

Bulletin

Europol's newsletter on
firearms and explosives
trafficking

✉ firearms@guardiacivil.org
✉ O22@europol.europa.eu

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Introduction

by José Romero

Officer of the European Commission
Former Driver Impact Firearms

Dear colleagues, dear EMPACT “family”:

These words are as former driver of the EMPACT Firearms, as I started working as officer of the European Commission in October this year in DG HOME, concretely the Firearms team of the Unit in charge of Organized Crime and drugs policy.

I started my duties as driver in 2014 and since the beginning I realized about the importance and responsibilities of managing the priority of FIREARMS. I could feel the support of you that, as me, had to work on EMPACT activities on the top of our national duties. Nowadays, the Firearms threat is still a priority at EU level and I think we can be proud of the work done for all of us, the EMPACT family, especially in terms of raise awareness, reinforcement of specialized units within the Law Enforcement Agencies and especially the coordination with EU Institutions and Agencies. Also we also learnt how to use better the different tools, databases and opportunities for funding, we have a clear picture

of the current threats and vulnerabilities, which helps us for doing our best in the fight against the firearms trafficking.

There is still a lot to do, and I can assure you that my colleagues and me will do our best from the European Commission, to keep on working on our own duties and supporting the Member States efforts on this European priority.

I am sure that my colleague and friend Adriana Toston, the new driver, with the support of all of you, especially the co-drivers and action leaders, will increase the quality of the different areas where the EMPACT Firearms is working, to ensure our main goal: the protection of the people against the firearms threat. It has been an honor to have all of you on board and although is a farewell as driver, it is a hola/hello/salut as officer of the European Commission.

I wish all of you a safe and healthy Merry Christmas and I hope to see you soon face to face.

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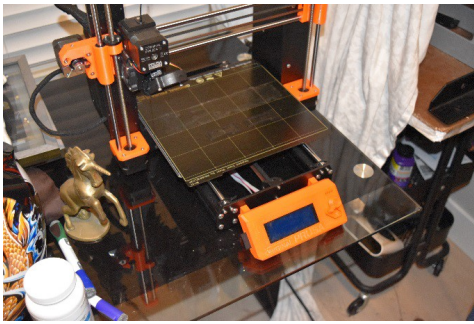
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Kind regards,

José Romero



Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit British Columbia



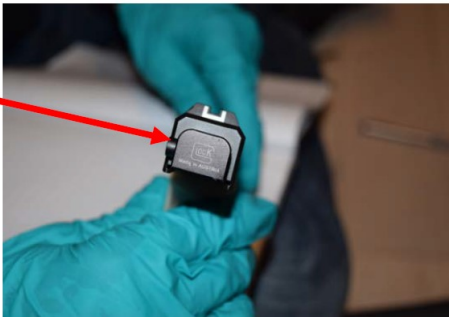
In September 2019, CGIIG - Illegal Firearms Enforcement Team (IFET) executed a search warrant in New Westminster, Canada. During the search, the following items were located in the residence: commercial 3D printer and 3D firearm parts including 3D AR-15 lower receivers, 3D Glock frames, and a 3D

Glock pistol magazine; 'Polymer 80' Glock with 'auto sear'; Airsoft pistol frames and a converted Airsoft 1911-type pistol; (5) commercial firearms; (3) suppressors; significant amounts of fentanyl and methamphetamine; and numerous pieces counterfeit identification

3D Printed AR-15 lower receiver with commercial upper receiver, barrel, stock, grip, and scope



'Polymer 80' Glock frame with factory slide and prohibited 'auto-sear' (converts pistol to full automatic)



SAVE THE DATES

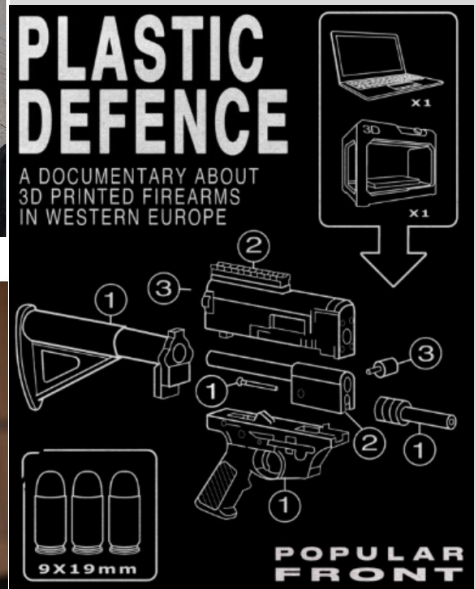
INTERPOL FIREARMS FORENSIC SYMPOSIUM—ONLINE EVENT

