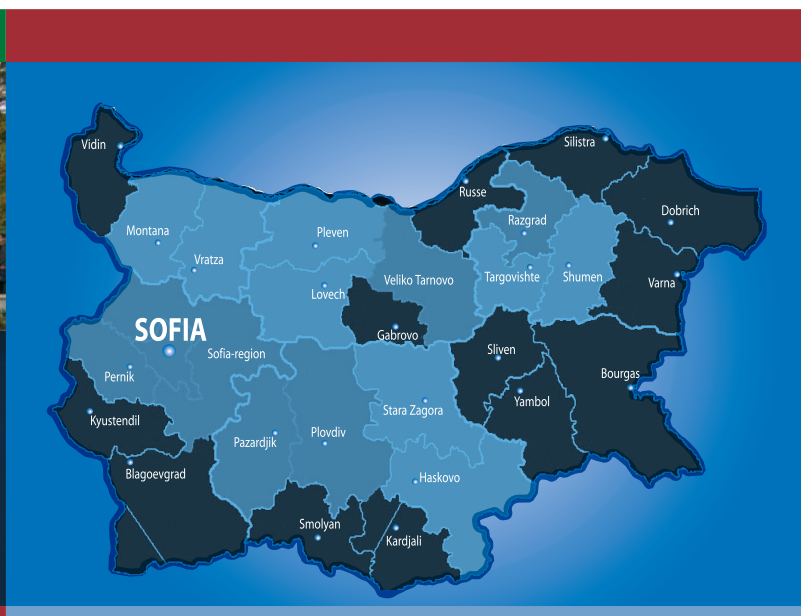


Taming the Arsenal – Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bulgaria



SEESAC

South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the
Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons



The **South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SEESAC) has a mandate from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SPSEE) to provide operational assistance, technical assistance and management information in support of the formulation and implementation of SALW co-ordination, control and reduction measures, projects and activities in order to support the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan, thereby contributing to enhanced regional stability and further long-term development in South Eastern Europe.

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Taming the Arsenal – Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bulgaria

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADGT	Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies
BHC	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
BRC	Bulgarian Red Cross
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation
CEI	Central European Initiative
CHDO	Control of Hazardous Devices Office
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COARM	European Union Working Party on Conventional Arms Exports
COMTRADE	United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
CSD	Center for the Study of Democracy
CSTMB	Central Storage and Technical Maintenance Base
EU	European Union
EUC	End User Certificate
EUROPOL	European Police Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HHS	Household Survey
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAS	Integrated Alarm System
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
JACIG	Joint Arms Control Implementation Group
LCESFA	Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition
LCFTADGT	Law on the Control of Foreign Trade Activity in Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies
MANPADS	Man-Portable Air Defence Systems
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MPMCS	Military Police and Military Counterintelligence Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBPS	National Border Police Service
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation



NISAT	Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers
NPS	National Police Service
NSCOC	National Service for Combating Organised Crime
NSI	National Statistics Institute
NSS	National Security Service
ODC	Organisation for Defence Co-operation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PHARE	European Union pre-accession assistance programme for Central and Eastern European countries
PSC	Private Security Company
R&D	Research and Development
PfP	Partnership for Peace (NATO)
RIP	Regional Implementation Plan
RMDS/G	Regional Micro Disarmament Standards and Guidelines
RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
SADS	Small Arms Distribution Survey
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SAS	Small Arms Survey
SECI	Southeast Europe Co-operative Initiative
SEESAC	South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SMPMC	Military Counter-Intelligence Service
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPoA	United Nations Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Executive Summary

Taming the Arsenal – Small Arms and Light Weapons in Bulgaria, is a report on the findings of research conducted on questions relating to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Bulgaria from July to November 2004 by the Sofia-based Center for the Study of Democracy, and London-based Saferworld. It sets out the findings of a comprehensive assessment of the 1) distribution of SALW in Bulgaria; 2) the impacts of SALW on individuals, communities and the state; 3) public perceptions of SALW and security; and 4) the capacity of the state to control the proliferation and misuse of SALW. The main findings of the study are as follows:

Distribution

- There are currently just over one million SALW in Bulgaria, approximately 300,000 of which are registered civilian weapons.
- The rate of legal weapon possession among civilians has nearly tripled in the last decade with the gradual easing of restrictions on civilian gun ownership and a growth in imports. An important professional group that can obtain a weapon relatively easily under the current domestic arms control regulations are former and current Ministry of Defence and Interior personnel who are automatically presumed to be safe and responsible owners. A growing number of private security companies are also stimulating the domestic trade in arms by relying on their employees to use personal weapons at work.
- The Bulgarian Armed Forces hold around 200,000 surplus SALW and 21,000 tons of surplus SALW ammunition. At present there is a national programme for the destruction of surplus ammunition but not for weapons. The Bulgarian Government's preferred choice for disposing of surplus weapons is sale, whether on the national or international market, rather than destruction. Despite this, around 100,000 surplus military SALW have so far been destroyed with the assistance of international donors, with whom discussions are ongoing.
- An illegal SALW market exists in the country, drawing on an estimated pool of some 93,000 unregistered weapons. The main sources for illicit weapons include: thefts from households, factories and military depots; cross-border smuggling; and illegal craft-manufacturing and remodelling. Across the country, there are thought to be several hundred individuals involved in the illegal production and trading of craft weapons at any one time. Illegal producers are generally ex-defence factory workers who manufacture illegal weapons using parts stolen from factories or who remodel gas-spray guns.
- Despite significant improvements in border management in the past three years, corruption and a lack of equipment leave Bulgaria susceptible to cross-border SALW smuggling, albeit in small amounts and as part of a wider trade in illicit goods. At present, illegal SALW traffic is most prevalent along the Turkey–Bulgaria–Serbia and Montenegro route.

Impact

- Despite the widespread availability of SALW, both legal and illegal, the impacts on public health, community security and inter-ethnic relations are not serious.
- While Bulgaria's firearm homicide rate is much below that of other Central and Eastern European countries, the continued use of SALW by criminal gangs, and the growing proportion of crimes in which guns feature, are a concern.
- Absolute numbers of firearm homicides have decreased in recent years in line with a general decline in crime rates. The proportion of homicides committed with SALW has, however, increased during the same period.
- The proportion of females who fall victim to gun crime has doubled in the last three years, to the point where it now exceeds the global average.



Perceptions

- Most Bulgarians are well informed about SALW issues, including domestic and international arms control laws, international and national production and export practices. They do not perceive SALW proliferation to be a serious security concern at this time and rank gun-related problems far below other issues such as unemployment, crime and corruption. Most appear to support their government's declared policy of prohibiting SALW exports to sensitive destinations.
- Most Bulgarians feel that the current domestic weapons permit regime is not restrictive enough and believe that stricter controls will increase the general level of security in the country.
- A majority of Bulgarians are afraid they will become a victim of crime, with crimes against property being their main concern. Fear of crime is the single most important driving force behind civilian demand for weapons, with hunting coming a close second.

Capacity

- Bulgaria's SALW production capacity is much reduced in comparison to a decade ago with only 8,000 – 9,000 persons directly employed on SALW production at present. The privatisation of defence industries has had mixed effects with respect to SALW control. While conversions and sell-offs have reduced total output in the sector, the emergence of many smaller companies has placed a burden on the arms and dual-use goods and technologies regulatory system.
- The arms and dual-use goods transfer control system has been progressively tightened from 1996 onwards and the regulatory framework is now fairly comprehensive in scope. Proposed SALW exports are assessed on a case-by-case basis by a specialist commission composed of representatives from all key government ministries. Despite the reforms, several official transfers to potentially sensitive destinations are thought to have occurred in the last few years.
- The Bulgarian Government is an active participant in numerous international SALW fora, and regularly exchanges information at the international and regional level. However, levels of public transparency have not kept pace with international information exchange, and the Bulgarian public's right to obtain information on SALW is severely curtailed by secrecy laws. The country's first ever arms export report is long overdue and will shed much-needed light in this area.
- Although the system for issuing civilian weapon permits is strict, its application is often flawed. Vague criteria for assessing licence applications appears to invite corruption on the one hand while causing frustration to many gun owners.
- Police statistics show a high clear-up rate for SALW-related crimes in comparison with many other types of crime. One important exception is firearm crimes committed by organised criminal groups, most of which remain unsolved.
- The efforts of Bulgaria's law enforcement agencies to combat SALW crime are undermined by a weak judicial system that is characterised by corruption, long delays and light sentencing. Concerns also remain over the apparent continued impunity of high-profile individuals implicated in past illicit arms deals.
- Two previous 'temporary' SALW collection and registration schemes have been implemented at times of political tension, with little success. There is, however, little support for voluntary weapons collection among the public at this time and more interest in anti-crime measures.
- A small number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are active within the country, sporadically researching SALW issues and occasionally advocating for change. There have not as yet, however, been collaborative projects between them.



Introduction

This report is a Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Survey of the Republic of Bulgaria, conducted in accordance with a set of guidelines developed by the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small and Light Weapons (SEESAC), in co-operation with the non-governmental research organisation, the Small Arms Survey.¹ These guidelines determined the scope, method and objectives of the research, a fact that is reflected in this report. The report details research findings in relation to four thematic areas:

- **Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)**, which investigates the distribution of small arms across Bulgaria.
- **Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)**, which examines the impact of SALW on the human environment, specifically by looking at armed crime and the impact on individuals, communities and the state.
- **Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)**, which assesses the views of the public in relation to SALW in their communities.
- **Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)**, which examines the capacity of institutions for dealing with small arms problems.

Having been spared the conflict and instability that affected its Western Balkan neighbours during the 1990s, Bulgaria has not had to grapple with anything like the resulting proliferation of SALW that occurred there. Typical indicators such as the absolute number of weapons in the country, the incidence of armed violence, and levels of ethnic tension raise little cause for concern.

SALW issues are, however, highly relevant in Bulgaria. Many of the challenges the country currently faces can be traced back to the Communist era, when Bulgaria maintained a large standing army and the defence industry was a mainstay of the national economy. The political and economic reforms that a transition away from Communism required proved difficult to see through, particularly in the early 1990s. Simultaneous changes to the structure and workings of the defence industry, security forces and national administration resulted in a weak arms export control system, a growing number of surplus SALW and a progressive downsizing of the SALW production industry. All of this occurred against a backdrop of increasing physical and economic insecurity for the country's citizens.

From around 1998, the overall political and economic situation in Bulgaria gradually stabilised. Membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was achieved in March 2003, and with recent European Union (EU) reports commending the reforms undertaken to date, EU accession is now expected in early 2007. This report provides an overview of the extent to which Bulgaria has successfully overcome its past SALW problems, and the challenges that still remain. This report is the first of its kind in Bulgaria to offer a comprehensive picture of the SALW situation in Bulgaria (including weapons production, distribution and impact, as well as data on public perceptions and national capacities to control SALW). In the run-up to EU accession it is to be hoped that all those concerned with SALW control in Bulgaria and the South Eastern European region can make good use of the report's findings to refine and target their efforts appropriately.

¹ Specifically, Regional Micro Disarmament Standard 05.80 and SALW survey protocols 1, 2 and 3.



Box 1: Methodology

A number of different methods were used to gather information for this report. These included a nationwide household survey (HHS), focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews with 'key informants', and a review of secondary sources.

- More than forty key informants were interviewed by the researchers over a period of months. They included staff from the key national SALW control agencies within the Ministries of Defence, Economy, Interior and Foreign Affairs; employees from international organisations; and a number of journalists and non-governmental activists working within the country (see Annex G for a list of interviewees).
- In addition to research reports available on the subject, news reports from Bulgaria's national TV stations (BTV, New Television and Bulgarian National TV) and all national daily and weekly newspapers for the previous year were analysed. A full bibliography is provided in Annex H.
- A nationwide household survey, capturing 1,251 respondents (48.1 percent female, 51.9 percent male) aged 15 years and over, was a central component of the research. A two-stage random cluster sample was used for the survey, drawing on the entire adult population of Bulgaria. An English-language translation of the household survey questionnaire, selected data tables and data file are available online.²
- Six focus group discussions were carried out around the country from 5 to 12 July 2004 with key social groups in the towns of Sofia, Varna, Kazanlak, Kyrdzhali and Gotse Delchev (see Annex A).
- While a substantial amount of the data included in this report was generated during the five-month research period, official statistics, whether from government ministries, hospitals or independent bodies such as the National Statistical Institute, were an important information source.

² See the websites of either Saferworld, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications/europe_ebalkans.htm>, SEESAC, <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/surveys.htm>> or Center for the Study of Democracy, <<http://www.csd.bg/en/euro/arms.php>>.



1 Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)

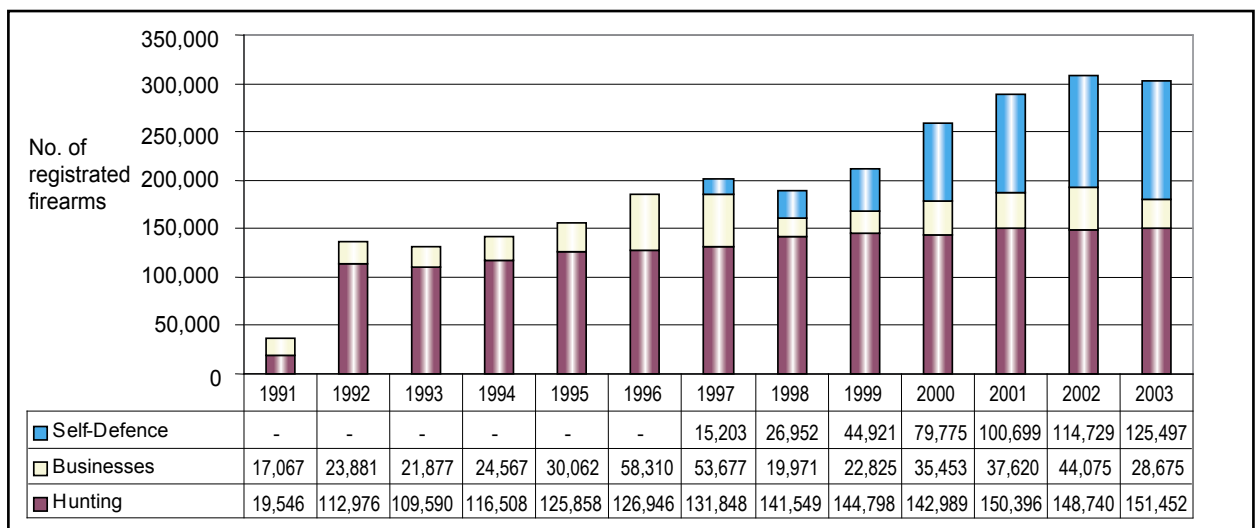
1.1 Legal SALW

1.1.1 Civilian weapons

According to the Control of Hazardous Devices Office (CHDO), a unit within the National Police Service (NPS), which maintains records of all registered civilian weapons on behalf of the Ministry of Interior (Mol), as of 31 December 2003, there were 305,624 weapons in the hands of 249,882 private citizens across Bulgaria. Although this puts Bulgaria roughly on a par with other Central and Eastern European countries in terms of per capita ownership, the current levels of civilian armament are comparatively new. Until 1991, civilian possession of firearms was limited to hunters and sportsmen under a highly restrictive domestic arms control system dating from the Communist period. During that time, many weapon owners were actually privileged party members (especially those honoured as ‘Active Fighters Against Fascism and Capitalism’), or senior Ministry of Defence (MoD), or Mol officials. The most common weapons among civilians at that time were hunting rifles and almost all of those were legal. Illegal firearms were generally rifles, pistols, revolvers, and assault rifles left over from the First and Second World Wars.³

With the passing of Communism the country has gradually liberalised its system for civilian weapons possession, allowing certain categories of civilians, including private security guards, to possess and carry weapons. Figure 1 below charts the gradual rise in the number of weapons in circulation from 1991 onwards. The first notable increase in the number of registered weapons occurred in 1992 when the government passed a decree requiring the re-registration of all civilian weapons.⁴ As the graph below shows, some 100,000 weapons were registered following the decree. In 1994 this process of collection and re-registration was repeated.

At this point in time the domestic legal market for small arms was still developing and it was common practice for the Mol to rent out weapons to civilians. For the staff of Private Security Companies (PSCs), and others who could prove the need, 9 mm Makarov pistols were on offer from the police; 7.62 mm Kalashnikovs were also rented to security firms to protect buildings outside populated areas.⁵



Source: Ministry of Interior, National Police Service.

Figure 1: Number of registered firearms in Bulgaria.

³ Interview, Chervenkov, 21 July 2004.

⁴ The Decree also required all government institutions to provide an exact account of the firearms in their possession. Decision No. 167 of the Council of Ministers for Re-registration of Firearms, used by Legal Entities and Private Individuals, from 4 May 1992.

⁵ Order No. 15 of the Mol, 25 February 1997.



