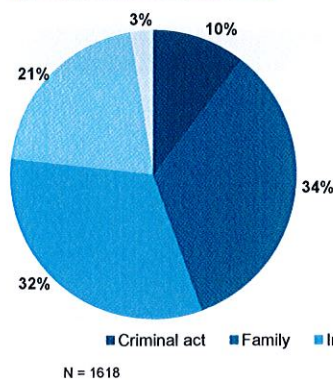


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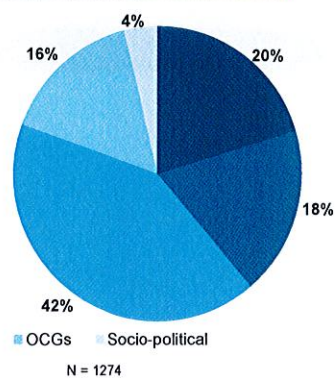
## Results

### Motivation of the shootings in the EU (2010-2015)

#### DEADLY SHOOTINGS



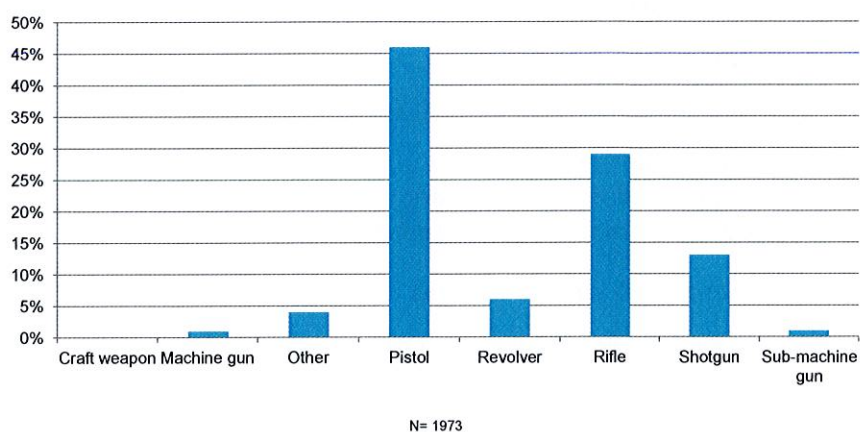
#### NON DEADLY SHOOTINGS



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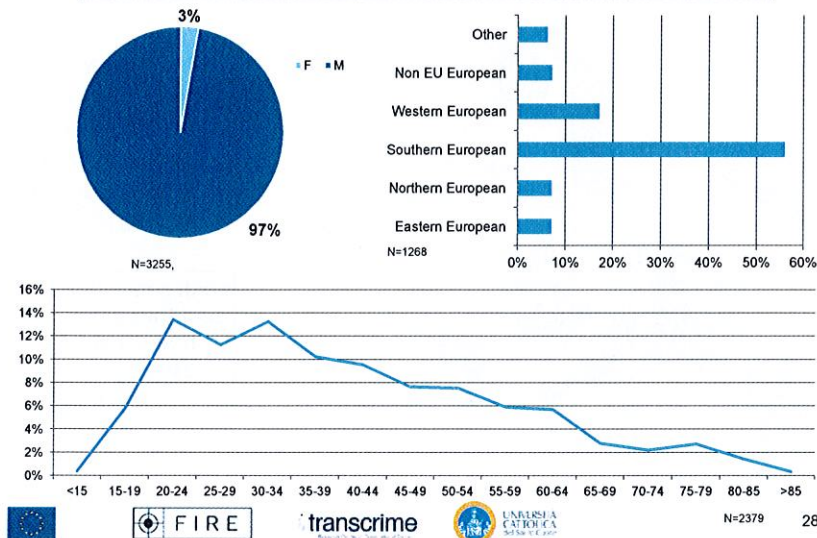
## Results

### Share of firearms used (2010-2015)



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### Main characteristics of the shooters in the EU (2010-2015)