4-6 MAY 2021

HIGHLIGHT

Plastic Defence is a documentary about illegal 3D printed firearms in Europe and the decentralised network behind them. The documentary describes a network designing and building these downloadable rifles. It goes by the name "Deterrence Dispensed" led by founder known as JStark. Its members are determined to give untraceable DIY firearms to the world.

<https://www.popularfront.co/3d>



The Doha Declaration Global Programme supports Member States in building capacity to recognize, address and suppress illicit firearms flow around the globe through its Education for Justice initiative.

Marco Teixeira
UNODC



International Gun Destruction Day

According to the United Nations, July 9th was the International Gun Destruction Day. To mark this event in the current year of 2020, the Public Security Police of Portugal promoted the destruction of over 17.000

(seventeen thousand) weapons.

On this event, 17.183 weapons were destroyed, tallying up to nearly 200.000 (two hundred thousand) since 2014.



Portugal is one of the key supporters of UNODC's initiative to monitor illicit arms flows among the international community.

Pedro Moura
Director of Arms Control Public Security Police
of Portugal





EMERGENCE OF THE PHENOMENON OF SO-CALLED "80%" WEAPONS: THE EXAMPLE OF GLOCK-TYPE PISTOLS



Since 2017, in France, the appearance of the phenomenon of incompletely machined frames of Glock-type semi-automatic pistols has been observed in seizures. This phenomenon may also concern the lower receivers of AR-15 type rifles (Armalite Rifle 15, in other words the M16 and M4 rifles family).

As regards pistols, fully functional guns can be assembled with generic parts manufactured by various US firms under their own brands and compatible with original Glock elements and pistols. The phenomenon may concern essential elements classified in France and in the European Union (barrels, slides, frames), as well as unclassified parts (firing pins, trigger kits in particular).

In the US, while frames are considered as a classified essential element, the unfinished ones - called "80%" - are not regulated. Indeed, they are not functional as they are (lack of guide rails, barrel locking block, trigger mechanism ...) and cannot be assembled with a barrel or a slide without being modified beforehand by carrying out several operations.

The frames of these generic brands are intentionally produced and delivered unfinished. They do not bear any marking or serial number. Thus, it is easy to illegally reconstitute a weapon by assembling these parts, making it untraceable.

Among many models, the POLYMER 80 kit marketed by the company of the same name is the most present on the French illegal market. The price is around 160 USD. (www.polymer80.com).

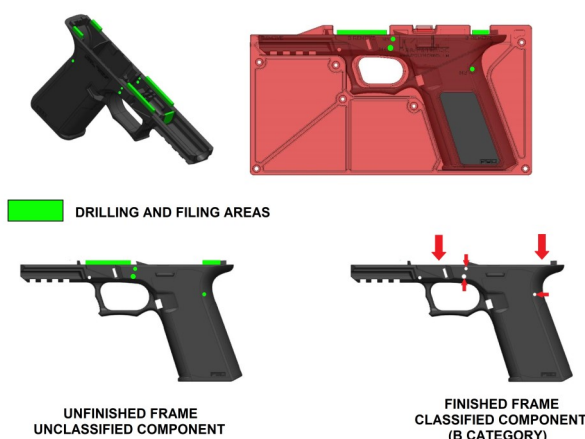


- This kit consists of (e.g. for the PF940V2 model for Glock 17 type guns):
- an integral but incomplete and non-functional frame since holes must still be made and material must be removed in certain places (1) ;
 - a plastic jig with holes serving as drilling / filing guides into which the frame is inserted (2) ;
 - a locking / unlocking block comprising the front breech rails, while for original Glock pistols the breech rails are integrated into the receiver (3) ;
 - a removable metal block comprising the rear rails, which receives the ejector, and the rear trigger module (4) ;
 - thus, due to the tools: 2 pin-pins (5) , 2 drill bits (6) and a milling cutter (7).