At the end of 1996, amendments to the law which then governed domestic firearms possession, the *Regulation of the Law on Explosive Substances, Arms and Ammunition*, allowed private individuals to obtain firearms for protection of their business or for work in private security firms.⁶ This law was eventually repealed altogether and a new *Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition* (LCESFA), allowing firearm possession for self-defence for the first time, was introduced in November 1998.⁷ Following the new law, the number of registered civilian weapons increased for several years, only beginning to tail off in 2002. Interviewees from the CHDO explained the rise by pointing to the extreme political tension in the country around this time, which heightened the public's sense of insecurity. They also noted that in response to growing insecurity, PSCs became more and more popular, probably further increasing the demand for civilian self-defence weapons since PSCs rely heavily on staff who already own their own weapon.⁸ Despite the fairly rapid increase in registered weapons possession over this period, Figure 2 shows that, at 3.9 weapons per 100 persons, Bulgaria's current level of civilian possession is close to that of the newer EU states, and below the EU average of 11 weapons per 100.

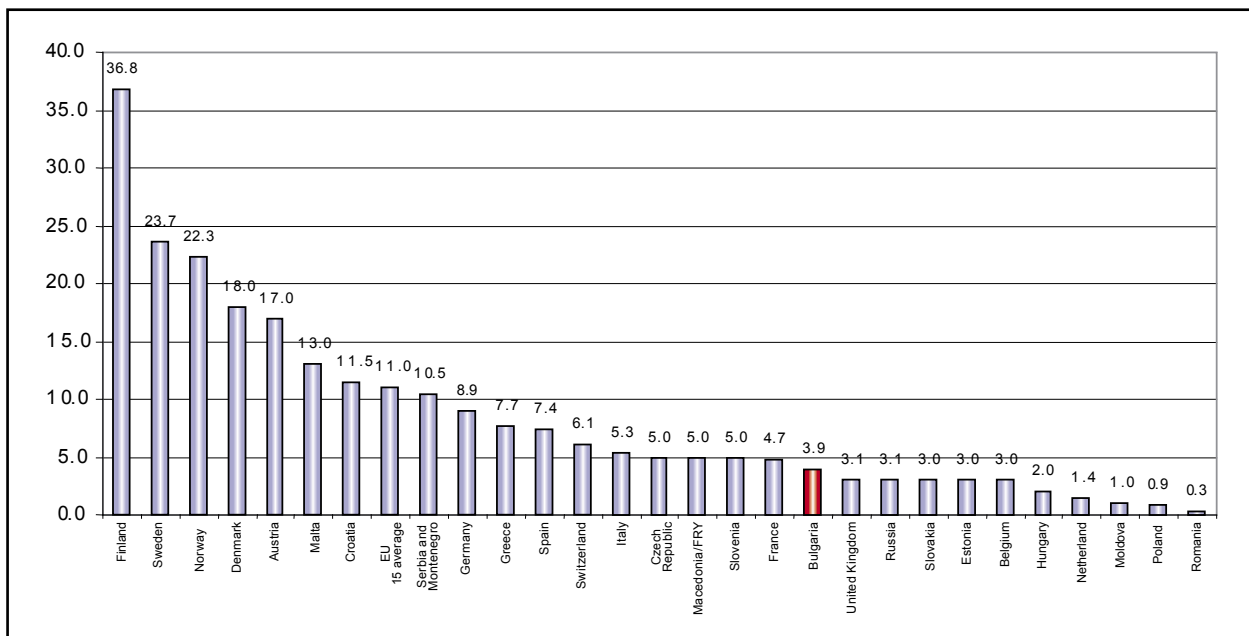


Figure 2: Registered firearms per one hundred people.⁹

A request by the research team to the Mol for a breakdown of legally registered civilian weapons by type was refused.¹⁰ Nevertheless one can assume that the great majority of the 145,816¹¹ civilian-owned hand guns are Makarov pistols, firstly because the great majority of owners (former military and police staff) were allowed to purchase them at preferential prices and secondly because Makarovs are comparatively cheap. Interviews with a number of gun-shop owners show that Glock, CZ, Beretta, Browning, Walther, Smith & Wesson, and Colt are the brands of hand-guns that are in the highest demand.

Records provided by the CHDO provide a picture of how the country's total number of registered weapons are distributed among various actors.

⁶ Amendments to the Regulation of the Law on Control of Explosives, Firearms, and Ammunition, *State Gazette* number 79, 17 September 1996.

⁷ LCESFA, *State Gazette* number 133, 11 November 1998. A subsequent regulation on the law's implementation was introduced in September 1999.

⁸ As permitted by Article 14.4 of the LCESFA. The practice is legal provided records of the weapons in use are kept at the site being guarded. Interview with CHDO official, 27 October 2003.

⁹ Source: Calculations for Bulgaria are based on data from the Ministry of Interior, National Police Service. Data for other countries is taken from Small Arms Survey (SAS), 2003, pp 64–65.

¹⁰ Unofficially, it was explained that this information would constitute a 'marketing study'. Interview, Gaidarski, 02 August, 2004.

¹¹ This figure is the total number of hand guns registered to civilians, private companies and former Mol/MoD personnel.

OWNERS BY TYPE	NUMBER OF PERMITS ISSUED
Hunters	108,704
Former/current MoD/Mol	64,002
Private individuals	57,625
Businesses	18,975
Members of sports organisations	252
Collectors (private individuals)	217
Collectors (companies/sole proprietors)	59
Sports organisations	48
Total	249,882

Table 1: Registered weapon owners by type of permit (2003).¹²

WEAPONS BY TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF WEAPONS REGISTERED
Hand guns for self-protection	145,816
Smooth-bore hunting rifles	137,732
Smooth-bore under 510 mm	3,162
Rifled hunting rifles	17,441
Sports/award/collectors' weapons	12,428
Civilian subtotal	316,579

Table 2: Registered civilian weapons by type (2003).¹³

Hunters are the largest single civilian group holding weapons in Bulgaria. Even before 1989 their number was already in the tens of thousands. By the end of 1992, Bulgaria's private individuals had registered 112,976 hunting weapons. In the following five years, the number of hunting weapons remained relatively stable. By the end of 2003 the CHDO had registered 108,704 hunters who possessed 151,452 hunting weapons. Since under the current law each hunter may own an unlimited number of hunting rifles and up to 50 rounds of ammunition per rifle (or 200 rounds per smooth-bore rifle), there is plenty of scope for the number of legal hunting rifles in the country to increase in coming years.¹⁴

After hunters, the bulk of private citizens possessing firearms – 64,002 individuals – are actually current and former employees at the MoD and Mol, of whom a substantial number are military officers.¹⁵ Fifty-three percent of civilian gun owners fall into this group, possessing 64,079 weapons between them (some have more than one weapon). In addition, there are 57,625 ordinary citizens who possess 61,418 firearms (including 1,133 award¹⁶ and 249 sports weapons). The higher level of ownership by those connected with the MoD or Mol is probably accounted for by the permit system, which makes it easier and cheaper for current and former employees to

¹² Source: Mol, NPS.

¹³ Source: Mol, NPS.

¹⁴ Regulation on the LCESFA, Article 57.1.

¹⁵ Because the current permit system designates a single category for both former and current military and police personnel, there is obviously some overlap in the statistics between current Mol/MoD employees and true civilians.

¹⁶ Award weapons are usually given by government agencies to individuals, most often Mol or MoD officers in recognition of their service.



obtain a licence. Most former police or military personnel own 9 mm Makarovs, since they were allowed to purchase them from stocks, or to purchase their own professional firearm upon retirement.

A separate category of civilian owners are legal entities such as sole proprietors and companies. Statistics from December 2003 showed that there were 28,675 firearms licensed to businesses or sole proprietors for the protection of their company. A sizeable minority of these companies provide security services, the private security business having grown rapidly over the past decade. In 2004 there were approximately 3,000 PSCs in Bulgaria employing close to 130,000 security guards.¹⁷ According to a Mol statement, personnel employed by PSCs are together in possession of around 90,000 firearms.¹⁸ Although no in-depth research has been carried out so far in Bulgaria on the conduct of these companies, it seems that the bulk of private security guards are using weapons registered for their personal use during their work. This practice is entirely legal and does not require a change of registration. Since many of them are former and current police and army officers, it is reasonable to assume that most PSC personnel are using 9 mm Makarovs.

Bulgaria's gun shops and shooting ranges also hold significant weapon inventories. In 2004 there were 269 registered gun shops and 67 shooting ranges in the country.¹⁹ Estimates of the weapons held in stock at gun shops and shooting ranges must take into account the fact that such establishments range in size from the two-floor luxurious *VIP Trading* gun shop in Sofia, which stocks hundreds of different firearms, to gun shops in small towns with only a few dozen weapons.



Saferworld. 2004.

Photo 1: Center for the Study of Democracy researcher Philip Gounev tries out the hardware at a shooting range, September 2004.



Saferworld. 2004.

Photo 2: VIP Trading gun shop in Sofia, one of the best-equipped retail outlets in the country.

Nevertheless, a conservative estimate would be that each gun shop has an average of 150 small arms in stock, giving a countrywide total of 40,350. Allowing for 30 weapons per shooting range would mean that there are an additional 2,070 firearms nationwide.²⁰

Finally, in addition to the above-mentioned groups, CHDO records show that there are about 8,000 weapons owned by 59 private collectors, and some 2,300 weapons owned by sports clubs and athletes.²¹

¹⁷ Mol, 05 August, 2004, <http://press.mvr.bg/News/news040805_01.htm>, accessed 10 August 2004.

¹⁸ Mol data quoted in *Cash*, 2004. The Mol agency to which PSCs periodically report on their staffing levels and weapon holdings is known as the Security Police.

¹⁹ Mol data.

²⁰ The calculation is based on information given by staff at a number of different shooting ranges in Sofia visited by the research team during September 2004.

²¹ CHDO data, Mol.

1.1.1.1 Geographical distribution

The distribution of registered weapons across the country closely follows the distribution of the population, except in four regions. While Sofia and the region around it represents only 18 percent of the population, it holds 26 percent of all registered weapons. Sofia-city also has the highest rate of firearm ownership in the country (six per 100 people). Higher rates of possession are also evident in the regions of Khaskovo (bordering Turkey), Kyustendil (bordering Macedonia), and Lovech which have around five firearms per 100 people, significantly above the 3.8 average for the country.

There are several possible explanations for this disparity. Sofia has the biggest concentrations of business and government institutions, most of which are guarded by PSCs. This fact alone could be sufficient to explain the additional concentration of weapons – police data from 1999 (before private security companies started actively hiring guards with their own weapons), shows that 41 percent of all security guards were in Sofia. Since average incomes are higher in Sofia than elsewhere in the country (by about 26 percent higher than the national average according to National Statistics Institute (NSI) data for 2003), higher disposable incomes may conceivably be playing a role.²² Other factors are also at work however, and it is also important to remember that crime rates are higher in Sofia than elsewhere in the country, which may be driving civilian possession.

In the other three regions, more information is needed before the reasons for higher levels of ownership can be determined. An examination of weapon permit denials does not highlight any difference for these regions. The reported crime rate is also not markedly different in these areas, while the number of registered hunters does not appear exceptionally high either. Figure three below shows how levels of legal civilian firearms ownership have changed since 1999.

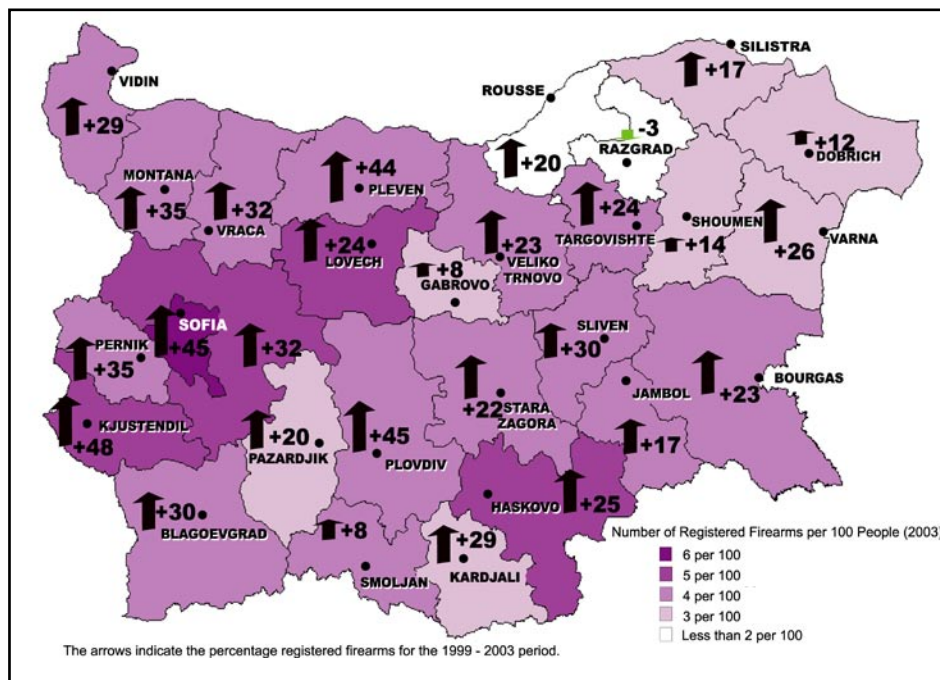


Figure 3: Firearms per one hundred people / percentage change in number of registered firearms for 1999–2003 period.²³

Note: The above map examines only the distribution of weapons among civilians and not that among government agencies or defence companies which tend to be stored at concentrated sites.

²² NSI, 2003, p15.

²³ Source: Mol, NPS.



1.1.1.2 Ethnic distribution

According to Mol records (see above map), regions with a predominantly ethnic Turk population, such as Kardjali and Razgrad, have some of the lowest density of firearms per head of population (three per 100 and two per 100 respectively). Recent history may explain this fact. During the 1980s a number of repressive measures were used against the Turkish minority by the government and thousands were expelled. Fearing retaliation, the security forces searched these areas, seizing all the weapons and ammunition that they could find. Consequently, by 1991 when people were allowed to register some weapons, few remained in these areas.

According to household survey (HHS) findings, while 6.8 percent of ethnic Bulgarians own firearms, this percentage is much lower for Turks and for Roma.²⁴

ETHNICITY	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS THAT OWN FIREARMS
Bulgarian	1,065	6.8%
Turk	91	1.1%
Bulgarian-Muslim	25	0%
Roma (Gypsy)	58	1.8%
Other	9	0%
No answer	3	0%
Total	1,251	5.9%

Table 3: Ethnic breakdown of self-declared firearm owners.

Another reason why most Turks do not have firearms may be that they tend to live in small towns and rural areas where crime levels are lower.²⁵ Unfortunately the number of Roma participants captured in the HHS was too small to allow for statistically valid conclusions about the reasons for the particular geographical distribution of weapons among this group which is dispersed in city neighbourhoods and villages around the country. The survey registered no firearms within the Bulgarian-Muslim community (also known as 'Pomaks'). Although, it is statistically possible that within a small sample of 25 individuals there were no weapons, Bulgarian-Muslims certainly possess some arms. During a focus group discussion in Gotse Delchev, a town surrounded by a predominantly Muslim population, participants, who were all ethnic Bulgarians, claimed that most Pomaks households had weapons. In their opinion, this is because the Pomaks community fears repression, either from ethnic Bulgarians or the state. In addition, participants claimed that many Pomaks were hunters. Even discounting nationalist-inspired exaggeration, these claims point to some level of weapons possession among Pomaks.

1.1.2 Bulgarian Armed Forces

Information concerning the SALW holdings of the Bulgarian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), is not publicly available.²⁶ Nevertheless, it is possible to estimate army and MoD SALW holdings using other publicly available information such as the number of personnel serving in the armed services.

²⁴ Bearing in mind the small size of the ethnic minority sample, these figures should be regarded as indicative rather than statistically significant.

²⁵ 78.5% of all Bulgarian firearm owners live in towns with a population greater than 5,000, but in keeping with the country-wide distribution of the ethnic Turkish community, 67 percent of Turkish HHS respondents were resident in communities with a population of less than 5,000.

²⁶ As an MoD official pointed out, members of foreign delegations from countries offering to fund SALW destruction will obviously gain an appreciation of available stocks when visiting stockpiles. Remarks by Yordan Bozhilov, International Organisations & Arms Control, Ministry of Defence at a seminar hosted by the Bulgarian Red Cross, 03 – 04 November 2004, Sofia.

