

# Reflection on findings from a research perspective: the Swedish case

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*'Trick and treat: Firearms diversion through fraud in the European Union' – 23 June 2021*

# Main points

- Diversion of firearms in Sweden: the general picture
- Measures to prevent and address diversion
- Conclusions and general reflections



# How many illicit firearms are in circulation in Sweden?

## 1. Rise in the number of firearms-related homicide/attempted homicide

Crime	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Murder, manslaughter or assault with lethal outcome	230	329	229	236	288	317	305	338	436	449
Against woman/girl	95	120	79	94	105	97	98	101	122	139
With the use of a firearm	12	10	4	10	12	11	9	2	7	8
Without the use of a firearm	83	110	75	84	93	86	89	99	115	131
Against man/boy	135	209	150	142	183	220	207	237	314	310
With the use of a firearm	36	37	38	32	50	63	58	74	98	114
Without the use of a firearm	99	172	112	110	133	157	149	163	216	196
Attempted murder or manslaughter	791	792	842	798	728	792	838	879	909	868
Against woman/girl	197	202	201	183	169	156	180	182	186	171
With the use of a firearm	28	33	42	28	32	25	27	27	40	44
Without the use of a firearm	169	169	159	155	137	131	153	155	146	127
Against man/boy	594	590	641	615	559	636	658	697	723	697
With the use of a firearm	134	162	187	189	177	185	204	221	248	246
Without the use of a firearm	460	428	454	426	382	451	454	476	475	451
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 021</b>	<b>1 121</b>	<b>1 071</b>	<b>1 034</b>	<b>1 016</b>	<b>1 109</b>	<b>1 143</b>	<b>1 217</b>	<b>1 345</b>	<b>1 317</b>
<b>Total with the use of a firearm</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>412</b>
<b>Per cent with the use of a firearm</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet (Brå))



# How many illicit firearms are in circulation in Sweden?

1. Rise in the number of firearms-related homicide/attempted homicide
  - *Structural changes in lethal violence and increased availability and use of different types of illicit firearms (mostly one-handed weapons)*
  - *Impact of gun legislation*
  - *Trends confirmed in more recent Brå study on gun homicide levels in Sweden*

Brå:

– (2012), *Brottslighet och trygghet i Malmö, Stockholm och Göteborg - En kartläggning* ([Crime and security in Malmö, Stockholm and Gothenburg - A survey](#))

–(2015), *Det dödliga våldet i Sverige 1990–2014* ([Deadly violence in Sweden 1990-2014](#))

–(2021), [Gun homicide in Sweden and other European countries](#)



# How many illicit firearms are in circulation in Sweden?

## 2. Rise in the number of reported cases for firearm related offences

Crime	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Weapon law (9 kap. 1-3 §)	4 903	4 844	4 839	4 797	4 619	5 176	5 801	5 751	6 460	6 678
Illegal possession of a gun or pistol	943	909	921	986	898	1 037	1 138	1 178	1 266	2 268
Illegal possession of a hunting weapon	376	391	351	361	301	364	411	406	435	555
Illegal possession of another type of weapon	867	814	790	748	718	713	805	751	749	2 749
Other violation of weapon law	2 717	2 730	2 777	2 702	2 702	3 062	3 447	3 416	4 010	999

Source: Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet (Brå))

# How many illicit firearms are in circulation in Sweden?

## 3. Rise in the number of seizures of illicit firearms and related-data

- Data on seizure of illicit firearms provided by the National Forensic Center (NFC) and Customs
- Single-handed weapons (guns and revolvers) are the most prevalent types of weapons in the Swedish illicit firearms market
- NFC argues that seizures of military grade weapons (e.g. sub-machine guns) are becoming more common
- Increased importance into the firearms illicit market of ‘modified starter or gas weapons’ (in 2010: 40 processed; in 2018: 153)



# How do firearms enter the illicit market?

- Smuggling from abroad (South-Eastern Europe or Central and Eastern Europe main);
- Mostly small shipments by road or postal services in connection with other criminal activity (however, raising concerns about criminal groups/individuals ‘specializing’ in illicit firearms trafficking (e.g. the ‘Skåne Network’)
- **What, then, is the role of fraud as a mean of diversion in Sweden?**



# Diversion through fraud

- Not particularly relevant in Sweden as per the other types of diversion documented by the DIVERT project;
- However, even rare cases can have a significant impact: the ‘Dalarna dealer case’
  - i. Between 2015 and 2018 317 firearms purchased from 15 hunting shops in Sweden and sold illegally;
  - ii. At the time of writing the report, 289 weapons were still missing. Three cases in which weapons connected with these cases were used in criminal circumstances;
  - iii. Weaknesses in the implementation of record keeping and enforcement requirements.





# Relevant measures

- The Weapons Act (Vapenlagen 1996:67)
- The Weapons Ordinance (Vapenförordning 1996:70)
- The Military Equipment Act (1992: 1300)
- The Military Equipment Ordinance (1997:124)
- Compliance with EU legislation on firearms, EU Regulation 258/2012; Directive 91/477/EEC; and obligations under the EU Common Position and Arms Trade Treaty for Export of firearms which constitutes military equipment according to the EU ML

→ Combined, these acts contain provisions to prevent the diversion of firearms into the illicit market e.g. through establishing licensing procedures, the conditions to own certain civilian weapons and procedures to get relevant authorizations, introducing self-storage requirements, and penalties of course.

→ Variety of actors involved



# Relevant measures

Some of the measures preventing possible cases of fraud:

- Specific provisions regulating dealership in firearms;
- Export control procedures and supporting documentation;

Reaction to Dalarna case:

- Need for electronic record-keeping systems;
- Training;
- Discussion over licensing requirements for weapons' magazines
  - <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/lagratsremiss/2020/09/reglering-av-ljuddampare-och-vissa-vapenmagasin/>
  - <https://www.riksdagen.se/en/news/2021/jan/27/no-to-the-governments-proposal-on-the-amending-directive-to-the-eu-firearms-directive/>



# Other relevant initiatives

- Cooperation and coordination (at the national, European, and international level) including through the provision of international assistance in the field of SALW controls;
- Changes in legislation ([Stricter approach](#) to the handling of weapons and explosives as per December 2020)
- Results of 2015 government assignment



# Concluding remarks

- Need for additional resources to better understand dynamics of diversion;
- Need for additional resources to make internal cooperation more effective and systematic;
- Need to understand gaps and weaknesses in legislation and they way this is applied;
- Considerations from a research perspective
  1. Importance of dialogue and accessibility to sources
  2. Importance of DIVERT research (understand gaps, provide public info and knowledge in the phenomenon, connecting different actors)
  3. Opportunity to have a major policy impact