The user of the kit must then :
drill 2 holes allowing the locking / unlocking unit to be fitted with the front rails;
drill 1 hole for mounting the rear unit (rear rails, ejector, trigger module) ;
milling material inside the frame to allow mounting of the barrel ;
file the future location of the cylinder head rails to allow mounting of the cylinder head.

Making these "80% kits" functional is an easy operation that requires no specialized tools and can be completed in a short time. Once completed, the receiver can be assembled with generic or original cylinder heads and barrels.

French and European laws rule the manufacture of weapons. Carrying out such operations therefore falls within the scope of illicit manufacture.



This situation also raises the question of the nature and therefore of the legal regime applicable to the essential unfinished elements, both in terms of national legislation and of European regulations. Starting from where should an unfinished weapon component be considered as a classified component? The possibility to punish the import, the marketing or the illegal possession of such a component depends on the answer to that question. Indeed, as long as the item is considered unfinished, it cannot be classified and its possession cannot be considered illicit. The same applies to the absence of marking, which cannot constitute an offence, because only a classified part has the obligation to be marked.

This situation calls for clarification in order to fill this legal void, which already poses a problem in terms of public security.

GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST MAIL ORDER GUN TRAFFICKERS

Over 42 000 parcels were checked and hundreds of weapons seized as part as a joint operation targeting the trafficking of firearms to and within the EU through post and courier services.

Taking place between 16-20 November, Operation ARMSTRONG VII saw the involvement of police and customs authorities from 26 countries, with international coordination efforts supported by Europol and the European Commission – DG for Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD) and DG Migration and Home Affairs (HOME) and the Customs Cooperation Working Party (CCWP).

This operation took place in the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and implements the EU action plan on firearms trafficking 2020-2025 adopted by the European Commission in July 2020.

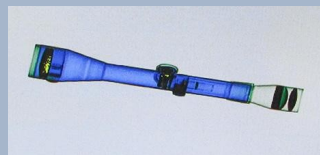
During the action week, police and customs authorities in the participating countries carried out enhanced controls of suspicious parcels and postal shipments. This operational phase was preceded by an intelligence phase in which Europol and DG TAXUD developed risks indicators, including those relating to purchases via the dark web in order to increase the success rates of parcel controls during the action week.

Results of the action week:

- ★ 42 124 parcels checked
- ★ 416 officers involved
- ★ 6 firearms, 13 firearms parts and 600 pieces of ammunition
- ★ 297 other weapons (knives, pepper spray, tasers)

Seizures of firearms prior to the action days:

- ★ 87 gas/alarm weapons
- ★ 23 firearms
- ★ 12 weapons parts
- ★ 64 indicative parts
- ★ 4 parcels with ammunition
- ★ 1 hand grenade



STRONG POLICE - CUSTOMS COOPERATION

With millions and millions of parcels crossing the borders, finding the particular shipments containing firearms and other prohibited items constitutes a sizeable challenge for police and customs and other law enforcement authorities across Europe.

In this endeavour, the key success defining factor is intelligence: knowing what to look for (i.e. consignor), where (i.e. courier company) and when (i.e. at arrival, during customs clearance, etc.) based on emerging new trends. This can only be achieved through active and continuous operation between police and customs and the private industry (post and express courier services).

“Safe Shot” Operation

On August 9th of 2020, The Public Security Police (PSP) carried out Operation “Safe Shot” which consisted on the inspections and control of an illegal shooting range in Santarém, Mação.

Throughout the inspection, existence of an unlicensed shooting range was identified, established by an association, which was in violation of the Portuguese Law. As a result of this operation 11 shooters were identified and fined for using their weapons without justification or declared pretension and the use of an unlicensed shooting range; 1 shooter was fined for the use

of firearms with more than 0,5 g/L of alcohol on the blood; The promoter was appointed with a fine from 5.000 to 30.000 Euros, for exploitation of an unlicensed shooting range; 3 long fire arms were seized, along with 2401 12Ga shells, 1 clay target machine, 4104 targets, some documents, and other electronic gear.



Operation YAKIR

INTERNATIONAL SMUGGLING OF WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES

Last November, a joint operation of the Spanish National Police with the Force of the Mossos d'Esquadra, the Spanish Tax Agency and EUROPOL was carried out. As a result, seven people were arrested for their alleged participation in the crimes of money laundering, belonging to a criminal organization and smuggling of defense material. Those arrested people belonged to a transnational criminal organization, made up of Ukrainian, Latvian and Spanish citizens, operating from Catalonia and Valencia in Spain.