As of 2004, the armed forces numbered 100,000, a figure which includes 55,000 reservists (see breakdown in Table 4). All active duty officers are assigned a hand gun, and ten percent of them also receive an assault rifle. A third of all junior officers are assigned an assault rifle, and the remaining two-thirds, hand guns. All soldiers in the lower ranks are assigned an assault rifle. Bulgaria's 55,000 reservists are assigned weapons in the same fashion. Since an extra 10 percent of weapons are held in reserve to compensate for routine damage, based on the figures above, the number of active service weapons held by the armed forces is calculated here as 116,468 units. Interviews with MoD officials though, suggest that there are also wartime reserves of about 180,000. Thus the total amount of working small arms – excluding those designated as surplus – can be estimated at around 300,000 units.²⁷

Current SALW surpluses are said to stand at around 200,000 units and can be expected to grow as the armed forces are further downsized in line with Bulgaria's agreements with the NATO.²⁸ The research team were unable to obtain further information as to the exact number and type of surplus weapons because the information was deemed classified.

While the condition of weapons designated as surplus may vary according to their previous history, a report by an international consultant who reviewed the condition of surplus MoD weapons during a destruction project sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), indicates that the remaining surplus weapons are in good condition.²⁹ So long as large stocks of serviceable weapons exist, the prospect of a lucrative sale on the international market always remains. In the past the Bulgarian Government has sought to export its surplus weapons whenever possible.³⁰ It should be noted though, that Bulgaria has entered into a political commitment to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE), which emphasises that the destruction of surplus SALW is the preferred method of disposal.³¹

The country's total ammunition stock is currently in the order of 160,000 tons, of which 80,000 are earmarked for destruction under a national programme.³² Around 21,000 tons of this stock is surplus SALW ammunition (see Annex C).

1.1.3 National Police Service and Ministry of Interior

The National Police Service and other MoI agencies also hold a range of SALW. The exact number of police and other MoI personnel is classified, although numerous public statements by MoI officials have previously made reference to 60,000 personnel, including thousands employed in administrative positions.³³ The figures for weapons distribution among personnel vary somewhat (eg in one recent public statement the police force was said to be 27,000 - 30,000 strong, which would suggest police SALW stocks of a similar range, while a second statement³⁴ claimed that, '20,000 sergeants and officer staff possess most likely around 22,000 units of personal and professional firearms').³⁵ The difference between figures is probably accounted for by the employment of 7,000–10,000 administrative personnel. Each police officer is assigned a hand gun for routine duties, and

²⁷ Interviews with MoD officials confirm that this is a credible estimate, Sofia, 23 September, 2004.

²⁸ Interviews with MoD officials, 14 September, 2004.

²⁹ The consultant oversaw the destruction of 4,500 AK-74 rifles and assorted ammunition designated as surplus by the MoD and noted that the weapons selected for destruction by the MoD were in good condition. It seems reasonable to assume that the remaining surplus stocks are in a similar, if not better condition, since it would be unusual to destroy the best-kept weapons and retain ones of a lower quality. See Munro I, 'Ammunition Consultant After Action Report References: UNDP PROJECT BUL/02/H12/1X/34SSA no. 2003-005-POG'.

³⁰ "Money Talks, Arms Dealing with Human Rights Abusers", (*Human Rights Watch*, April 1999), Vol. 11, No. 4 (D).

³¹ OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, (OSCE). Forum for Security Co-operation (2000), FSC.DOC/1/00 of 24 November 2000.

³² From 30 November to 03 December 2004 an international delegation visited the CSTMB to assess the feasibility of a destruction project. MoD staff indicated to the joint SEESAC/JACIG team that up to 80,000 tons would be available for destruction. Interview, Wilkinson, 03 December 2004.

³³ Bulgarian National Television, 05 July 2004

³⁴ Bulgarian National Television, 05 July 2004; Bulgarian National Television, 20 May, 2002; and *Novinar*, 27 September 2003.

³⁵ *Trud*, 28 March 2003.



an assault rifle in case of special operations, martial law or war.³⁶ According to Mol interviewees, an extra ten percent of stocks of both weapon types are also kept in reserve.³⁷ This means that the NPS has at least 22,000 hand guns and 22,000 assault rifles (Kalashnikovs) at its disposal. Although the Mol also retains a number of weapons available for renting to individuals or companies, as well as a reserve of old or decommissioned weapons, the research team were unable to source any reliable information as to the numbers involved.

The police's reserve weapons are kept in warehouses maintained by the country's 188 district police departments. District police departments are also responsible for temporarily storing any weapons seized during the course of their work, whether from criminals, or from ordinary citizens whose permits have expired. These weapons tend to be stored for short periods at police stations before being moved after a longer period to warehouses. Alternatively, following their seizure, criminal proceedings may require particular weapons to be passed on to other agencies such as the courts or the Mol's Research Institute of Forensic Sciences and Criminology. Despite attempts to do so, the research team could not determine exactly how many seized weapons the NPS holds at this time. However, the number is probably quite low, because the Mol retains the right both to sell and destroy these weapons (the Mol-owned company BMW has a chain of gun shops and a trading licence). In September 2004, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree stipulating that on 1 January each year, the Mol's 'Material Technical Supplies' Directorate must present a full list of all surplus weapons and ammunition to the Minister of Interior. Under the new arrangements, once the Minister approves the list a special commission will set reserve prices for any weapons earmarked for sale.³⁸ In the most recently reported sale on 31 March 2004, the Mol sold off 705 weapons that had been confiscated by customs and Mol personnel.³⁹ It is assumed here that Mol holdings of this type are similar to the average annual seizure rate of 1,200.

In the course of security sector reforms begun in the late 1990s, those Mol agencies which had previously performed military-type duties, such as Gendarmerie and the National Border Police Service (NBPS), saw their inventory of weapons considerably reduced as they began to take on a purely policing role. As a result, a significant number of SALW, including military-style weapons such as heavy machine-guns, were removed from active service.

SALW holdings at other Mol agencies can be harder to estimate, since in some cases (eg National Security Service (NSS)) staffing levels are secret. The estimates in Table 4 are based on information gathered during key informant interviews and on researchers' observations. As suggested by Mol interviewees, the calculations also assume an extra ten percent reserve. The total SALW holdings of all Mol agencies is estimated in the below table as approximately 94,000 units.

1.1.4 Other government agencies

A number of other government agencies retain SALW stocks for their employees' use. They include: customs officers, forest rangers; prison guards; judicial police; building construction inspectors; Ministry of Agriculture inspectors; railway inspectors; and road vehicles inspectors. The main agencies' holdings are estimated in Table 4 below based on staff levels.

The National Protection Service, which is the agency responsible for the protection of the President, the Prime Ministers as well as other government, judicial, and legislative branch officials has a staff of around one thousand. Most of the staff are drivers who carry at least one hand gun. However, there are around two hundred bodyguards who have more than one hand-gun, including a range of automatic weapons.⁴⁰ The estimated number in the table assumes that every officer at this agency has at his disposal at least one hand-gun and one assault rifle or similar automatic-type weapon. An extra reserve of ten percent has again been factored in.

³⁶ Interview, Mol official, 06 October 2004.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The decree also stipulated new storage standards. *Trud*, 24 September 2004.

³⁹ *24 Chassa*, 01 April 2004.

⁴⁰ Interview, former NPS officer, June 19, 2004.

	EST. PERSONNEL	EST. HAND GUNS	EST. ASSAULT RIFLES	EST. OTHERS (ASSORTED)	TOTAL
Military and Ministry of Defence					
Active duty officers	7,582	7,582	758		
Active duty junior officers	11,396	7,521	3,761		
Soldiers	23,221	2,322	23,221		
Reserve officers	9,882	9,882	988		
Reserve junior officers	14,853	9,803	4,901		
Reserve soldiers	30,265	3,027	30,265		
Other MoD officers	1,849	1,479	370		
Other MoD junior officers	924	610	305		
<i>Sub-total</i>		42,226	64,569		
Reserve weapons (10 percent)		4,162	6,426		
<i>Army total</i>		46,388	70,995		
Other wartime reserves				180,000	
Surpluses				200,000	
Army light weapons				6,713	
Military subtotal		46,388	70,995	386,713	504,096
Ministry of Interior					
National Security Service	4,000*	2,000	2,000		
National Service for Combating Organised Crime	2,000*	1,000	1,000		
National Police Service	27,000	29,700	29,700		
National Police Service (seized)				1,200	
National Border Police Service	8,162	8,978	8,978		
National Gendarmerie Service	2,000	2,200	2,200		
Fire department	5,000*	5,500			
Moi Subtotal		49,378	43,878	1,200	94,456
Other agencies					
Bulgarian Customs Agency	3,147 - 4000	500			
Forest Rangers	2,800			550	
National Prison Administration	5,850	6,435			
Ministry of Justice Police	900	990			
National Protection Service	1,000	1,100	1,100		
Other agencies subtotal		9,025	1,100	550	10,675
Civilians (as of 31 December 2003)					
Self-protection				125,497	
Hunting				151,452	
Legal entities (including some private security)				28,675	
Other (sports, collections)				10,314	
Gun shops	269 (x 150)			40,350	
Shooting ranges	69 (x 30)			2,070	
Illegal (lower estimate)				93,206	
Civilian subtotal				451,564	451,564
Country total					1,060,791

Table 4: Estimated distribution of official weapons stocks by agency.

Note: In the case of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the number of weapons in service (columns three and four) has been estimated using available data on the number of armed personnel and a 'force multiplier' (see text). * = Estimates of classified number of personnel.

A detailed breakdown of the weapon types held by Bulgaria's security forces is provided in Annex B.



1.2 Illegal SALW

1.2.1 Numbers in circulation

The regularity with which the Bulgarian police seize illegal weapons is an indication that weapons of this kind continue to be available in the country. Police seizure statistics show that the average number of seized weapons is 1,212 units over the last five years.

YEAR	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 *	AVERAGE
Confiscated firearms	1,346	958	1,458	1,074	1,224	1,212
Firearms reported stolen	136	210	219	240	237	208
Total	1,482	1,168	1,677	1,314	1,461	1,420

Table 5: Weapons seized by security agencies, or reported stolen to police (1999–2003).⁴¹

Note: Seizure statistics in the above table are totals recorded by all agencies under control of the MoI. Seizures recorded by the Customs Agency are ignored to avoid double counting (there is considerable overlap with Border Police figures, but the differences are not large in terms of overall seizures).

* Note: MOI agencies used a different method from previous years when compiling data for 2003.

They also offer an insight into the type of illegal weapons circulating in the country at any one time, particularly among criminals:

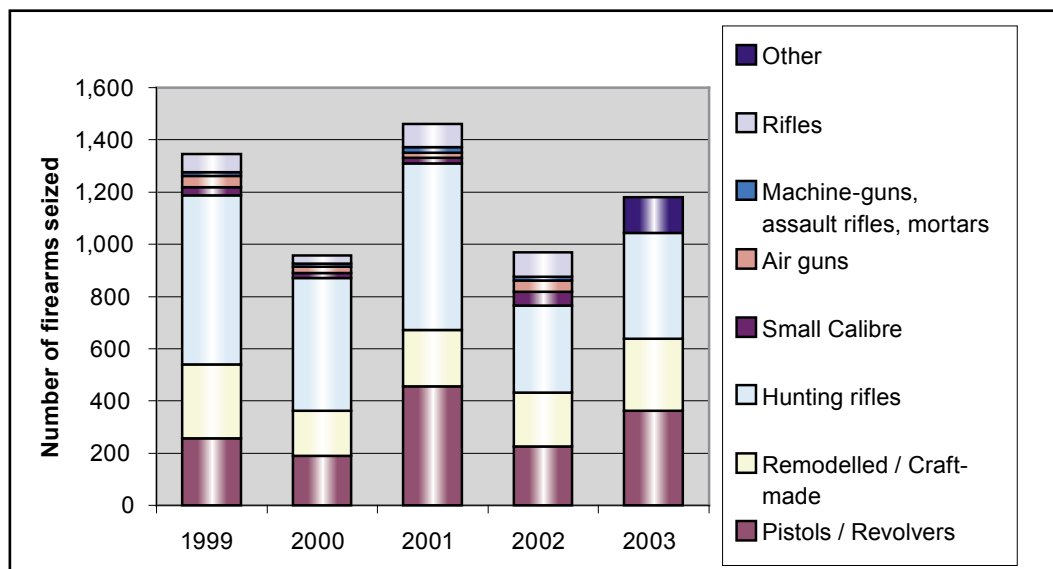


Figure 4: Breakdown of seized illegal weapons by type (1999–2003).⁴²

The research team used a number of different sources in order to gauge the exact number of illegal weapons in circulation. These included the available statistics on police seizures of illicit weapons and the use of illicit weapons in firearm suicides. Estimates provided by 'key informants' and HHS and FGD participants were also taken into account, though they provided quite divergent figures. Based on an extrapolation of the annual seizure rate, the Bulgarian MoI estimates that in the last five years some 40,000 units of illicit firearms have entered the black market.⁴³

⁴¹ Source: MoI, NPS and NSCOC.

⁴² Source: MoI, NPS.

⁴³ The figure was calculated on the basis that the 1,200 to 1,400 illicit SALW seized by police each year represent around 20% of the total number in the black market, and that the 100 additional illicit weapons of Bulgarian origin seized by police in other European countries each year represent around 10% of the total smuggled out of the country. MoI, official communication to CSD, 15 February 2002.

One member of parliament, a former shooting champion, has claimed that there are about one million illegal SALW in the country, explaining that before 1989, shooting clubs, and the Organisation for Defence Co-operation (ODC), gave out large numbers of weapons before being dissolved in the 1990s.⁴⁴ This statement was contradicted by a NBPS official who stated when the Voluntary Organisation for Defence Co-operation was disbanded in 1968, many sports weapons simply 'disappeared'. He did however add that controls over sports and military weapons were considerably improved in 1974 and 1984.⁴⁵ Another border control officer with many years' experience at the CHDO has also put the number of illegal SALW at around one million.⁴⁶ While these comments are a valuable insight into the perceptions of officials who have a specific interest in SALW control, they are not the result of any systematic calculation, and should therefore be viewed with caution.

The above estimate provided by the Mol, although realistic about the number of weapons circulating in the black market, does not account for 'dormant' illicit weapons such as those left-over from WWII, or unregistered hunting rifles in rural areas. Previous academic work into the use of guns in violent crimes and suicides suggests that there is a strong, positive correlation between suicides committed with firearms and the levels of societal weapons possession.⁴⁷ Thus, the greater the proportion of suicides committed with firearms in a particular country, the higher the number of households possessing at least one firearm.⁴⁸ It is to police records that one must look to discover whether legal, or illegal firearms have been used in particular suicide cases. In Bulgaria, the legal/illegal firearm breakdown is only available from the statistics for 2003. During that year, 42 suicides (62.69 percent of the total), were recorded as having been carried out with legal firearms, and 25 (37.31 percent), with illegal ones. If one presumes that those intending to commit suicide are no more likely to use a legal than an illegal weapon, this would indicate that around 37 percent of the weapons available in households are illegal. For practical reasons though, a large majority of suicides are carried out using hand guns, probably somewhere in the order of 80 percent.⁴⁹ According to CHDO data, at the end of 2003 there were 145,816 civilian registered hand guns in Bulgaria. If the assumptions above are warranted, the official statistics for 2003 would have captured only 62.69 percent of the total number of hand guns in the country. The true number would actually be 231,908, a figure which includes 86,782 illegal weapons. Table 6 below gives low, average and high estimates of the number of illegal hand guns.⁵⁰

	EST. No. OF ILLEGAL HAND GUNS (AVE.)	PERCENTAGE	EST. No. OF ILLEGAL HAND GUNS (LOW)	PERCENTAGE	EST. No. ILLEGAL HAND GUNS (HIGH)	PERCENTAGE
Legal hand guns	(145,816)	62.69 %	(145,816)	74.34 %	(145,816)	51.04 %
Illegal hand guns	86,782	37.31 %	50,331	25.66 %	139,874	48.96 %
Total	232,598	100 %	196,147	100 %	285,690	100 %

Table 6: Estimated number of illegal hand guns using 2003 firearm suicide statistics.

⁴⁴ Interview, Matova, 2004. The ODC was a wide network of sports clubs and shooting ranges around the country where it promoted activities and sports that could provide skills to support the military in the event of an emergency.

⁴⁵ Interview, Stoyanov, 2004.

⁴⁶ Interview, Parlev, 2004.

⁴⁷ Killias et al, 2001.

⁴⁸ While significant variations in suicide rates, and the use of different suicide methods, are apparent across the globe, the fact that the occurrence of firearm suicides has been observed to vary with levels of firearms ownership indicates that there is likely to be a positive correlation in Bulgaria.

⁴⁹ Hand-guns are over-represented in all forms of gun crime and violence, accounting for around 80% of cases sampled in one study. See Cook, 1991.

⁵⁰ Assuming random sampling for ease of calculation, at the 95% confidence interval, the 62.69 figure could vary by +/- 11.65%.



In addition to any illegal hand guns in the country, there will of course be other types of unregistered weapons such as hunting guns. Police records of the different types of illegal weapons seized are a useful basis for estimating how many weapons there are. Table 7 below, shows the breakdown of police seizures by type for the year 2003, and by extrapolation, an estimate of the total number of illegal weapons in circulation.

