

# **Illicit firearms trafficking and gun violence in Europe (Project TARGET): In-depth analysis of Serbia**

Project TARGET – Trafficking in arms and its impact on gun violence in Europe is being implemented by the Flemish Peace Institute (Belgium) and Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs (The Netherlands). It is a large-scale international research project on gun violence in Europe and illicit firearms trafficking. It consists of in-depth analysis of gun violence and the impact of illicit firearms trafficking on gun violence in seven countries: Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

The Victimology Society of Serbia is conducting an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the scope and dynamics of gun violence and illicit firearms trafficking in Serbia. The aims of the VDS's study are: 1) To find out the scope and nature of gun violence in Serbia; 2) To find out the characteristics of firearms used in gun violence in Serbia; 3) To get a better understanding of possible policy actions and to identify best practice, i.e. to map out existing policy and practice related to preventing gun violence, combating illicit firearms trafficking and limiting the impact of illicit firearms trafficking on gun violence in order; and 4) To develop proposal for collecting and recording data on the impact of illicit firearms trafficking on gun violence in order to improve data collection on these issues.

The impact of illicit firearms trafficking on gun violence is analyzed by collecting detailed data on (firearms used in) incidents of gun violence through quantitative and qualitative research methods. The first step is a desk analysis, which shall result in a thorough overview of the existing legislation, policy and practice related to the illicit gun trafficking and gun violence, systems of data recording and keeping, and the so far research on gun violence conducted in Serbia. Desk research will provide a basis for developing methodology for the empirical part of the research. The second step is empirical research, which consists of: collecting quantitative data on incidents of gun violence in Serbia and the firearms used in these incidents through the questionnaire, and in-depth interviews with key actors in Serbia in order to get deeper insights and contextual information relevant for better understanding of the quantitative data. Research results and conclusions will be presented at a workshop in Belgrade. Feedback information received from the participants will help in formulating recommendations and finalizing the country report.

Associate partners in the Project Target are: Europol, the Dutch National Police, UNDP-SEESAC, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drugs Addiction (EMCDDA). The project is funded by DG Migration and Home Affairs at the European Commission under the 2019 Internal Security Fund – Police. More information about the Project Target can be found at <https://vlaamsvredesinstituut.eu/en/target/>.

VDS's involvement in the Project Target is from September 2020 to the end of March 2021.