The investigation has been coordinated by the Special Prosecutor's Office against Corruption and Organised Crime in Spain, under the supervision of the Superior National Court.

During the police operation carried out in the provinces of Valencia, Alicante and Barcelona, seven entries and house searches were performed, seizing economic documentation, computer equipment and cash. The three leaders of the organisation were placed at the disposal of the head of the Superior National Court, for whom it was ordered their provisional imprisonment.

Police enquiries began in 2018 and required the creation of a multidisciplinary working group including experts in the economic, armament, technological, commercial and international maritime transport fields. This fact highlights the enormous complexity and difficulty that the dismantling of the organisation entailed.

The judge also ordered precautionary seizure measures on 18 properties and the freezing of more than 50 financial products by banks, so that the total value of the assets involved could exceed EUR 10 million.

Internal warfare between the leaders of the plot

An internal war within the organisation under investigation broke down the security measures undertaken to hide their weapon smuggling and money laundering activities, which they were directing from Spain, and allowed the authorities to launch the investigation.

This conflict between the leaders, with constant extortion and mutual threats, sought to obtain control of the maritime routes used in the shipments of arms and defense material from Ukraine to different destinations, mainly countries in North Africa and the Middle East - especially to conflict zones -. Most of these countries were subject to international embargoes. These differences led to a split of the criminal structure into two different factions which would led them to continue with their criminal activities separately.

Merchant ships with weapons and explosives were chartered

The detailed study of the organisation's economic capacity in Spain, linked to the hard operational work of the investigators, made it possible to identify the members of the network who collaborated in the purchase and sale of arms travelling on cargo ships.

The international operational capacity was one of the most notable features of this organisation. The researchers stress the ease with which they were able to carry out this type of complex operation. Examples include the moment when the organisation planned the escape of the captain of one of the cargo ships, who had been arrested by the Greek authorities for arms smuggling, or how they demonstrated their high capacity for the international transport of heavy weapons across the Mediterranean, including tanks.

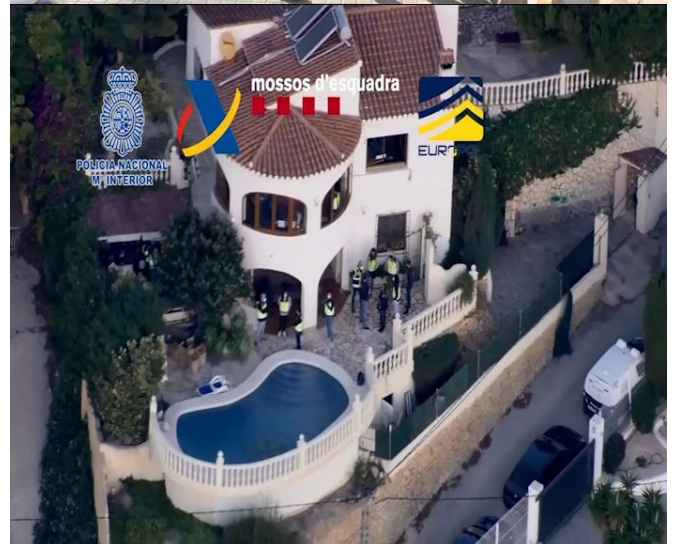
More than 10 million euros had been laundered

As a result of this criminal activity, the organization generated considerable profits that were introduced into the national economic sector. In order to give its origin a legal appearance - capital laundering - the organisation had established a modus operandi that started from tax havens - the place where the cargo ships identified in the investigation were domiciled.

The money originating from arms trafficking in countries with less rigorous banking control was transferred to accounts of European companies, mainly Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Once there, the trading companies that controlled

the current accounts transferred all the laundered capital to Spain, simulating a real and legal commercial activity that allowed them to operate in Spain by investing their assets and maintaining a high standard of living.