TYPE OF WEAPON	NUMBER OF UNITS SEIZED (2003)	TYPE AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL SEIZED	EST. NO. OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS (LOW)	EST. NO. OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS (HIGH)	EST. NO. OF ILLEGAL WEAPONS (AVE.)
All types of hand gun *	639	54%	50,331	139,874	86,782
Smooth-bore firearms	440	37%	34,486	95,840	59,462
Rifled hunting rifles	65	6%	5,592	15,542	9,642
Others	36	3%	2,796	7,771	4821
Total	1,180	100%	93,206	259,026	160,707

Table 7: Estimates of total number of illegal weapons of all types in Bulgaria using police seizure pattern for 2003.

Note: * Since the majority of seized remodelled weapons are actually hand guns, calculations have been made on the basis of a combined category 'all types of hand guns', which combines the number of remodelled and craft weapons seized during 2003 (23 percent of overall seizures), with pistols and revolvers seized (31 percent).

On the basis of these calculations, the research team estimate that there are somewhere between 93,206 and 259,026 illegal SALW in Bulgaria today, the mean estimate being 160,707 units. It should be emphasised, however, that this is a tentative estimate, based on a method that has several important limitations. Firstly, the proportion of suicides in which illegal weapons are used will vary from year to year, so the 2003 figures may not be typical. Secondly, it may be unwise to make generalisations from the police seizure statistics above about the distribution of unregistered weapons in the population as a whole, since many Bulgarians with illegal weapons will be otherwise law-abiding citizens who are unlikely to feature in police statistics. There may be other distortions too, such as the fact that registered owners will be more likely to store weapons safely (as required by the law), making access more difficult. It will be possible to make more precise estimates in the future if the NPS continues to record the proportion of illegal weapons used during suicides in future years. In addition, were the CHDO to begin keeping records of the number of stolen weapons that the police recover as part of their annual seizures, an alternative method could be used to calculate the number of illegal weapons in circulation.⁵¹

1.2.2 Distribution of illegal SALW

HHS results and FGDs show that the popular perception is that the large cities, like Sofia or Plovdiv, as well as the small arms industry regions, such as Stara Zagora, have many illegal firearms (see section 3.6). Better measures are available though, since police data gives the seizure rate for illegal weapons and the number of reported weapon thefts by region.

Photo 3: On 28 January 2004, during a police raid on drug-dealers in the Sofia's Nadezhda district, Bulgarian police arrested a 48-year old man. His apartment was found to contain drugs, fake documents, two hand guns, and assault rifle ammunition. Documents found in the apartment indicated that this individual had previously sold two heavy machine-guns, four hand guns with silencers, an RPG, a rifle with an optical sight, and plastic explosives.



Ministry of Interior Information Centre, 2004.

⁵¹ Unfortunately the police do not retain statistics on what proportion of the weapons that have been reported as stolen are eventually recovered during seizure operations. Interview, Vassilev, 2004.

Using the rates of seizure and theft as proxies for the concentration of illegal weapons, the regions of Vratza, Haskovo, Shumen and Pleven emerge with the most illegal firearms per 10,000 people. The Stara Zagora region also has a high-concentration of illegal weapons. Since the majority of reported cases in this area relate to illegal craft production (see section 1.2.2.3), this is probably because of the illegal trade in weapons in the area. The high rates in the regions of Haskovo and Montana are probably attributable to the high-levels of trans-border crime in these regions. More research is needed to explain why other regions show high rates of seizure and theft. One possible explanation might be more efficient police practices in these areas.

In most of the regions featured in Figure 5 thefts and seizure rates have dropped over the 1999–2003 period, which may be a sign that the concentration of illegal weapons in the country is decreasing. On the other hand, assuming that theft and seizure rates are reliable proxies, further investigation is probably warranted in those areas that show an upward trend. In order to draw any firm conclusions though, more information would be needed on policing practices in each area. The high rate of thefts and seizures in Sofia, and increases in both areas, may well be fuelling the public's perceptions that there are a larger number of illegal weapons in the capital.

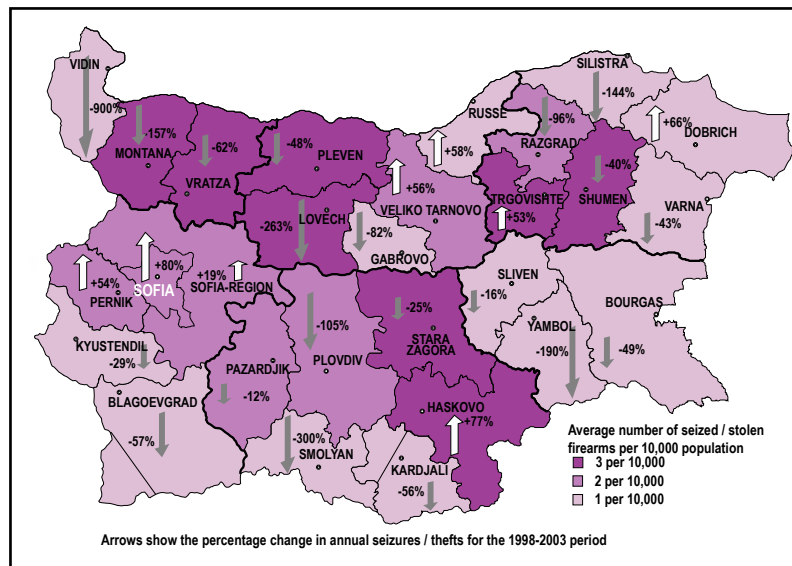


Figure 5: Average number of seized and stolen weapons per 10,000 persons (1999–2003).⁵²

Note: For each municipality, the number of weapons reported stolen has been added to the number seized by security services and the total divided by five to provide the annual average.

The demand for illegal weapons in Bulgaria appears to be driven by several factors, the most important of which is the need that criminals have for unregistered weapons. While hand guns are in high demand across the criminal fraternity, organised crime groups are the main users of Kalashnikov assault rifles and sniper rifles, as demonstrated by the occurrence of several high-profile assassinations in Bulgaria in the past two years (see Box 2).

As police and customs seizures across the region show, a second stimulus for the illegal trade in weapons, and particularly for their illegal production, is the black market created by criminal gangs in Western Europe or neighbouring countries. The financial incentives for Bulgarian illicit producers are particularly strong in the case of foreign clients (see Table 8 below).

A third factor driving illicit possession is a minority of hunters who turn to the illegal market to obtain cheap weapons. This type of weapon continues to appear in police seizure statistics year on year, albeit in small numbers.

There is also a small demand for illegal weapons among citizens who have failed to obtain a permit. HHS results and FGDs indicate that perceptions of rising crime and police inefficiency are the main demand drivers among this group. Those who fail to obtain a permit sometimes choose to purchase gas-spray pistols, some of which

⁵² Source: Mol, NPS.



Box 2: High-profile assassinations⁵³

- On 05 June 2004, two assassins dressed as priests entered the lobby of the Art Deco coffee shop in Sofia, shooting two individuals and injuring three others, all of whom were thought by police to be involved in the sale of illegal drugs.
- On 30 July 2004, assassins with at least seven different types of firearms, including assault rifles, killed six and injured two, in Slavia restaurant in Sofia. The victims were thought to be involved in drug distribution and numerous other illegal activities.

are then converted into firearms.⁵⁴ Because the denial rate for civilian weapon permit applications is extremely low, however, the contribution this group makes in driving the illegal market group should not be overestimated. According to the CHDO, the typical denial rate for civilian weapon permit applications across the country in 2003 was 5 percent for applications for hunting rifles and 11 percent for hand guns for self-defence. FGDs also provided evidence that some individuals who are denied permits try – with success – to obtain them by bribing officials (see Section 3.2).

In general, illegal arms are more expensive than legal ones in Bulgaria (see Table 8 below). The exact price for illegal weapons is determined by several factors, including the type of weapon and the number of intermediaries involved in a particular sale.⁵⁵ The cheapest option of all is to buy a remodelled gas-spray pistol. Once remodelled, these weapons sell for around EU 150 – 210 on Bulgaria’s black market. If however they are exported to Greece or Spain, they can be sold for around EU 500. Bulgarian-made army and police weapons (eg Makarovs), sell for around EU 200. Kalashnikovs, usually stolen from military stockpiles or assembled from parts smuggled out of factories, sell for as much EU 350. A range of foreign weapons are available on the black market, but at a much higher price (eg a Beretta or Glock pistol would cost around three to four times the price of a Makarov).

BRAND FIREARMS	STORE/FACTORY PRICE (EURO)	BLACK MARKET PRICE IN BULGARIA (EURO)
Baikal gas-spray hand gun, 8 mm IZ-79-8 Makarov	110	150 – 210 (range for remodelled)
Makarov-Arsenal (9 mm Bulgarian made)	85 – 100	200
Kalashnikov	100 – 150	350

Table 8: Black market weapon prices.⁵⁶

1.2.3 Sources for illegal SALW

The illegal market appears to be supplied from a number of different sources which are discussed further below:

- Household thefts.
- Thefts from military depots.
- Thefts from factories.
- Illegal production by former defence or metal industry employees.
- Cross-border smuggling.

⁵³ Sources: *Sega*, 05 June 2004; and *Trud*, 31 July 2004.

⁵⁴ In their original state, these weapons look exactly like real guns, giving the owner an effective deterrent, but do not fire a projectile. Instead they release gas at high pressure. They are unlikely to cause a serious injury, even at close range.

⁵⁵ The prices quoted below are based on in-depth interviews with former and current workers at Arsenal JSC, as well as with MoI officers.

⁵⁶ Sources: Shop-prices are based on information from www.oragie.com. Illegal firearm prices are based on FGDs and interviews with NSCOC staff.

1.2.3.1 Household thefts

A statistical analysis of police records shows that there is a high correlation across the country's twenty-eight regions between the occurrence of weapon theft and the rate at which the police seize illegal weapons.⁵⁷ In other words, there is strong evidence that theft is a source of illegal arms. Most recorded thefts are from private households, probably because the law imposes strict security standards on gun shops. Police data shows that the gradual increase in the number of weapons among the civilian population since 1998 has been accompanied by a significant increase in the number of weapon thefts, which are now running at around 1 theft per 1,300 registered weapons. Yet while the absolute number of thefts may be increasing, the increase is proportionally less than the growth in registered firearms. As Figure 6 shows, Bulgaria also compares reasonably well with other countries in this respect.

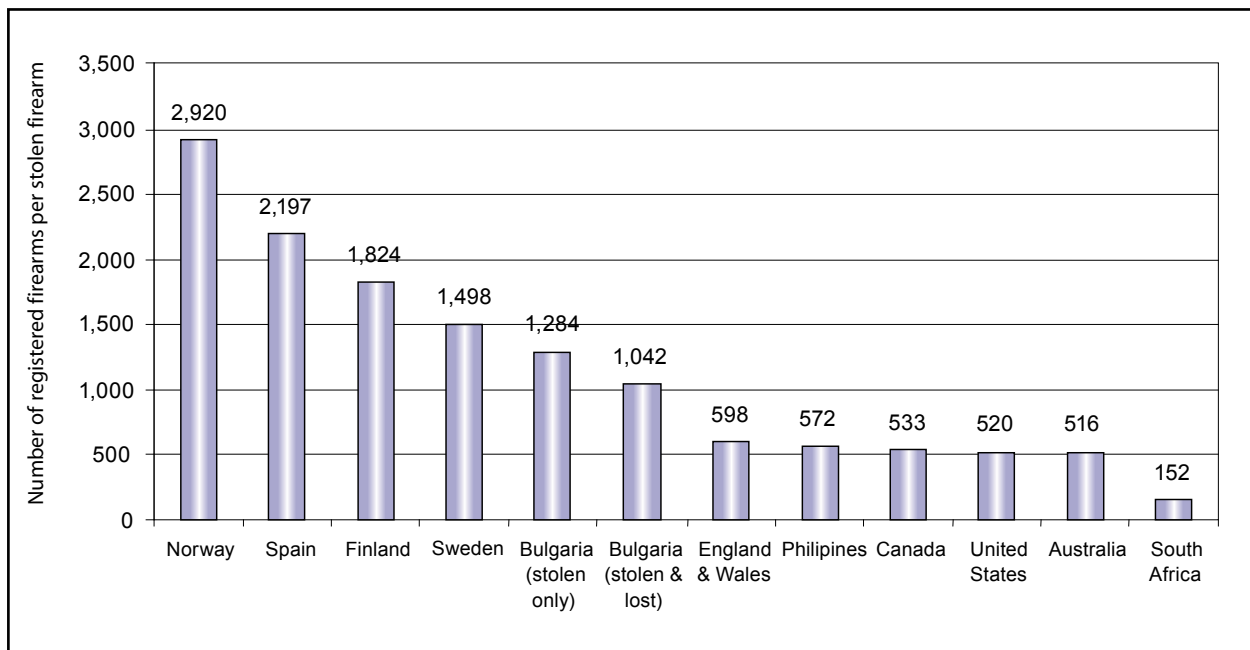


Figure 6: Number of registered firearms per stolen firearm.^{57a}

One possible explanation for the limited increase of firearm thefts in proportion to overall ownership might be that household storage standards are relatively high, thereby serving to prevent theft. Although the Bulgarian laws for home storage certainly require precautions to be taken against theft, it is difficult to determine how rigorously they are adhered to by weapon owners (see also Section 2.1.1).

Further constraints on this source may now be in place since in 2004 the theft of firearms and explosives was designated a 'grave threat' and made punishable by imprisonment for a period between one and ten years (any effect of this change has yet to be seen however and will depend in part on judicial practice – see also Section 4.2.9).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The actual correlation is 0.609, statistical correlation being denoted by a number between 0 and 1, the latter denoting a perfect correlation between two events and any number over 0.5 indicating that the two sets of observations are strongly correlated.

^{57a} Source: Calculations on Bulgaria are based on Ministry of Interior, National Police Service. Data on other countries is taken from Small Arms Survey, 2004, p 63.

⁵⁸ Penal Code, §195.10, State Gazette No. 26, 2004.



	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Stolen firearms	237	240	219	210	136
Lost firearms	55	42	45	28	14

Table 9: Lost and stolen firearms, 1999–2003.⁵⁹

TYPE OF OWNER		TYPE OF FIREARM	
Companies	26	Hand guns	159
Private individuals	138	Smooth-bore barrel (up to 510 mm)	7
MoD or MoI officers	27	Smooth-bore barrel (longer than 510 mm)	54
Collectors	9	Rifled hunting rifles	17

Table 10: Reported firearms thefts for 2003.⁶⁰

1.2.3.2 Military depots

There is strong evidence that Bulgaria's military depots are a source of illicit weapons. The problem appears to have been at its worst several years ago when army restructuring was at its height and SALW were regularly being moved to new military bases around the country in great numbers. In 2002, the Military Police and Military Counterintelligence Security Service (MPMCS) reported five cases of weapon theft, stating that arrests were made in four cases.⁶⁴ This was the lowest figure in the 1996–2002 period, falling from twenty-two thefts in 1996, to nine in 2001 and then to five in 2002. Reports indicate that most of the stolen weapons in these cases were 9 mm Makarov pistols and 7.62 mm Kalashnikovs. In one case, however, the security service also reported fifty pistols, seven submachine-guns and twenty-two *Neto* hand-held anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers (RPGs) (ten of them stolen from a military unit in the town of Strajitza) as being among the stolen items.⁶²

However, in January 2003, media reports appeared to show the Chief of the General Staff, General Kolev, publicly admitting that the transfer of large quantities of arms and munitions to new locations during the downsizing process had directly undermined security. The comments attributed to Gen Kolev implied that during this period the movements of weapons was not closely monitored, and that opportunities for theft were created because although military units performed regular inventories, they were often conducted in a superficial manner and close inspection was rare.⁶³ Information on stolen military SALW is said to be classified by the MPMCS who were unable to supply any further information on the subject to the researchers.⁶⁴ The pattern of thefts would seem to indicate that the current stockpile security problem is focused at active military bases across the country rather than the surplus and reserve stockpile which is stored at the Central Storage and Technical Maintenance Base (CSTMB).

In January 2004, the Chief of the General Staff also stated that stockpile thefts are not a serious cause for concern. He claimed that during the 2002–3 period there was a 33 percent decrease in weapons and ammunition thefts.⁶⁵ A second MoD official has gone on record to say that the problem of illicit trafficking in the country is of more concern than that of stockpile thefts.⁶⁶ This comment is undoubtedly correct in terms

⁵⁹ Source: MoI, NPS.

⁶⁰ Source: Ibid.

⁶¹ *Monitor*, 11 January 2003.

⁶² *Sega*, 18 January 2003.

⁶³ *Dnevnik*, 11 January 2003.