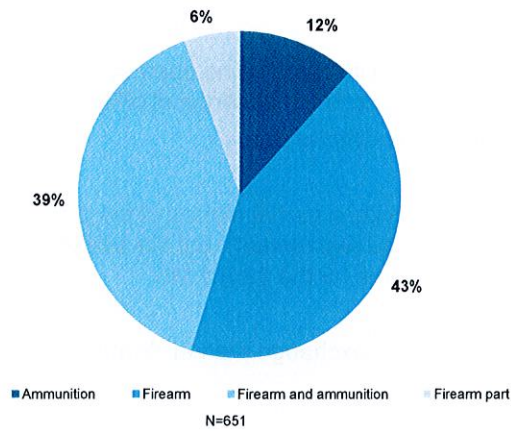
## Section n. 6

### Deep web

## Methodology

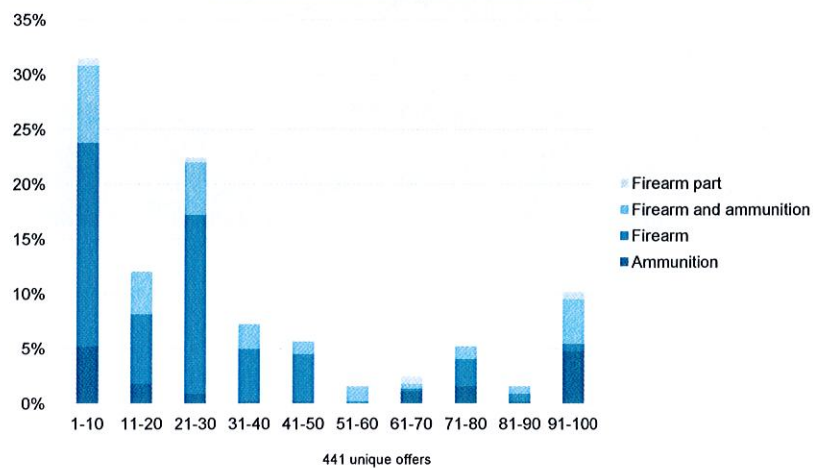
- The Onion Router - TOR
- Keywords
- Temporary monitoring (2 weeks). Aims:
  - Checking available information
  - Verifying if websites were not fleeing
  - Verifying if websites were not fraudulent
- Identification of 12 suitable websites
- Systematic collection of information on these websites

## Types of products



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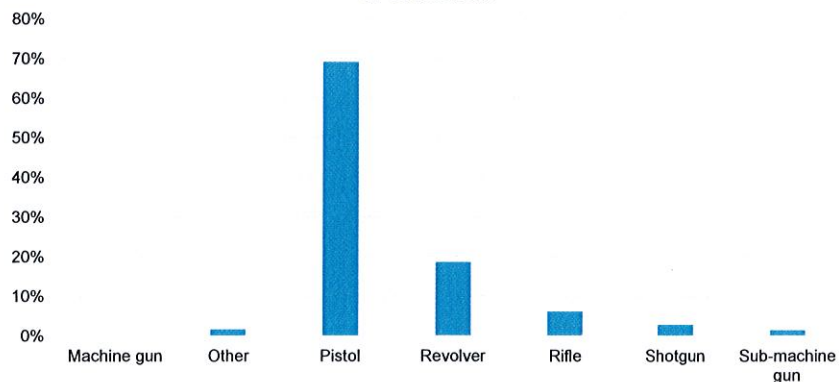
## Days online per type of product



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## Types of firearms\*

N° of firearms\*



\*Firearms classification from UNODC

N=1731



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## Conclusions and recommendations

- First attempt of analysis
- The analysis of firearm seizures using open sources has some limitations, but it is an option in absence of official data  
→ **more reliable and official data**
- Firearm seizures provide a partial picture of the phenomenon (underestimation of the real market), but the added value is having data on firearm seizures for the 28 EU MS
- Deepweb as emerging exchange market → **more research and studies**



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**Project FIRE "Fighting Illicit Firearms Trafficking Routes and Actors at European Level" (HOME/2012/ISEC/FP/4000002325)**

**Final conference, Milan 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

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