- The organization had the capacity to charter merchant ships for the illegal transport of weapons and explosives from Europe to different countries in Africa.
- Money from tax havens was laundered thanks to a business network run from Catalonia and the Valencian Community.
- An internal war between the main leaders in Spain cracked the security measures of the organization, precipitating its fall.



mossos d'esquadra

RED ARCO

The use of firearms by organised crime and terrorist organizations on European and Latin American soil has made the prevention and fight against illicit trafficking in firearms a priority within the Security Strategies of many regional and international organizations. In the same way, at a national level, the National Strategies against Serious and Organized Crime and the National Strategy against Terrorism include among its core axes the fight against criminal markets and serious criminal forms, including illicit arms trafficking. That is the reason why the Project EMPACT FIREARMS was launched in 2014, with the aim of disrupting Organised Crime Groups involved in the illicit trafficking, distribution and use of firearms.

Given the success of that Project at European level, and taking it as a model, in November 2019, at the Regional Seminar on Arms Trafficking organized in Mexico City, it was agreed to create a network of specialized police officers focused on strengthening the exchange of information and experiences between Latin America and the European Union. This materialized in the creation of the RED ARCO, made up of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Spain, France, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal and Uruguay, and supported by the Driver of the EMPACT FIREARMS.

During the first semester of 2020, each member country designated two points of contact, one strategic and the other operational, who will be the representatives to the RED ARCO, whose main purpose is the exchange of information about seizures of firearms and investigations conducted, modus operandi and others, in addition to create a channel to strengthen international police cooperation.

Within the framework of the aforementioned Network, the development of different projects and the organization of activities focused on the fight against the illicit trafficking in firearms is planned.

Up until today, two workshops related to the specialization in firearms traceability and in cyber-patrol and arms trafficking, respectively, have been organised and implemented. Moreover, in this context, the periodic distribution among the member countries of the RED ARCO of a magazine specialized in content related to the fight against illicit arms trafficking was proposed. This RED ARCO Newsletter will take the EMPACT BULLET-in as an example, since this European initiative remains as an example of international cooperation after three years of publications.

Thus, the RED ARCO Newsletter emerges as an exceptional means of disseminating articles related to activities focused on the fight against the illicit trafficking in firearms, promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices among the member countries of the Network. Likewise, it stands as a fundamental tool to state the operations carried out by the different police forces in the region, as well as the new trends related to this criminal activity. The first edition of the Newsletter, which will include a publication presenting the RED ARCO, will be aimed at the dissemination of articles related to the integral control of weapons by the different competent authorities at the national level, including the legal control and their traceability. For its part, the second edition will deal with the fight against online crime and, specifically, the development of cyber-patrol activities to detect illicit arms trafficking online.

In short, this new initiative in Latin American countries stands as a new instrument to promote the exchange of information and strengthen international cooperation.



Seizures in Greece

CASE No. 1: SECURITY SUBDIVISION OF ORESTIADA

On 06/08/2020 a foreigner was arrested, because in the process of special transport/transit of weapons and cartridges with a truck (tractor and truck trailer), he attempted to enter Greece through the border station of Ormenio with Albania being his final destination, transporting additionally 27 gas/alarm pistols, which were not included in the relevant transit permit and were not accompanied by the appropriate documentation.



CASE No. 2: SECURITY SUBDIVISION OF KASTORIA

A criminal case file was built against a Greek national (who was already a prisoner in a judicial prison for an older criminal case), because on 11/09/2020 during a police raid in a fenced warehouse of an outdoor enterprise in the region of Kastoria, our authorities found buried and confiscated, inter alia, an anti-tank rocket launcher with 16 RPGs, 16 packs of booster charge, 2 submachine guns, 3 Kalashnikov rifles, 79 defensive (fragmentation) grenades, 1 offensive (high explosive) grenade, 80 ignition mechanisms of grenades and 25.920 cartridges.



CASE No. 3: SECURITY DEPARTMENT OF KILKIS

On 24/09/2020 a Greek national was arrested, because during a search in his residence and in another space he was using in his region of Kilkis, our authorities found and confiscated, inter alia, 11 hunting rifles, 2 revolvers, 1 warfare rifle, 4 gun barrels, 7 telescopic sights (scopes) and 1.276 cartridges of various calibers.

CASE No. 4: HOMICIDE & PROPERTY CRIME SUBDIVISION

On 23/10/2020 a Greek national was arrested, because during a search in his main residence and his holiday residence as well as in his motorcycle, our authorities found and confiscated, inter alia, 1 submachine gun with folding buttstock 6mm Flobert caliber, along with magazines, 100 cartridges 6mm Flobert caliber and ten 10 replica cartridges, 1 revolver, significant number of firearm cartridge, various weapon parts and components, as well as weapons accessories, modified gun barrels, 1 telescopic sight (scope) and 1 gun silencer.