⁶⁴ According to the MoI however, their statistics on stolen weapons include thefts from military sources.

⁶⁵ The General also remarked on the theft of 5 assault rifles from a military base in Samokov and 7 assault rifles from a base in Ponor during his statement. *Sega*, 24 January 2004.

⁶⁶ Statement made by Yordan Bozhilov, International Organisations & Arms Control, Ministry of Defence Bulgarian Red Cross seminar on Non-Proliferation of SALW, 03 – 04 November 2004, Sofia.



Photo 4: On 23 March 2004, the Sofia regional bureau of the NSCOC raided an apartment in Sofia, where officers found 50 kg of explosives and over 6,000 rounds of ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles and Makarov pistols. They arrested a former military officer who had apparently stolen large amounts of ammunition over a long period of time. Only two weeks earlier in another raid, the RSCOC seized 250 rounds of Kalashnikov ammunition in a private basement in Sofia’s Zapaden Park district.

of the absolute numbers reported, but it also raises the question of how many undetected thefts are occurring. It is to be hoped that the army’s public admission of past problems and the gradual consolidation of new military structures will have had beneficial effects. In an attempt to prevent stolen military equipment being smuggled out of the country, in September 2004 the Customs Agency and MPMCS signed an agreement on information exchange, in which the MPMCS will provide regular information on stolen or missing military equipment and arms.⁶⁷

1.2.3.3 Illegal production and factory thefts

One of the most significant sources of illegal firearms are craft producers who either make weapons using parts stolen from factories, or who remodel gas-spray weapons to allow them to fire live ammunition. In 2003, these combined sources accounted for 23 percent of all seized illegal weapons – a five-year high.

	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Remodelled or illegally produced firearms seized	276	206	216	173	282
Percentage of total illegal firearm seizures	23%	21%	15%	18%	21%

Table 11: Remodelled or illegally produced SALW as a percentage of police seizures (2000–2003),⁶⁸

According to the NSCOC, illegal firearms production is most often encountered in the Stara Zagora region, particularly in and around the town of Kazanlak, a traditional SALW production area, home to the country’s biggest SALW producer, Arsenal. The table below shows the spread of illegal weapons seized by the NSCOC during the past four years, highlighting the high number of seizures that occur in the region. Since the NSCOC is mandated to work on organised crime cases, a substantial proportion of its work concerns illicit SALW production.

⁶⁷ Customs Agency, October 2004.

⁶⁸ Source: Mol, NPS.



REGION	CITY	AUTOMATIC WEAPONS					HAND GUNS				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL FOR REGION	2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL FOR REGION
NC	Gabrovo				1	4		1	1	10	24
	Veliko Tarnovo		1		1		2		3	2	
	Pleven				1			3			
	Ruse							1	1		
SC	St. Zagora	9	7	9	2	29	19	6	1	24	86
	Plovdiv				1		4	2	4	5	
	Kardjali						2	7		3	
	Haskovo								1		
	Pazardjik		1					6		1	
	Smolian									1	
NE	Varna	5	1			7	2	2		1	22
	Silistra						1				
	Shumen			1			2	5	6	2	
	Razgrad							1			
NW	Vidin					0		2	10		27
	Vratza						3	2	2	8	
SE	Yambol				1	3	1		2	3	16
	Sliven		1		1			2	3	1	
	Burgas						2			2	
SW	Blagoevgrad	1	5		1	15	1	5	2	10	62
	Sofia			2				10	5	2	
	Pernik		3		2		2	2	2	15	
	Kiustendil				1				1	5	
Total		15	19	12	12	58	41	57	44	95	237

Table 12: Number of illegal weapons seized by the National Service for Combating Organised Crime (2000–2003).⁶⁹

Interviews carried out with current and former workers from the Arsenal plant in Kazanlak indicate that a minority of employees steal firearm parts from the production facilities and pass them on to local craftsmen who use them to make firearms (see Box 3). Officials from the regional headquarters of the NSCOC estimate that there are around 300 individuals in the region who are involved in craft production. For example, in January 2004, six individuals were arrested in the Stara Zagora and Plovdiv regions because of their connections with illegal arms manufacturing in the village of Enina, near Kazanlak. From 2002–2003, the NSCOC raided twenty illegal firearm craft shops in the Stara Zagora region alone.⁷⁰ Although this constitutes a serious problem, the situation is believed to have improved considerably over the last decade or so.⁷¹

The other important source of illegal arms is the remodelling of gas-spray pistols. According to the NSCOC, a few years ago the great majority of these weapons were remodelled in the regions of Stara Zagora and Kazanlak. Since 2003 however, craft shops involved in remodelling have also been discovered in Varna, Vratza and Sofia.⁷² The remodelling process typically starts with the purchase of Baikal gas-spray guns (Izh-70, Izh 78-8 or Izh-79), which cost about EU 100. The barrel is knocked out with a wooden hammer and is replaced with a factory-made barrel, usually stolen from a factory.⁷³ Although the authorities have considered regulating gas-spray pistols, either through import or purchase controls or a registration scheme, there are presently no restrictions in place (see Box 4 below).

⁶⁹ Source: MoI, NSCOC.

⁷⁰ Bulgarian National Television, 18 January 2004.

⁷¹ In the early 1990s, security at the Arsenal plant was worse – around 1,000 Kalashnikovs are believed to have been gradually stolen between 1990 and 1997. *Sega*, 19 January, 2004.

⁷² Unofficial letter to CSD, 15 August 2003.

Box 3: In-depth interviews with Arsenal and VMZ Workers

From 22 – 25 September 2004, ten in-depth anonymous interviews were conducted with former and current workers from two companies – VMZ and Arsenal. While VMZ workers denied that employees were involved in the smuggling of weapons or their components, the Arsenal workers claimed that thefts do occur at their company.

The Arsenal factory is close to residential areas and occupies several hundred acres in Kazanlak. There are three security perimeters at its production facilities. At the first level, the company premises are surrounded by 3 – 4 metre-high walls topped with barbed wire. At the second level, inside, there are additional gates and a simple fence that separates the administrative and production areas. Although the entry and exit points are controlled, no metal-detector inspections or searches take place. The third perimeter is at building level where, according to interviewed workers, stockpile inventories and finished-product security are best. In the various production departments security is not very strict, “except when there is a visiting delegation”.



Center for the Study of Democracy, 2004.

Photo 5: The Arsenal factory, Kazanlak: the second security perimeter on the company's premises.

All interviewed workers pointed out that security was much higher before 1989. During that period the police or military were in charge of security, while some workers were paid to report on their colleagues. While current private security guards are regarded as less competent, under-paid, and often more corrupt than their Communist-era colleagues, the factory's Executive Director pointed out that plant security was “up and above what the company should be expected or could afford to pay”.

According to the interviewees the main reason for thefts is the low salaries; EU 70 – 130 a month for those on the factory floor and EU 100 for security guards. One interviewee explained that the components for weapons can be sold on at between EU 10 and EU 50 a time depending on the part, and that an entire Makarov pistol sells for EU 200.

When interviewed, the Executive Director of Arsenal, Mr Nikolai Ibushev, admitted that there were some component thefts but pointed out that the company works in close co-operation with the NSCOC as well as the local police in order to minimise such cases. He stated that he has fired “dozens of workers not only smuggling out arms parts but even for stealing things as simple as a bolt”.

Most workers agreed that the theft of entire weapons is rare, but still theoretically possible. They also agreed that it was the underpaid or temporary workers that most often steal parts. Only one interviewee claimed that the management was involved in the theft of parts.

The most commonly smuggled weapon component was said to be the barrel, since this part requires the specialised production methods that only a factory can offer. Barrels are stolen before they can be marked with production numbers. Apparently one weak point in the production process is the discarding of defective parts that can still be used to make a low-quality firearm. No exact count is kept of discarded defective parts, which apparently allows some of them to be stolen.

Several methods for smuggling parts off the factory grounds were described, eg, “One can always throw a part across the walls and come and collect it later”. Another option is just to walk through the gates. Although there is some risk attached, it was said that if one gets caught the guards are ready “for Leva 10 – 15 [EU 5 – 7] to keep their eyes closed.” The final possibility that was mentioned was to use service vehicles.

Stolen weapon parts are usually sold to intermediaries – local coffee-shops, kiosk owners, and former workers with illegal craft-shops. Other potential clients are unemployed former workers that want money to travel abroad for work (particularly to Spain or Portugal), who just want a hunting rifle.

⁷³ Non-lzh gas-spray pistols are difficult to remodel because their barrels cannot be separated and because the gun is made of non-steel metals that cannot withstand the pressure created by firearm ammunition. Bulgarian National Television, 18 January, 2004.



Box 4: The problem of remodelled gas-spray guns

The number of gas-spray guns in circulation is unknown and difficult to estimate. Although the law required these weapons to be registered with the police until 1998, tens of thousands of them have been sold since then. A spate of high-profile murders in late 2003 committed with remodelled gas-spray led to increased calls for the regulation of their import and sale. The problem centred largely on the illegal modification of PSM-Izh 70 and Izh-79 'Baikal' models. In January 2004, under pressure from the police and the NSCOC, the Mol considered the introduction of permits for the importation and ownership of gas-spray guns.⁷⁴ One difficulty with this proposal is that the relevant legislation currently defines firearms as, "technical devices that could eject a hard object."⁷⁵ Even with a legislative amendment however, the supposedly high number of such weapons already in circulation would mean that introducing a requirement for an import permit would not significantly affect domestic supply. No action has yet been taken to regulate these weapons.⁷⁶ The Bulgarian authorities also see the fact that neighbouring countries do not control these weapons as a further impediment to any restrictions they might introduce.

1.2.3.4 Illicit trafficking

Ongoing problems with border security have left the country susceptible to illicit trafficking of a number of commodities, including SALW.⁷⁷ The most acute problem is the security of border facilities and the need to upgrade equipment for border control. Of particular concern is the security around airports and seaports, where most Bulgarian arms exports take place, in particular in the towns of Varna and Burgas, the two biggest ports on Bulgaria's 320 kilometre Black Sea coastline (see Section 4.2.4).

Despite the efforts of security and border control agencies, it is clear from this research that individuals regularly smuggle small quantities of SALW through Bulgaria's borders. Data provided by the Customs Agency⁷⁸ shows that for the period 1998 – 2003, out of a total of 86 cases in which trafficked SALW were seized, 53 cases (or 62 percent) were in vehicles transiting Bulgaria. Fourteen cases were recorded where Bulgaria was the final destination (an 'import') and nineteen cases where vehicles were leaving Bulgaria (an 'export'). In the cases of illegal 'imports' it is not clear whether the smuggled SALW were eventually destined for re-export.

According to one customs official at the Kapitan Andreevo border crossing with Turkey, 20 percent at most of all smuggled weapons and drugs are seized at the borders.⁷⁹ In fact this is probably a high-end figure because only about two percent of the passing vehicles are even inspected. The wide variation in border seizures over time also shows this percentage is likely to vary. Reported seizures of Bulgarian weapons in other European countries are also a useful indicator. According to the Bulgarian Mol, in the past two years, law enforcement agencies in Western Europe have identified approximately 100 seized weapons as being of Bulgarian origin.⁸⁰ This indicates that for most years, Bulgarian border control agencies are certainly seizing less than 50 percent of smuggled SALW.

Customs data also allows seizure rates at different border crossing points to be compared. The available figures point to the main route for trafficked SALW being the Turkey - Serbia and Montenegro route, though one must also bear in mind that the effectiveness of customs agents and border guards may vary between border points, in turn influencing seizure rates. Along the Turkey - Serbia route most of the 'transiting' arms were being trafficked to Western Europe, although a small number were also smuggled into Turkey. From 1998 – 2003 there were a total of 53 cases (or 61 percent of the total), along this route. Some of the smuggled imports on the route are

⁷⁴ *Dnevnik*, 11 January 2004.

⁷⁵ Article 4, LCESFA.

⁷⁶ Interview with representatives of Izhmaj guns, official importers of Izh guns, at the Hunting Arms Expo, Sofia, 7–8 September 2004.

⁷⁷ EU Commission, 2003, pp 104–106.

⁷⁸ The Border Police also register seizures of illicit goods, but Customs Agency data is much more comprehensive because as it registers all violations, while the Border Police only registers violations uncovered by its own officers.

⁷⁹ Interview with a Customs Officer, Kapitan Andreevo border crossing, February 2004. His reasoning was that once seizures intercept 20% or more of the illegal transfers, it is no longer financially advantageous to attempt smuggling. Since shipments continue to be intercepted regularly, one can infer the proportion of illegal shipments being intercepted is below 20%.

⁸⁰ Interview, Gaidarski, 12 December, 2004.



Bulgarian Customs Administration. 2004.

Photo 6: Fully loaded weapons seized by customs officers at the Bulgaria – Serbia border, on 09 December 2004: 11 pistols, 4 silencers, 40 rounds of ammunition.

cheap Turkish hunting weapons intended for sale in Bulgaria. Others are guns for criminal use smuggled from Serbia into Bulgaria.

The second-highest smuggling destination appears to be Macedonia, with 18 (or 21 percent of all cases), of all outgoing seizures being recorded at that border between 1998 and 2000. According to one official interviewed, in recent years Macedonia has become a destination for both illegally and legally exported Bulgarian SALW. The types of exported or smuggled weapons are not only pistols but also semi-automatic Arsenal-made hunting rifles, whose intended use is not always clear.⁸¹

BORDER CROSSING WITH COUNTRY	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL CASES
Turkey	8	0	14	4	1	5	32
Serbia & Montenegro	2	1	1	1	7	9	21
Macedonia	1	2	8	4	3	0	18
Romania	2	0	0	0	3	1	6
Greece	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Internal Customs	4	-	-	2	-	1	7

Table 13: Customs seizures by border crossing point (1998 – 2003).⁸²



Bulgarian Customs Agency. 2004.

Photo 7: February 2003, two smuggled weapons, a Kalashnikov assault rifle and a Makarov pistol, are intercepted at the Novo Selo customs post on their way to Greece.

The numbers involved in these cases do appear small and consequently in those years where a sudden increase in the number of smuggled weapons is apparent, it is usually because of a single shipment. For example, the increase between 2001 and 2002 can mostly be attributed to a case in December 2002 when a Greek man and a Bulgarian woman tried to smuggle into Greece (through the Novo Selo border post), 3 Kalashnikovs, 52 Makarov pistols, a Kalashnikov grenade launcher, 3 PSM pistols, 1 Star pistol, 10 silencers, an optical sight and 3,000 pieces of ammunition. Most of the weapons were unmarked, frustrating efforts to trace their origin.⁸³ The much higher prices of such weapons in Greece fuel ever more attempts to smuggle and sell firearms there.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Interview, Parlev, 08 July 2004.

⁸² Source: Customs Agency, MoF.

⁸³ The arms were hidden in a gas cylinder. Sega, 03 December, 2002.

⁸⁴ Customs Press Centre, 13 February 2003.



SALW TYPE	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Firearms	6	3	235 (198)	4 (2)	77 (13)	35 (36)
Gas-powered weapons	7	0	17 (12)	12 (12)	131 (12)	5 (3)
Ammunition	6,143	15	64,976 (23,560)	1,630 (358)	8,904 (680)	1,175 (1076)
Grenades	-	-	-	-	10	-
Magazines	-	-	-	1	2	8
RPG	-	-	-	-	-	(2)
Detonators	-	-	-	-	-	(15)
Silencers	-	-	-	-	17	21 (21)

Table 14: Customs and Border Police⁸⁵ SALW seizures (1998 – 2003).⁸⁶

Previous studies have suggested that international bus companies that run services through Bulgaria are sometimes used by organised criminal networks to move money, drugs, prostitutes and occasionally small arms, across international borders.⁸⁷ Customs data gathered during this research also shows that bus companies are being used to traffic illegal firearms, since they are the second most common means of transport in cases of weapons seizures at border crossing points (see Table 15). Private cars appear to be the most common method, and some of the biggest seizures involve their use, as seen in the example above.

VEHICLE TYPE	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL
Passenger car	9	1	8	2	9	11	40
Passenger bus	2	1	5	5	1	2	16
Commercial truck	-	-	6	1	2	1	10
Van	1	-	3	-	1	2	7
Airplane	1	-	-	2	-	-	3
Train	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Without vehicle	1	1	2	-	2	-	6
Postal delivery	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Total	16	3	24	11	15	17	86

Table 15: Customs seizures by type of vehicle (number of incidents).⁸⁸

Customs officers and border guards interviewed for this research assert that the 'green border' (unofficial crossing points in rural areas) is a common route for small-scale arms traffickers. In most such cases weapons are part of a larger, mixed consignment of contraband, such as drugs or migrants, indicating that trafficking in SALW is only one element of a larger problem.⁸⁹ For example, in February 2004, two smugglers were apprehended by the Border Police near the border town of Petrich accompanied by nine illegal Indian migrants. In addition to

⁸⁵ The Border Police provided data only for the 2000 – 2003 period due to technical difficulties in collecting information for the previous years. Their numbers are given in brackets.

