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# Firearms fraud in the European Union: Findings from Project DIVERT

Webinar “Trick and treat: Firearms diversion through fraud in the European Union”,  
23 June 2021

# Project DIVERT

## ➤ Objectives

- Better understanding of scope and characteristics of firearms diversion in EU
- Strengthening information sharing between relevant actors
- Identification and dissemination of good practices for preventing diversion

## ➤ Scope

- Live-firing firearms
- Diversion within the EU
- Three methods:
  - Theft
  - Non-regularization
  - Fraud

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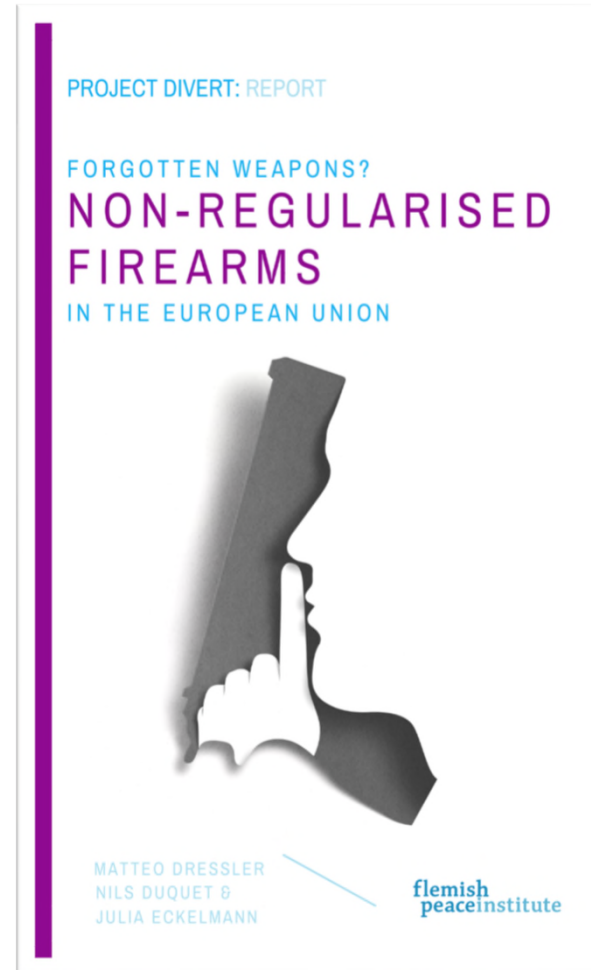
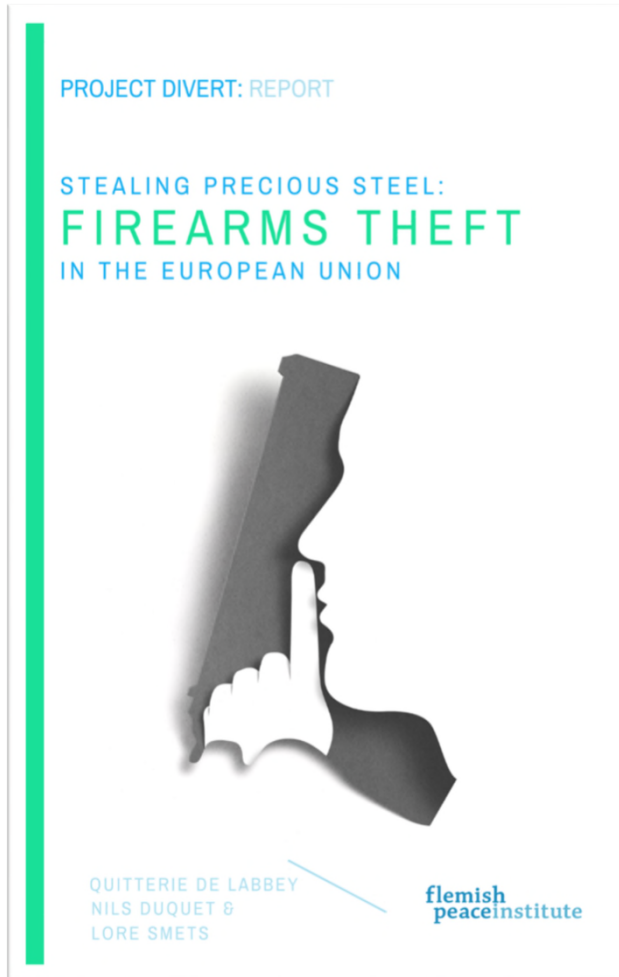
## ➤ Partners

- Flemish Peace Institute
- SIPRI
- Arquebus Solutions
  
- Europol
- CITCO (Spanish Ministry of Interior Affairs)
- Federal Police of Belgium

## ➤ Funding

- EC DG Migration and Home Affairs - Internal Security Fund

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# Various modes of firearms fraud at different stages of the lifecycle

- **Tampering with authorisation for firearms possession**
- **Tampering with authorisation to transfer firearms**
- **Tampering with arms registers**
- **False declarations of theft or loss**
- **Fake deactivation or destruction**

# Tampering with authorisations for firearms possession

## ➤ Identity fraud

- ❑ Official authorities
- ❑ Authorised arms dealers
- ❑ Fake or stolen identities

## ➤ Fake or forged medical documents

## ➤ Fake or forged documents on “good causes”

- ❑ e.g. documents of shooting ranges or shooting clubs

## ➤ Other types of false declarations

# Tampering with authorisations to transfer firearms

- **False declarations of destination or end use**
- **False declarations on type of weapons**
- **Forged export and import documents**
- **Use of straw man**

# Tampering with arms registers

## ➤ Falsifying information

- ❑ Cover up thefts
- ❑ Off-the-record sales
- ❑ Information on types of weapons
- ❑ Surrendered weapons

## ➤ Authorised arms dealers and government officials



# Fake declarations of theft or loss

- **To keep firearms**

- ❑ e.g. after changes in legislation

- **To transfer firearms**

- ❑ Straw purchasers
- ❑ Transfers to criminals

- **Private gun owners, but also other actors**

# Fake deactivation or destruction

- **Fake deactivation certificates**
- **State officials diverting weapons during destruction procedures**
- **Pretended use of ammunition during shooting exercises**

# Concluding thoughts

## ➤ Involvement of various actors

- ❑ Private gun owners
- ❑ Commercial actors
- ❑ Governmental actors

- ## ➤ To keep or acquire one or a few firearms (personal use) vs. (international) transfer of large quantities of weapons (criminal activities)

# Concluding thoughts

## ➤ Scope of the problem?

- ❑ Limited number of identified cases
- ❑ Very difficult to detect
- ❑ Wide variety of modus operandi
- ❑ Sometimes very large numbers of diverted firearms

→ Likely high dark number