CASE No. 5: SECURITY DEPARTMENT OF SPARTA

On 13/11/2020 a Greek national was arrested, because during a search in his main residence in a local community of Municipality of Sparta Lakonia, our authorities found and confiscated, among others, 3 warfare rifles, 2 hunting rifles, 1 airgun pistol, 1 barrel of a warfare rifle, 2 warfare rifle slides, 13 warfare rifle magazines, 1 grenade and 448 cartridges of various types and calibers.

SPANISH OPERATIONS



Operation SALVADO



Last 2018, the Civil Guard Intelligence Service in the framework of Operation GOLALDE, arrested 4 people and seized 322 firearms and more than 50.000 cartridges, where assault rifles and NATO calibers were also seized. In order to investigate the origin of those firearms and ammunition, the Civil Guard Intelligence Service started the Operation SALVADO, developing in October along different Spanish provinces, the arrest of four people, as well as the charging of two more, due to their implication in Firearms and Ammunition Trafficking and Depot, Explosives Depot and Illegal possession of

Forbidden Firearms; proceeding to 10 house searches, in which they seized 137 firearms (pistols, shotguns, rifles and handcrafted, etc.); 1 hand grenade, 3 mortar grenades and 2 rocket projectiles; 29 barrels for short firearms, between other essential parts; 18.196 metal cartridges; 75 kg of projectiles, 33 kg of shells, 11.050 pistons and 2,5 kg of powder for the illegal manufacture of metal ammunition; and different devices for the same purpose. Thanks to the investigation, it has been found out that the main target had been selling ammunition illegally for more than 5 years, mainly to people who had firearms against the law. It has been exposed that this person would have got to sell more than 36.000 metal cartridges of different calibers (including war ammunition) during said period, putting end with the biggest ammunition trafficking point sold by internet in Spain.

Operation BOTXO

In the framework of this Operation the Civil Guard Intelligence Service proceed to arrest a crime group which using the concealment of firearms broker, sold modified blank firing weapons to criminals all over Spain. The investigation could detect that those people import the firearms from other countries of Europe, and then, the modified them previously to be sold. Thanks to the technology investigation and with the surveillances made to the main suspects, it was discovered that they sent the modified firearms by parcel packages, being able to find some illegal buyers of those firearms.



Finally, 6 house research where made all over Spain, and 6 people were arrested and 3 more have been charged, due to their implication in Firearms and Ammunition Trafficking and Depot, Explosives Depot, Drugs trafficking and money falsification; in which 49 guns and revolvers, 5 sub machine guns, 2 machine guns, 4 rifles, 5.000 cartridge and many essential components (barrels, receivers and slides) where seized.

The results of this Operation were timely contributed through this CITCO to the Operation ACTION 2.4.

Operation TRETA



In the framework of this Operation the Civil Guard Intelligence Service proceed to arrest an international crime group conformed with two Spaniards and Rumanian Citizens, which import blank firing weapons from the east of Europe (Slovakia, Czech Republic and Bulgaria) that where modified in an illegal workshop that they had, in order to be sold to different criminals all over Spain. Beside those blank firing weapons, thanks to the investigation it could be discovered that they also modify and sold reactivated firearms and ammunition that they manufacture. Finally, 15 people were arrested due to implication in in Firearms and Ammunition Trafficking and Depot, Drugs traf-

ficking and false documents, and 36 firearms, 10.000 cartridges, more than 20.000€ and 42kg of marijuana where seized. This investigation has been made with the cooperation of the Rumanian Police and American (HSI) Police Forces. One of the main suspects, which were abroad Spain, is wanted in order to be arrested.

The results of this Operation will be contributed through this CITCO to the Operation ACTION BOSPHO-ROUS of the EMPACT FIREARMS.

1776 FIREARMS SEIZED IN INTERNATIONAL SWEEP AGAINST ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING OF TURKISH MANUFACTURED WEAPONS

A total of 24 European countries supported by EU institutions and agencies including Europol, have come together to target alarm and signal weapons of Turkish origin illegally trafficked into the EU via Bulgaria and other countries. To tackle the increase in weapons illegally transformed and traded, operation BOSPHEUS was setup and led by the Romanian Police (Politia Romana) within the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). Supported by Europol, authorities collected data and conducted intelligence analysis of the buyers and sellers of firearms earlier this year to enable series of investigations and activities on a national level.