⁸⁶ Sources: Customs Agency, MoF/MoI, NBPS.

⁸⁷ Bezlov et al, 2004, p 37.

⁸⁸ Source: Customs Agency, MoF.

⁸⁹ Interview with NBPS official, 15 July 2004.

2.6 kg of cannabis, the smugglers were in possession of a 7.62 mm Kalashnikov assault rifle and 99 rounds of ammunition.⁹⁰ This case also exemplifies another trend in recent years, the increased participation of Bulgarian nationals in trans-border crime. For much of the 1990s, drug transit through Bulgaria was the monopoly of ethnic-Albanian crime groups from the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Since 2001, however, state intervention has gradually reduced the traditional sources of income for Bulgarian crime groups, such as racketeering and the smuggling of consumer goods. As a result they have become ever more involved in the smuggling of drugs, people and occasionally weapons.

NATIONALITY	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL
Bulgarian	2	-	5	2	4	5	18
Turkish	4	-	3	1	4	3	15
Macedonian	-	2	7	2	3	-	14
Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro	-	1	4	1	-	1	7
Albanian	1	-	3	-	-	-	4
Others (over 12 different nationalities)	9	-	2	5	5	8	29

Table 16: Nationalities of individuals apprehended smuggling arms through Bulgaria (number of cases).⁹¹

1.2.3.5 Communist-era weapons

The research team were unable to find any reliable information on another potential source of illegal weapons, namely those individuals who acquired weapons during the late 1980s and early 1990s, at a time when old state structures were dissolving and controls over stocks held by organisations like the ODC, or defence facilities were weak. Some proportion of the unregistered weapons currently circulating in Bulgaria will certainly have come from this source, since as one FGD participant, previously an ODC employee, put it, “Before [1989] lots of firearms were distributed in factories – in electronics plants, in mechanical plants, in the transport companies, lots of ODC sports firearms, including hand guns, small calibre pistols, sports shooting rifles. All these were given out and nothing was being accounted for”. Although the original beneficiaries of leakages from official stocks during this period would usually have been those with strong connections to factory managers, the Communist party and its institutions, the weapons may now be widely dispersed among the population. The extent that these weapons enter the black market is difficult to judge.

1.3 Legal SALW production

Bulgarian defence facilities have traditionally manufactured a range of civilian and military SALW, including hand-guns, assault rifles, mortars, mines, rocket launchers as well as explosives and ammunition. In 2004, Bulgaria’s SALW production remains a significant component of a defence industry, which continues to produce a range of weapons, munitions and military equipment, ranging from armoured personnel carriers to communication equipment. Following the contraction of the country’s traditional markets in the 1990s, however, the SALW industry is much reduced compared to the 1980s when the defence industry employed over 100,000 people and exports were at least ten times their current levels.⁹² Estimated at US\$ 60m for 2002, the value of today’s SALW production is a tiny fraction of the country’s US\$ 20bn economy.⁹³

The companies that retain a SALW or ammunition production capacity in contemporary Bulgaria include Arsenal, VMZ, Arcus, Dunarit, EMCO, NITI and two branches of the MoD TEREM Company in Veliko Tarnovo and Kostenetz.⁹⁴ Of these, only Arcus, Arsenal and VMZ are truly active in weapons production. Several firms retain the capacity to

⁹⁰ MoI Press Release, 25 February 2004; 24 *Chassa*, 26 February 2004.

⁹¹ Source: Customs Agency, MoF.

⁹² Kiss, October 2004, p16.

⁹³ The GDP data is from the MoE, <<http://www.mi.government.bg>>.

⁹⁴ NITI stands for, ‘Science, Research, and Technology Engineering’.



produce SALW but are not actively doing so. Although it is difficult to determine what proportion of the country's remaining SALW production capability is still in use, many production lines are inactive for long periods until orders arrive. Because of this, production companies are not thought to retain significant stocks of weapons.⁹⁵ Ammunition producers aside, the only three significant SALW producers at the present time appear to be Arcus, Arsenal and VMZ.

The state-owned VMZ (Sopot) is among the largest 100 companies in Bulgaria, but also one of the least successful.⁹⁶ The company has been running at a loss for the past three years, during which time its losses have risen from US\$ 15m in 2001 to US\$ 45m in 2003.⁹⁷ The government has written off about US\$ 8m in debt and extended the repayment period for further debts EU 27m by an extra ten years in an attempt to make VMZ more attractive to privatisation, expected some time in 2005. The company produces a range of artillery and aviation ammunition, man-portable (Stinger-type) anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS), and RPG systems.⁹⁸ The production of MANPADS has apparently been halted for the time being following pressure from foreign governments.⁹⁹ Reportedly, the company has been working mainly on India-bound production, but mainly of ammunition.¹⁰⁰ VMZ's production capacities are huge.¹⁰¹ The company has two active facilities in the towns of Sopot and Iganovo, five other facilities that are now unused, and another five large storage facilities in and around Sopot. Since VMZ is located far from major cities and highways, privatisation has proved difficult. Meanwhile, communities located near production facilities remain heavily dependent on the firm. In 2004 the company laid off around 400 workers, bringing the number of employed in the company to around 3,880.¹⁰²

The privatised firm Arcus is the most financially stable SALW producer in the country, and has managed to make a profit. Its product range has doubled to about 60 items, about half of which are SALW-related. They include ammunition for Kalashnikov assault rifles, semi-automatic weapons, grenade launchers and mortars.¹⁰³ In 2002 the value of its production grew to a ten-year high of EU 30m.¹⁰⁴ It has recently invested in the construction of an ammunition disposal and recycling facility. The company is also certified for export to NATO countries; its products are exported to five NATO-member countries, to Asia and the Middle East.¹⁰⁵

Arsenal, which in 2004 expected revenues of US\$ 45m, remains the biggest SALW producer. Arsenal's exports rank it among the top 20 exporting companies in Bulgaria. Arsenal is the only Bulgarian producer of Kalashnikov-class assault rifles, under its own brand 'Arsenal' (AR) (5.45, 5.56, 7.62 mm). The AR assault rifles were originally produced as licensed Kalashnikov assault rifles and the design subsequently altered. The production of these and other products is a matter of concern to Russian defence companies and to the Russian government. In addition, the company produces pistols and ammunition for firearms and mortars.¹⁰⁶ A traditional, and sometimes controversial, customer of the company has been the Indian government (see section 1.4). The company is the Bulgarian Armed Forces' main supplier of NATO-compatible 5.56 mm assault rifles¹⁰⁷ and the main source of hand-guns and small automatic weapons (eg Shipka submachine-guns). In May 2004, the visit of the Nigerian Defence Minister to Arsenal in Kazanlak raised hopes for future exports. In 2004, the company announced that

⁹⁵ Interview with Arsenal workers following FGD, Kazanlak, October, 2004.

⁹⁶ *Capital*, 24 January 2003.

⁹⁷ Privatisation agency, <<http://www.priv.government.bg>>, accessed 16 December 2004.

⁹⁸ MoD, Defence Industrial Co-operation, 2003, p 74.

⁹⁹ Interview with VMZ management at 'Hemus 2004' – the 6th International exhibition of defence equipment, Plovdiv, 26 – 29 May 2004.

¹⁰⁰ *Trud*, 02 December 2002.

¹⁰¹ According to the Bulgarian Privatisation Agency, VMZ's capacity by production groups is as follows: field artillery ammunition, 40,000 rounds per year; assault weapons, 200,000 units per year; spare parts 120,000 pieces per year. Source: Bulgarian Privatisation Agency, <<http://www.priv.government.bg/cgi-bin/ap/03/031/loader.cgi?k=14>>, accessed 17 December 2004.

¹⁰² Telephone interview with representative of the Podkrepa trade union in Karlovo, 02 December 2004.

¹⁰³ A full list of Arcus Co. products is provided at the company's website, <<http://www.arcus-bg.com/>>.

¹⁰⁴ *Pari*, 10 January 2003.

¹⁰⁵ *Trud*, 09 January 2003.

¹⁰⁶ A full list of Arsenal's products could be found on its website, <<http://www.arsenal-bg.com/defence.htm>>.

¹⁰⁷ *Dnevnik*, 12 June 2003.

¹⁰⁸ <www.mediapool.bg>, 0-2 October 2003.

it would be supplying the new Iraqi army with SALW.¹⁰⁸

In addition to these three firms, there are others that retain a capacity to produce SALW but that either no longer do so, or that manufacture intermittently to order. They include EMCO, NITI, Samel and some TEREM factories. For example Samel-90 advertises MANPADS on its website as part of its product catalogue but appears not to produce or export. EMCO is in a similar position having recently purchased the mortar production unit of the bankrupt PIMA company in Montana.¹⁰⁹ NITI, based in Kazanlak, is the former research and development branch of Arsenal. After Arsenal's privatisation, NITI remained a separate state-owned company. It produces a small range of SALW, including the SPS hand gun, the Mazalat hunting rifle, a barrel adaptor for the Makarov hand-gun, some small arms ammunition and anti-tank mines. In addition the company produces a range of artillery ammunition. Not much is known about NITI's exports but, given the company's small production capacity and facilities, its SALW exports are probably insignificant.

Two more companies, Opticoelectron and OMZ JSC produce sights and optical parts for SALW. Two branches of the MoD-owned TEREM company, in Veliko Tarnovo and in Kostenetz also produce very small numbers of SALW. The Veliko Tarnovo branch produces spare parts and repairs small arms. The Kostenetz branch repairs rifle and mortar ammunition. It also produces a number of training and smoke grenades, as well as several types of explosives. Not much is known about the exports of either branch, or their production capacity. Dunarit (Ruse) produces light weapon ammunition, but its financial situation has been so bad that in November 2004 the Privatisation Agency was unable to find a buyer – not for the first time.¹¹⁰

The output of individual companies producing SALW is difficult to estimate from open sources, since, except for Arcus (Lyaskovetz) and Arsenal (Kazanlak), all other companies produce a wide range of other defence or civilian products. Estimates are nevertheless provided below in Table 17.

Only around 25,000 individuals are now directly involved in the defence industry and only 13,500 work in companies that either produce SALW and components, or have the capacity to do so.¹¹¹ Only between 8,000–9,000 are actually involved in the direct production of SALW, and many of these only work when large orders come in and are paid irregularly.¹¹² The decline has had a marked effect in towns like Kazanlak, Karlovo, Sopot and Lyaskovetz which have long been dependent on defence factories for employment.¹¹³ According to industry sources, employment at Arsenal in Kazanlak, a city of 81,000, fell from 25,000 to about 4,300 during the 1990s.¹¹⁴ Interviews with employees indicate that until early 2004, when contracts for Iraq were signed, staff were often sent home for weeks without work, receiving only the state-mandated minimum salary of EU 50 per month. In recent years (1995–2001) the municipalities of Kazanlak, Karlovo and Lyaskovets have seen a partial reversal of the general trend towards increased lay-offs, but the increase remains small in comparison to previous levels of employment.

¹⁰⁹ *Pari*, 19 May, 2004.

¹¹⁰ *Dnevnik*, 02 December, 2004.

¹¹¹ Gounev et al, p18.

¹¹² Personal communication with Bojidar Penchev, MoE, 02 December 2004; and interviews with industry representatives, 25 September 2003.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p 11.

¹¹⁴ Interviews with industry representatives in Sofia, 25 September 2003.



COMPANY	% STATE OWNERSHIP	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	TYPE OF SALW PRODUCED	TOTAL REVENUES (\$ MILLION)	% PRODUCTION DEVOTED TO SALW	SALW PRODUCTION 2004 (\$ MILLION)
Arsenal	35.8 (Ministry of Economy)	4,465	A full range of civilian and military small arms and ammunition; a wide range of light weapons and ammunition	45.0 ¹¹⁵ (2004)	75 ¹¹⁶	33.7
NITI	100	163	Small arms (hand gun -SPS, hunting rifle- Mazalat), anti-tank mines, rubber bullets	0.9 (2001)	UNKNOWN (probably under 50%)	UNKNOWN
Arcus	0	3,000	Pistols, revolvers, fuses for light weapons ammunition, ammunition for small arms and for light weapons.	32.2 ¹¹⁷ (est. 2004)	90	24
VMZ	100 (Ministry of Economy)	3880	Artillery and light weapons ammunition, RPG launchers, MANPADS ¹¹⁸	22.3 (2001)	UNKNOWN (probably under 50%)	UNKNOWN
Dunarit	100 (Ministry of Economy)	700	Artillery ammunition: 82 mm; 57 mm air-defence ammunition; 81 mm mortar ammunition	6.2 (2002)	UNKNOWN (probably under 50%)	UNKNOWN
Optiko-electron	0	786	Sights for small arms and for light weapons	2.5 (2002)	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
TEREM-Veliko Tarnovo Branch	100 (Ministry of Defence) ¹¹⁹	383	Hunting rifle 7.62 calibre, spare parts for small arms,	2.7 (2003)	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
TEREM-Kostenetz	100 (Ministry of Defence)	118	Repair of light weapons and small arms ammunition. Manufacture of smoke grenades.	1.6 (2003)	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN
Bendida 99	0	c 20	Hunting arms ammunition	0.2	100	UNKNOWN
Ripelon	0	c 20	Hunting arms ammunition	0.3	100	UNKNOWN

Table 17: SALW Producers.¹²⁰

1.3.1 Privatisation, reorientation and conversion

Attempts to reorganise Bulgaria's defence industry have been dominated by the need to stem the inevitable social and economic impact of the industry's contraction. Privatisation, though well advanced, has not been successful at turning around the industry's fortunes. Neither the state nor defence firms can afford to invest in the research and development (R&D) needed to produce high-technology weapons and thus they resort to producing low technology goods such as SALW. As a percentage of the defence budget (0.36–0.39 percent or EU 1.5 – 1.6m), R&D spending is well below Western-European averages of 1.2 – 2.0 percent.¹²¹ The brain drain that continues to affect the whole country has not helped either, with skilled specialists easily lured to better-paid positions abroad. This leads to a dependency on SALW production, which involves simpler technology and export. According to some publications, most of the companies are hardly breaking even.¹²² NITI, for instance, has declining sales and a huge debt to the state. It has lost many of its long-standing trading partners and has missed several opportunities for conversion. Some of its production facilities have been sold off.

¹¹⁵ *Sega*, 12 October, 2004.

¹¹⁶ Telephone interview with Nikolai Ibushev, 15 October 2004.

¹¹⁷ *Dnevnik*, 30 April, 2004.

¹¹⁸ The company has ceased production of MANPADS for the time being due to the risks that these weapons pose – interview with company employee, 26 May 2004.

¹¹⁹ On 08 October 2004 the Bulgarian Privatisation Agency opened an official privatisation process for all branches of the TEREM company, including the Kostenetz and the Veliko Tarnovo branches.

¹²⁰ Sources: MoD, 'Defence Industrial Co-operation', (Sofia 2003), pp 53–75, Financial data for NITI, Dunarit, TEREM-Veliko Tarnovo, TEREM Kostenetz and VMZ is taken from the official website of the Bulgarian Privatisation Agency <<http://www.priv.government.bg>>; information on Bendida and Ripelon is based on National Statistical Institute data.

¹²¹ MoD, 2003, p12.

¹²² Bialos, July 2001, p 12.

Conversion attempts have been affected by a lack of investment capabilities, resources and technical expertise. It has also proven difficult to adjust defence-orientated production lines to civilian use.¹²³ In addition, during conversion initiatives the government often showed indecision by maintaining production of both defence-related and civilian goods simultaneously in one factory. By attempting to preserve defence production capacities in this way, factory managers were provided with an alternative to new civilian lines of production and often chose to concentrate on producing more profitable defence-related items.¹²⁴ Ultimately, most conversion initiatives have failed because interventions were undertaken at the individual factory level rather across the industry in line with any over-arching plan.¹²⁵

Privatisation's implications with respect to the arms transfer control process have been mixed. A key consideration in this is the creation of numerous small companies. On the one hand, most newer companies have already faced up to the fierce global competition of an international market that is characterised by giant mergers, sophisticated technology and expertise and abundant resources. Many of them are partnering with larger foreign firms and have moved away from the old shrinking markets whose destinations became less and less acceptable as the country's arms export control standards gradually improved from the late 1990s onwards. But the new shape of the defence industry has also created challenges for government agencies tasked with overseeing their conduct. According to one observer of the arms transfer control process, the proliferation of new traders has increased the likelihood of illicit deals going undetected, because unscrupulous dealers almost inevitably find it easier to operate when the state has a large number of companies to deal with.¹²⁶ While critics of public ownership have rightly raised concerns about the possible conflicts of interest that may arise when government ministers appoint defence industry executives and board members (see Box 5), it should also be recognised that in some respects at least this practice makes oversight of industry easier. Once firms are entirely in private hands, the capacity of regulatory authorities must be increased in order for firms to be monitored and investigated adequately.

Box 5: 'Expert Group' concerns over conflicts of interest.¹²⁷

Three government ministries that are responsible for examining export licence applications within the Interdepartmental Commission on Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction also own production facilities – the MoI, MoD and Ministry of Economy (MoE). A Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD)/Saferworld report in 2003, *Weapons Under Scrutiny*, raised the question of whether this dual role constitutes a structural conflict of interest, making undue business influence over licensing decisions a possibility.

The MoE has majority stakes in two of the country's biggest arms trading company, Kintex and also in a smaller broker, Teraton. In addition it has full ownership of the defence production companies VMZ, Dunarit and NITI and minority shares in Arsenal and some other defence companies. The Ministry appoints the boards of the companies where it has majority stakes and has representatives on the boards of the companies where it has minority stakes. Previous MoE representatives on the Interdepartmental Commission have also held positions on the boards of these defence companies. The MoI situation is similar, though its holdings are far smaller and limited to Contactless Multiplexing Systems (CMS), which is involved in the small arms trade. The MoD holds controlling shares in TEREM and Procurement & Trade (responsible for selling MoD surpluses).

The effects of privatisation on internal SALW proliferation have also been mixed. During the chaotic early years of the process, SALW are believed to have been smuggled out of factories in significant numbers (see Section 1.2.2.3). Illegal craft production of weapons by former factory workers is also partly connected to the privatisation process, albeit as one element of broader downsizing of the defence sector. Where it succeeds, privatisation will have its benefits insofar as it provides factory workers with alternative livelihoods, and leads to diversification and/or conversion of SALW production lines. For the benefits to be maximised, however, the remaining privatisation of the sector will have to be handled with greater consistency than has previously been the case. Fortunately, more recent privatisations, like Terem's have attracted the interest of foreign investors for the first time. The relative success of Arcus and Arsenal in finding new markets and remaining soluble compared to state-owned VMZ and

¹²³ BICC, 2001, p 68.

¹²⁴ Gounev et al, p 20.

¹²⁵ Gonchar, p 75.

¹²⁶ Interview, Lowder, 2004.

¹²⁷ Source: Gounev et al, p 53.



NITI, and the growing number of ammunition-producing firms, does illustrate that certain sectors of the industry are able to operate in a competitive market environment.

1.4 SALW transfers

According to a public statement by the Deputy Minister of Economy, Bulgaria's total arms exports for 2003 were worth EU 90m.¹²⁸ Government officials have previously stated that the country's SALW exports earned US\$ 30m in 2002,¹²⁹ which, judged by global standards, makes Bulgaria a small player in the estimated US\$ 4bn annual world market for SALW.¹³⁰ The only two companies known to be exporting small arms, including ammunition, at the present time, are Arsenal and Arcus. In 2004 the total revenues of the two companies is projected to be US\$ 75m. This is significantly higher than the 2003 figure of US\$ 29.2m. According to its Chief Executive Officer, Arsenal is currently trading with 80 countries on five continents.¹³¹ Media reports indicate that Arcus has 112 trading partners in 75 countries.¹³²

COMPANY	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Arsenal ¹³³	33.7	25.0	N/A	40.7	25.6
Arcus ¹³⁴	24.0	11.4	N/A	12.7	10.4
VMZ ¹³⁵	N/A	N/A	N/A	22.0	13.5

Table 18: Estimated SALW exports (US\$ million).

In lieu of a publicly available national arms export report, data from public sources such as the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (COMTRADE), media reports and arms exports published by foreign governments offer a glimpse into the wide spectrum of Bulgarian SALW exports. Some of the largest publicly known exports are presented in the table below, while more comprehensive lists of imports and exports, compiled from publicly available sources, are provided in Annexes E and F.

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	VALUE (US\$)
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,200,400
2001	Saudi Arabia	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	12,356,438
2002	Colombia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	2,191,896
2002	Indonesia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,260,586
2002	Poland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	884,000
2003	Colombia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,641,039
2003	Georgia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,144,383
2003	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	1,081,000
2003	Poland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	3,194,000
2003	USA	Multiple SALW and SALW ammunition	1,372,451

Table 19: Largest known SALW exports from Bulgaria (2001–2003).

¹²⁸ *Monitor*, 23 August 2004.

¹²⁹ Hirst et al, 2003, p 71. Reference to interviews with government officials, 5 October 2003.

¹³⁰ The Small Arms Survey estimates the global value and volume of small arms production for the year 2000 at US\$ 7.4bn (SAS, 2002, p 15). This figure includes military small arms, commercial firearms and ammunition for both of these. This estimate is presented as a 'very tentative' approximation, and has not been improved upon in subsequent yearbooks. See also SAS, 2003, p 97.

¹³¹ Ibushev N, 15 October 2004.

¹³² *Dnevnik*, 30 April 2004.

¹³³ Ibushev N, 15 October 2004. Estimates for other years assume 25% civilian production and virtually 100% export of arms production.

¹³⁴ *Dnevnik*, 30 April 2004. Estimates for other years assume 20% civilian production and virtually 100% export of arms production.

¹³⁵ Privatisation Agency, <<http://www.priv.government.bg>>



Some of the biggest trading partners, though, such as India or Middle Eastern countries like Iraq and Jordan have not been listed. Following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Bulgarian exports, particularly to Iraq, provided a significant boost for the country's SALW industry. The USA itself is becoming a big trading partner. As well as being a major supplier to the new Iraqi Army and Police, Arsenal has now become a subcontractor for the US firm General Dynamics, has announced a deal with major Hollywood studios to produce ammunition for films.¹³⁶ According to a former member of the Interdepartmental Commission, sales of ammunition now account for around half of all Bulgaria's SALW exports,¹³⁷ a claim supported by the publicly available data on weapons and ammunition sales sourced during the research (see Annex E).

Box 6: New contracts with Afghanistan¹³⁸

In May 2004, the Bulgarian Government announced it had concluded a deal to supply the Afghan Government with US\$ 10m worth of military aid, including SALW:

- 9,499 rounds of anti-tank anti-personnel carrier ammunition.
- 94 heavy tank-mountable machine-guns.
- 242, 880 rounds of SALW ammunition.
- 410 pairs of binoculars.
- 55 – 62 tank-repair kits.
- 86 medical and 50 surgery kits.
- 20 000 rounds of artillery ammunition D-30.
- 500 heavy machine-guns with accessories.
- 790 9 mm Makarov pistols.

1.4.1 Brokered transfers

Many of the above companies' arms export deals are concluded with the help of brokers who trade internationally in arms and dual-use goods and technologies (ADGT). A list of all companies licensed to broker ADGT in foreign markets can be obtained from the Interministerial Council (see Annex D for the most recent list). As of June 2004 ten companies were listed as having full licences to broker arms, three as having limited licences and two as licensed only to broker in dual-use goods and technologies. Only one of the listed companies is based in Bulgaria – Aheloy OMP of Sofia. The twelve others are based variously in Cyprus, South Africa, Israel, St. Kitts and Nevis, Ukraine, Norway and the British Virgin Islands.

One well-known international broker that currently facilitates transfers of Bulgarian-made weapons is Imperial Defence Services Ltd, based in the United Kingdom (UK). The company's online sales catalogue offers over twenty types of rifles, machine-guns, machine-pistols and ammunition, including the Bulgarian-made Shipka 9x18 machine-pistol, which are provided via, "...offices or agents in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Nigeria, Australia, South Africa and Vietnam."¹³⁹ The company is known to have been trading at least up until February 2003 when it made a written offer to supply 200 rifles at US\$ 275 each through its Bulgarian office for a proposed shipment to Syria.¹⁴⁰

Probably the best-known national broker trading in SALW is Kintex, the state-owned company licensed to broker in ADGT.¹⁴¹ Because of previous allegations that it has carried out illegal deals (eg the company was alleged to have armed Saddam Hussein's Iraq while a UN embargo was in place) Kintex's reputation has suffered. In April 2004 the company also became caught up in accusations levelled at the Indian Government which had contracted Kintex in a multi-million dollar deal to supply the Indian Army with AK-47 rifles. The Indian Government

¹³⁶ *Sega*, 10 December 2004.

¹³⁷ Interviews, Genov, November 2003.

¹³⁸ Council of Ministers, 13 May 2004.

¹³⁹ Imperial Defence System website, <http://www.imperialdefence.co.uk/defence_equipment.htm>, and <http://www.imperialdefence.co.uk/defence_equipment.htm>, accessed on 22 November and 01 December 2004.

¹⁴⁰ *Observer*, 27 April, 2003.

¹⁴¹ See <http://www.bmv.online.bg/eng/index_en.htm>, accessed 22 November 2004.



had rejected a tender from Russia's Rosoboronexport-Izhmash consortium, despite Rosoboronexport having submitted a bid 25 percent cheaper than Kintex's.¹⁴²

A number of companies have recently become involved in the lucrative brokering business. CMS is owned by the Mol. It has been trading in small arms since January 2002 and now runs a chain of firearms stores and a firearms repair shop. Prior to that it was the main importer of arms and equipment for the Mol.

1.4.2 Transport companies and transshipments

As of July 2004, the Interministerial Council's list of transport companies licensed to trade in ADGT contained named four companies: Aviostart, Bright Aviation, Vega Airlines and Videx (see Annex D). While the first three are airlines, Videx provides ground transportation services. In addition, there are two other aviation companies that have been known to transport arms in the recent past but currently do not hold arms transport licences – Air Sofia and Zori Air Company (formerly Air Zori).

Founded in 1998, **Vega Airlines** has six aircraft. It flies to all continents and is one of the few Bulgarian companies licensed to fly in the USA and Canada. The company is also attempting to gain accreditation with the UN World Food Program. Vega Airlines successfully performs cargo charter flights around the globe and has established a good reputation providing services to countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Honduras, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and India. Most of its business, however, is conducted in Europe and Africa.¹⁴³

Aviostart, founded in 1999, specialises in charter flights. The company was contracted to serve the Bulgarian military contingent in Afghanistan. It also works in the Balkans transporting UN and KFOR staff and cargo. The company boasts experience in flying AN-12, AN-24 and Il-76 flights to European, African and Asian destinations where it has long-term contracts. The company also transports humanitarian aid. Aviostart represents a number of large Ukrainian aviation companies in the Balkans, Europe and Africa.¹⁴⁴

Bright Aviation is a privately owned company, founded in 2001. It operates three AN-12 aircraft.¹⁴⁵ It was subject to unwelcome media attention in 2003 when its AN-12 plane was briefly apprehended in Belgrade on suspicion of transporting arms illegally. The aircraft was subsequently permitted to fly once the authorities concluded that the cargo was regular delivery of ten tons of Serbian arms and ammunition to the Kenyan Police.

Videx is both a producer of explosives and a transport company. The company has a trading licence for SALW but its primary activities are related to explosives, a large part of which are for civilian use. The company transports its products both within the country and across the Balkan region.

Air Sofia, founded in the 1990s as CG Air, was the most aggressive Bulgarian transport company during the embargo against the former Yugoslavia. At present the fleet consists of six AN-12, two IL-76, one AN-26 and one AN-124 aircraft. It operates scheduled and *ad hoc* flights worldwide. The head office and maintenance base are located in Sofia but the firm has marketing divisions in London (Gatwick), Singapore, Dubai and Cotonou. As many as 400 people work for the company – pilots, technical and maintenance staff. The company has

¹⁴² Balkanalysis.com, 26 April 2004.

¹⁴³ <<http://www.vegaair.com/>>

¹⁴⁴ <<http://www.aviostart.com>>, accessed 24 October 2004.

¹⁴⁵ <<http://www.brightaviation.com>>, accessed 22 November 2004; Standard, 20 February 2003; <<http://www.videx.bg>>, accessed 22 November 2004; <<http://www.airsofia.com>>, accessed 22 November 2004.

¹⁴⁶ One report suggests that during the embargo on the former Yugoslavia, Air Sofia undertook risky flights to Podgorica and Belgrade. At that time the company operated AN-12 cargo planes. Bulgarian intelligence sources have also stated that in 1994 Air Sofia also transported rocket-launchers from North Korea to Pakistan. See Dimitrova Z, 'The Business with Death and the Yugoembargo', <<http://investigation-bg.org/show.php?id=67>>. Air Sofia also featured in a report by the US-based NGO, Human Rights Watch (HRW), which cited a shipment made on 9 April 1995, where an Air Sofia plane was detained in Cape Verde after one hundred tons of weapons were discovered on board during a stop-over. The flight was *en route* to Ecuador at the time of a border war with Peru. In this case the aircraft was not carrying Bulgarian weapons and it did not transit through Bulgarian territory. Instead the shipment was believed to have begun its journey in Belarus. See HRW, April 1999.



previously featured in media and research reports concerning the transfer of arms to sensitive destinations.¹⁴⁶

Air Zori was founded in 1994 and was issued a licence to transport special products in 1995. As of 31 August 1998 the company is no longer licensed to transport military products. Although, the company was declared bankrupt in 2001, some of the same individuals became involved in a new company, Zori Air Company, about which little is known. Air Zori is, however, known to have delivered arms to the Middle East and Africa and has also attracted the attention of the Bulgarian news media.¹⁴⁷

At the time of research none of the big state-owned transport companies, Bulgaria Air, Bulgarian Maritime Company and Bulgaria State Railways were listed as licensees, despite their routine involvement in transporting ADGT.¹⁴⁸ Other omissions on the list of registered companies appear to include numerous firms that provide road-haulage, forwarding, financial and consulting services to facilitate transfers of ADGT.

1.4.3 Transfers of concern

During the 1990s, there were frequent accusations that official exports of Bulgarian SALW had found their way to countries in conflict, or regions of instability, often with the help of international brokers via circuitous routes. The list of sensitive destinations to which Bulgarian SALW were exported includes a number of war-torn African countries such as Angola (1996–1998), Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (1999), Uganda, Sierra Leone (1998) and Burundi. The transactions in question constituted a sufficiently grave infringement of international arms control norms that they came to the attention of the Bulgarian media, the international NGOs, and a UN Panel of Experts.¹⁴⁹

Nowadays the Bulgarian Government is publicly committed to upholding a “...consistent and responsible policy of export controls.”¹⁵⁰ This commitment has been reinforced periodically by government officials in different international fora.¹⁵¹ Among government officials, the introduction of the amended LCFTADGT in July 2002 is seen as having crystallised the government’s avowed commitment to a responsible arms transfer policy by introducing an advanced regulatory framework.¹⁵² Many of the changes incorporated into the new law meet recommendations made by international observers, including the introduction of controls on the activities of both Bulgarian and international arms brokers, and a renewed emphasis on the requirement for transfers to comply with international standards on arms transfers so as to prevent the transfer of weapons to sensitive destinations.

The occurrence of large-scale (official) illicit SALW transfers appears to be a thing of the past, leading a recent study of the Bulgarian export control system to state that “in the past two years no cases of significant illicit trade in SALW have been detected.”¹⁵³ Unfortunately though, accusations that Bulgarian arms transfers are helping to fuel conflicts and that the government is not abiding by international commitments have continued to surface. In February 2004, Bolivian media reported that military intelligence had launched an investigation into possible arms imports including sub-machine-guns and AK-47s produced in Bulgaria. The arms were allegedly transported into Bolivia through Peru for use by terror groups who had carried out several attacks on policemen and soldiers.¹⁵⁴ Media reports also indicate that an export licence was issued in August 2004 for the sale of 2,500 boxes of mortar shells to Georgia, despite there being a number of unresolved internal conflicts in that

¹⁴⁷ Op cit, Dimitrova.

¹⁴⁸ For example in April 2004, a Bulgarian Maritime Company ship carrying Bulgarian-made hunting rifles was briefly detained in Istanbul while en route to Hamburg, Germany. *Dnevnik*, 29 April 2004.

¹⁴⁹ HRW, April 1999.

¹⁵⁰ Passy, 2002.

¹⁵¹ Takev, 2001.

¹⁵² Interview, Stoeva, 23 September 2004.

¹⁵³ Gounev et al, Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁴ *Novinite*, 23 February 2003.

¹⁵⁵ *Novinite*, 06 August 2004; *BNN*, 07 August 2004.

¹⁵⁶ BBC, 12 August 2004.



country at the present time.¹⁵⁵ The Interministerial Commission publicly stated that export licences to Georgia were in full compliance with international procedures and requirements for ascertaining the end user.¹⁵⁶

A review of publicly available information on Bulgaria's recent SALW exports (see Annex E) reveals that exports have gone to a number of destinations of potential concern. The potentially problematic destinations listed for the 2001 – 2003 period include Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Each of these destinations may be considered sensitive and potentially problematic in the light of the eight export criteria stipulated by the EU Code of Conduct, to which Bulgaria is aligned. It should be stressed, however, that in the absence of more detailed information as to the types of weapons transferred and the end-use guarantees received, these cases are only of potential concern. It is to be hoped that the Bulgarian Government's forthcoming arms export report will shed further light on these cases.