Between 2 and 11 November the yearlong operation BOSPHEUS was concluded by joint action days. During the span of the action days, police officers from Albania, Greece, Portugal and Romania carried out 81 house searches.

These investigations led to the following arrests and seizures:

- ★ 11 arrests;
- ★ 191 firearms;
- ★ 3 714 cartridges of ammunition;
- ★ small quantities of drugs including cannabis and cocaine;
- ★ unstamped cigarettes packs;
- ★ 1 vehicle;
- ★ 164 pieces of pyrotechnics;
- ★ false ID documents.

Previous results: prior to the action days, all participating countries conducted various activities and investigations that led to the additional seizure of 1 585 firearms.

OPERATIONAL SET-UP

The action leader of the EMPACT Firearms activity from the Romanian Police coordinated the operation with the support of Bulgaria, Spain and Europol. The framework for the joint action weeks consisted of an operational upstream work performed by gathering intelligence, databases crosschecking and operational analysis of buyers in the EU of weapons from Bulgarian firearms dealers. Europol provided further support during the course of the action days with the exchange of information and real time communication among the participating countries.

DISARMING CRIMINALS

In recent years, alarm and signal weapons have become extremely popular among criminals and feature in considerable figures in firearm trafficking and seizure cases. This is due to the fact that they can be easily converted into lethal weapons and are cheaper to procure.

Europol plays a key role in supporting Member States fight criminal networks involved in illegal weapons and explosives trafficking. As part of a wider strategy to identify the criminal networks supplying terrorist groups with firearms and ammunition, Europol experts work closely with counter terrorism experts on international investigations. Moreover, Europol specialists and analysts combine efforts to assist Member States in developing their own resources to monitor and tackle the dark web phenomenon.





Seizures of Zoraki gas alarm pistols counterfeiting Glock pistols in France

In the last few months, French customs services have made several seizures of ZORAKI gas alarm pistols modified to shoot lethal ammunition and counterfeiting the GLOCK brand. These weapons were modified Turkish ZORAKI 917 pistols, with GLOCK markings and logo on the slides, as well as unblocked barrels allowing for the shooting of .380 ACP rounds (9mm short).

These seizures highlight what appears to be an almost industrial transformation process for these weapons, as well as the existence of a transnational supply chain in Western Europe for this type of weapons. These modifications constitute a qualitative leap, when compared to similar weapons previously seized in France, where the ammunition were modified blank cartridges (9mm P.A.K.), in which a steel ball or 6,35mm bullet had been inserted.

It should also be noted that large quantities of drugs were seized along with the firearms. If in one case, only a single firearm was found, meaning the weapon might have been used for the personal protection of the driver, in the other case, 18 weapons were discovered, which may have been destined for the supply of organised crime groups in the destination country.

Seizure at the Spanish border

In February 2020, French customs services seized 95kg of cannabis resin and what first appears to be a GLOCK 25 loaded with 9mm short rounds.



After careful examination, it appears to be a modified ZORAKI 917 pistol. The slide bears the logo and markings of the GLOCK brand and GLOCK 25 model. However several clues point to an imitation of a genuine GLOCK firearm:

- The barrel bears a serial number, whose structure is different from the one usually found on GLOCK weapons;
- If the slide bears the GLOCK logo and markings, there is a typo in the caliber description (no dot before 380 Auto);
- The rest of the weapon (grip, ejection port, strap attaching hole) remains a ZORAKI pistol.

Seizure in a car carried by a tow truck

In October 2020, customs services seized 70kg of cannabis herb, as well as 18 firearms counterfeiting the GLOCK brand. The driver, a Dutch national of Somalian origin, was driving a tow truck carrying a car back to the Netherlands. Both the drugs and the weapons were hidden in the car.

There are some differences with the previous seizure:

- The GLOCK markings are different : the caliber 9x17 is mentioned on the slide, while genuine GLOCK weapons firing 9mm short ammunition bear the “.380 Auto” marking ;
- Some slides have a chromed metal finish rather than matt black.

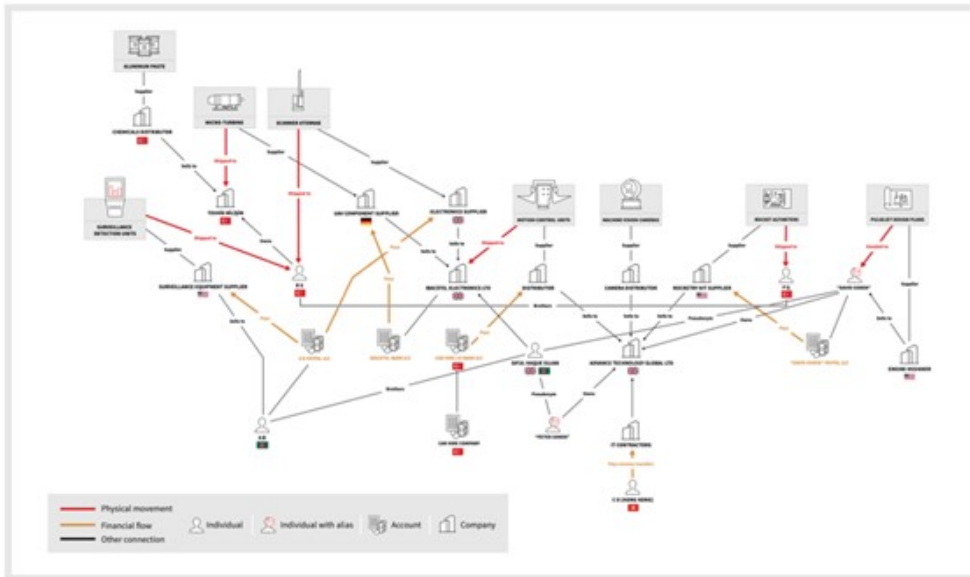




RISKY BUSINESS: HOW TO SPOT RED FLAGS IN ISLAMIC STATE PROCUREMENT

A small mobile phone shop buys six tonnes of an industrial chemical useable as a precursor for homemade explosives. A fertiliser dealer finances a \$200,000 shipment of a food additive (and explosive precursor chemical). A UK technology company purchases \$18,000-worth of sophisticated electronics from a North American supplier, yet the payment comes in a bank transfer from an entirely unconnected luxury car hire company in the Middle East.

Network diagram of electronics and leafing aluminium paste procurement



These and other incongruous transactions lie at the heart of an industrial revolution of terrorism. From 2013 to 2018, Islamic State (IS) forces developed a network of weapon workshops producing recoilless launchers, mortar rounds and rockets, as well as tens of thousands of improvised explosive devices and an assortment of other weapon systems: from armed UAVs to explosives-carrying robots.

Supported by the European Union (EU), field teams from Conflict Armament Research (CAR) in Iraq and Syria have meticulously documented these emerging capabilities since 2014. CAR

investigators are now mapping the human, financial and trade networks behind IS forces' production capabilities. They have examined commercial and transport records; obtained internal IS documents; and interviewed individuals associated with these procurement networks in Europe, the Middle East, North America and East Asia. In December 2020 CAR published the first findings of these network investigations.

Why did manufacturers and suppliers fail to question the anomalous transactions of these networks, despite clear red flags?

A few suppliers did cancel contracts after they became suspicious. Some simply ignored the incongruities. Others failed to notice. However, in some cases IS weapon designers engaged in more organised deceptions.

Exploiting weak checks on UK-registered companies, for example, one group set up a front company with fictitious directors and shareholders. They recruited suppliers of machine vision hardware and software to develop an automated anti-aircraft system, telling them they were building tracking systems for weather balloons and crop-spraying. They communicated with suppliers using pseudonyms, and paid them with cash transfers from an individual in Hong Kong.

CAR continues to work with Iraqi security forces to document and trace materiel seized from IS cells which remain active in Iraq and Syria. CAR is also working with the European Commission and the EU's Standing Committee on Precursors to help those in the chemicals, electronics and UAV industries secure their supply chains, and spot red flags that might indicate terrorist-linked purchases.

To read CAR's new report and learn more about its work, go to www.conflictarm.com



Thank you

For all the support and valuable contributions!

We wish you all a merry X-mas and a happy new year. Hope to see you back in good health in 2021!

Impact and Europol



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