1.4.4 SALW imports and internal trade

Bulgaria's legal internal arms trade takes place in 269 designated gun stores around the country. There are some indications that the bulk of legally imported SALW go to the civilian market. All regional capitals have gun stores, but the large majority are located in the main population centres: Sofia (53 shops), Plovdiv (22), Burgas (17), Pleven (15), Haskovo (13) and Varna, Veliko Tarnovo and Dobrich (each of which has 2).¹⁵⁷ The main commercial importers of civilian firearms are the Bulgarian trading companies Beretta Trading and Star Force. According to gun shop owners interviewed during the research, the most popular guns they stock are all imported: Beretta (Italy), Browning (USA), Remington (USA), Walter (USA), Smith & Wesson (USA), Colt, CZ 75 B Compact (Czech), and Glock (Austria). Among hunters, Russian and Turkish-made rifles are the most popular.¹⁵⁸ Shop-keepers estimate that about 70 percent of their sales are for items between US\$ 500 and US\$ 800. The most expensive class of firearms on sale cost US\$ 1,250 and above. Approximately 20 percent of sales are of domestically produced brands that retail between US\$ 100 and US\$ 300. Based on the growth in registered firearms the legal domestic small arms market in 2003 could be estimated as being worth US\$ 3.8m to US\$ 5.7m. Since many weapon owners choose to purchase new or more expensive weapons when they can afford it, the market may be even larger than these figures suggest. On the basis of these figures however, imports would be worth an additional US\$ 3.04m to US\$ 4.56m per annum.¹⁵⁹ Interviewees from the MoD suggest that imports are somewhat higher than domestic demand, and that many gun shops are holding large inventories.¹⁶⁰ The large network of gun stores suggests that there are probably around over 40,000 small arms in stock with a significant amount of this being inventory from previous years (see Section 1.1.1 for further details).

Since the law on weapons possession was first liberalised in 1998, the number of newly registered weapons has, however, gradually been decreasing, an indication that the market is tending towards saturation.¹⁶¹

YEAR	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Newly registered arms	24,072	45,653	30,518	20,211	7,467

Table 20: Newly registered firearms (1999 – 2003).¹⁶²

Aside from the general public's demand for imported SALW, there are other possible demand drivers that could be stimulating imports. Firstly, there is the question of imports for use by Bulgarian security services. Although the main security agencies actually have surplus stocks of SALW, which would indicate that they have no need to import regular weapons, security forces require high-specification weapons for special operations (eg close protection), which will often need to be imported. Secondly, it is likely that a proportion of imported SALW are

¹⁵⁷ NPS data as of 30 June 2004.

¹⁵⁸ Interviews with various gun-shop owners during September 2004.

¹⁵⁹ Judged against these figures the import data included in Annex F for 2003 appears quite comprehensive.

¹⁶⁰ Comments by Yordan Bozhilov, International Organisations & Arms Control, Ministry of Defence, at Bulgarian Red Cross seminar on Non-Proliferation of SALW, 03 – 04 November 2004, Sofia.

¹⁶¹ *Capital*, 22 October 2004.

¹⁶² Source: Based on data from MoI, NPS.



actually re-exported at some future date, possibly after repair or upgrading. In the absence of a detailed official report on Bulgarian arms exports and imports, it is not possible to say what fraction of the weapons identified in Annex F have been re-exported, or to identify any trends.

2 Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)

2.1 Firearms injuries

The research team sought information on firearm injuries from a number of different sources in order to measure the impact of SALW on public health, including hospital and police records and media reports. Of all these sources, figures held by the NSI (compiled using information provided by municipal authorities) proved the most useful. A review of media reports of firearms injuries revealed little new information since the media rely heavily on official police statements.

Record keeping and information sharing within the public health system itself is patchy at best and no reliable data on firearm injuries could be recovered from hospital records. When hospitals receive a patient with a gunshot wound, the case is recorded only in terms of the physical injury sustained, eg 'fracture', or 'torn ligament'.¹⁶³ However, most (though not all) hospitals have a police officer on 24 hour duty, to whom all firearm-related injuries incidents are to be reported. When this happens, the police record the case and categorise it as either fatal, non-fatal, or suicide (neither the police or NSI offer a breakdown of recorded firearm injuries by the type of physical injury). Interviews with medical staff suggested one reason why police data may be less complete than NSI data – there may be occasions when the patient himself prefers not to involve the police, possibly because the injury is related to a criminal act. Provided he or she can convince the hospital staff and duty police officer not to make a report, (eg by offering a bribe), the incident will go unrecorded. A final reason may be that suicides by military personnel are recorded by the NSI but not the police, because they come under the jurisdiction of the military rather than civilian police.¹⁶⁴



Photo 8: Gun safes on display at a trade fair in Sofia, September 2004.

Saferworld, 2004.

2.1.1 Non-fatal injuries

According to police data, during 2003 the police registered 42 accidental firearm injuries. The larger part of them (27) were inflicted with legally owned arms and 15 with illegal ones. In addition, there were 35 firearm injuries that were classified as criminal acts, of which 19 were committed with registered weapons, and the other 16 with illegal ones. It is not clear from the available data what part of the accidental injuries were self-inflicted. From Table 21 one can see that after an increase between 1999 and 2001, non-fatal firearms injury rates have fallen back to their 1999 levels. It is interesting to note that despite the increasing number of registered weapons available within the country, the occurrence of firearm injuries has not increased proportionally. One possible explanation is that the mandatory firearm-handling training courses which all registered firearm users have to pass and the storage precautions they are required to take, are paying dividends. The research team attempted to find out to what extent the laws on domestic weapons storage are followed but could not reach any firm conclusions on the basis of the information available. While HHS respondents appeared well aware of safe storage practices (see Section 3.3), interviews with weapon owners indicated that many are not equipped with metal safes.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Telephone interviews with hospital staff, see Annex G.

¹⁶⁴ *Sega*, 24 January 2004.

¹⁶⁵ Interviews with weapon owners September – November 2004.



While media coverage of firearms incidents offers no new statistical information, it does provide a profile of the individuals involved in reported firearms incidents, both victims and perpetrators. It is important to note though that the media tends to focus much more on cases related to organised crime, so it is not wise to draw general conclusions about the typical victim of non-fatal shootings from this source. An analysis of media reports for the 2002 – 2003 period showed that most victims of shootings are males aged between 20 and 30 years. The majority of them are involved in illegal activities, generally drug dealing. In most cases the weapons used were illegal, though this was not exclusively the case. Makarov pistols were used in a large majority of cases. During 2003, several shootings were carried out with Kalashnikov assault rifles. These cases all had clear mafia overtones. The commonest type of injury reported by the media was shooting in the legs.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of recorded incidents	75	87	102	75	77

Table 21: Firearms injuries (1999 – 2003),¹⁶⁶

2.1.2 Fatal injuries

Statistical information on fatal injuries was available both from NSI and police records. An attempt to cross-reference the statistics showed discrepancies in the two data sets, with police records typically registering fewer incidents (this may be due to the difficulty that those compiling the original data will have had in distinguishing between accidental firearm fatalities and suicides). Police data on fatal injuries, as opposed to suicides, has been collected over a longer period, and is shown below.

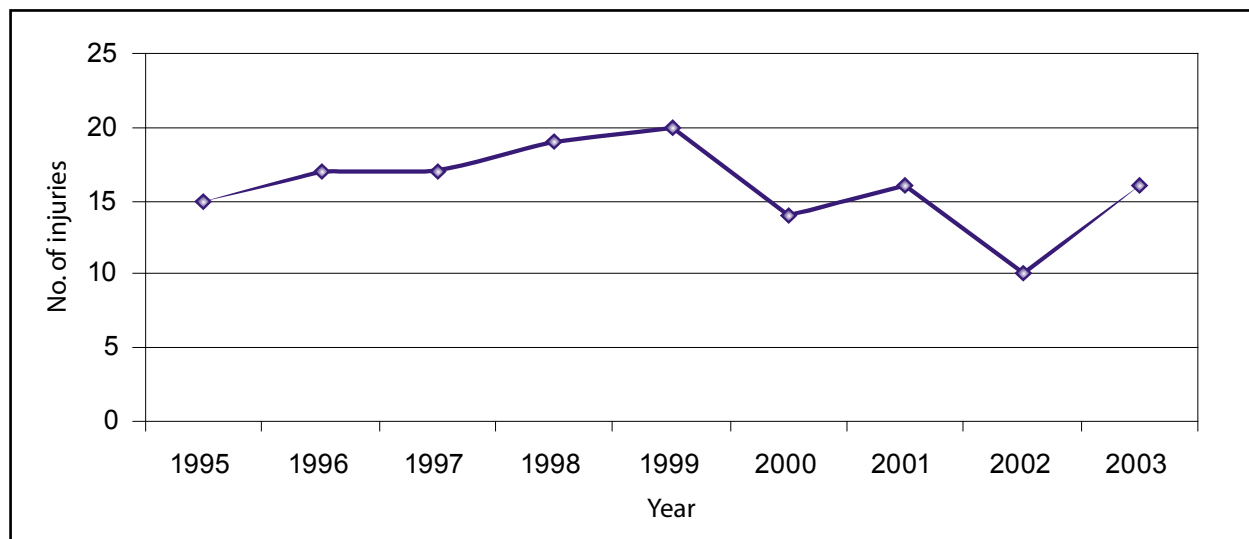


Figure 7: Number of reported fatal firearm injuries (excluding those categorised as suicides),¹⁶⁷

An analysis of police and NSI data shows that in contrast to murders, most suicides are committed with legally-owned guns. Discrepancies between police and NSI data are again apparent here for reasons explained above. Although the number of annual suicides has remained stable over the last few years, the proportion which are committed with firearms has increased (see Figure 8 below). No other obvious variables account for this increase, so it is reasonable to attribute the increased use of firearms in suicides to their wider availability among the general population.

¹⁶⁶ Source: Mol, NPS.

¹⁶⁷ Source: NSI.

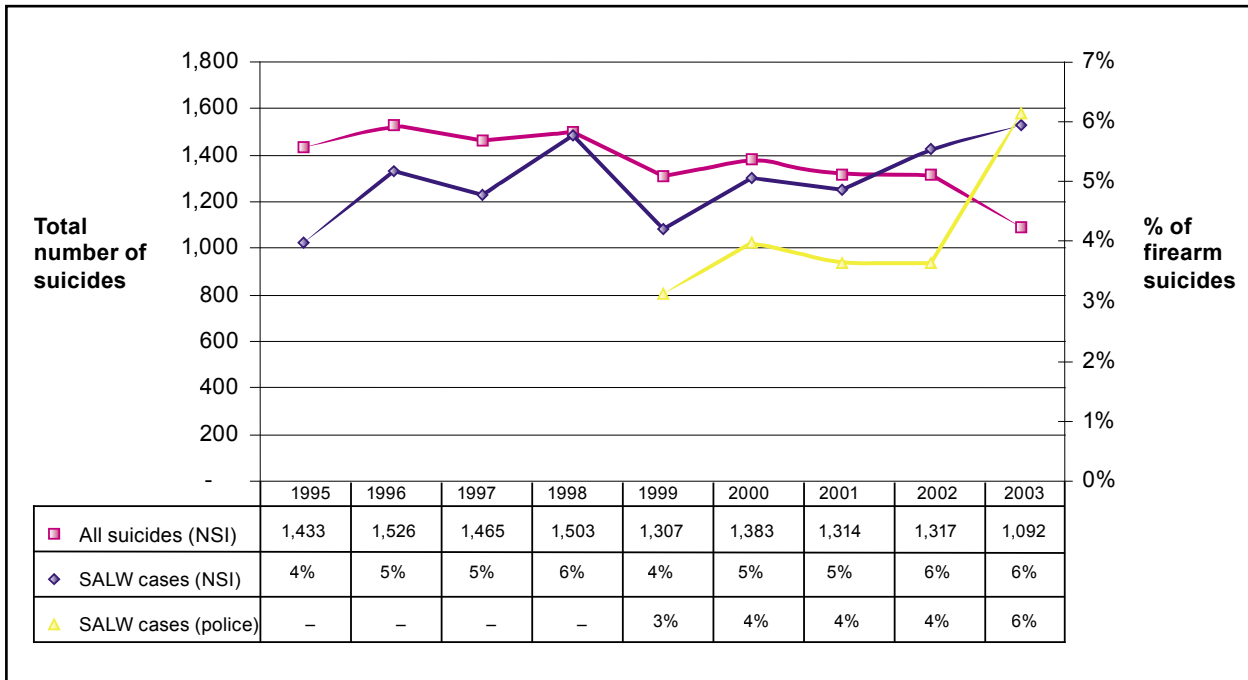


Figure 8: Firearm suicides as a percentage of overall suicides.¹⁶⁸

Males appear to make up a far larger proportion of firearm suicide victims than females do. This is probably accounted for by the fact that most registered firearm owners are male (registered owners will know where their weapons are stored, and be trained in their use). Among women the rate of firearm suicides appears roughly constant from 1995 – 2003, with a slight decrease from 2000 onwards.

Overall, Bulgaria's firearm suicide rate per 100,000 people remains low in comparison to most other countries. This is understandable given that per capita firearms ownership is still low in comparative terms.

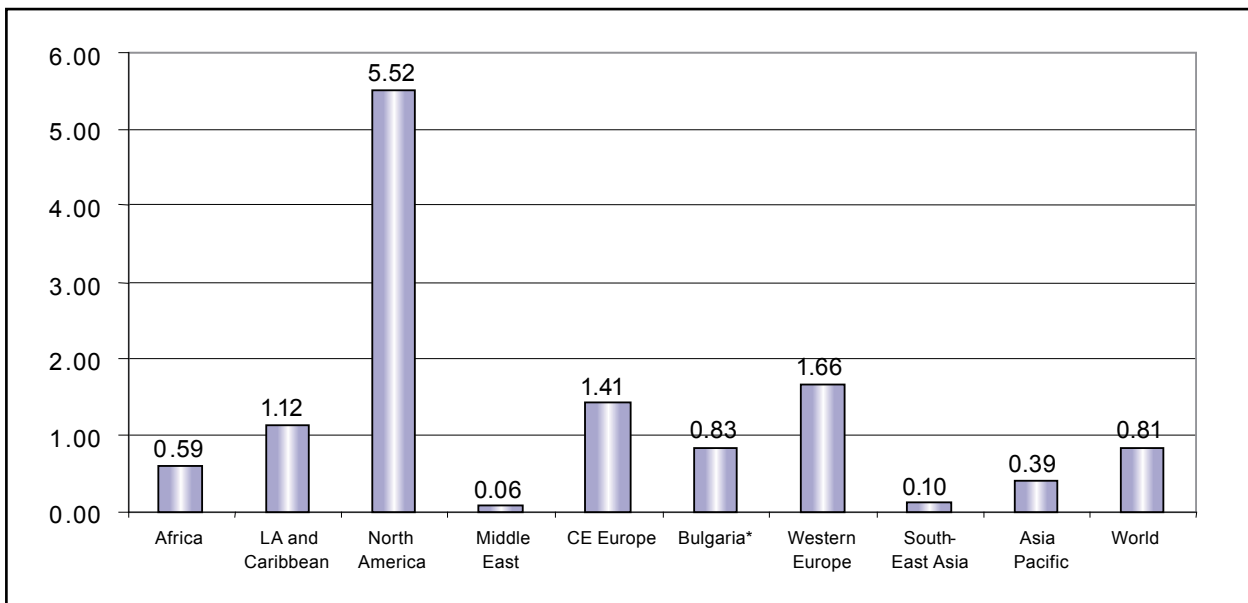


Figure 9: Firearm suicide rate (per 100,000 people).¹⁶⁹

Note: Although there is some variation, the data for other countries is generally for the period 1997–1999.

¹⁶⁸ Sources: NSI and Mol, NPS.

¹⁶⁹ Source: The figures for Bulgaria are for 2003 and are based on NSI data. Data on other countries is from WHO, 2002.



2.2 Crime attributed to SALW

According to police data, there has been a gradual reduction in recorded crime in Bulgaria between 1998 and 2003. This can be attributed to a number of factors, among them demographics, reporting patterns and the economic situation. Between 2000 and 2003 overall unemployment in the country dropped from approximately 18 percent to 13 percent (the downward trend was particularly strong among young people.)¹⁷⁰ The relationship between crime and unemployment has been noted in various studies worldwide¹⁷¹ and the relationship between murder and unemployment is notably strong in Bulgaria. As official statistics and a media review of reported murders between 2003 – 2004 both show, the social group most likely to commit murder in Bulgaria is young unemployed males. Reduced unemployment among this group is therefore likely to have had a beneficial effect on crime levels.

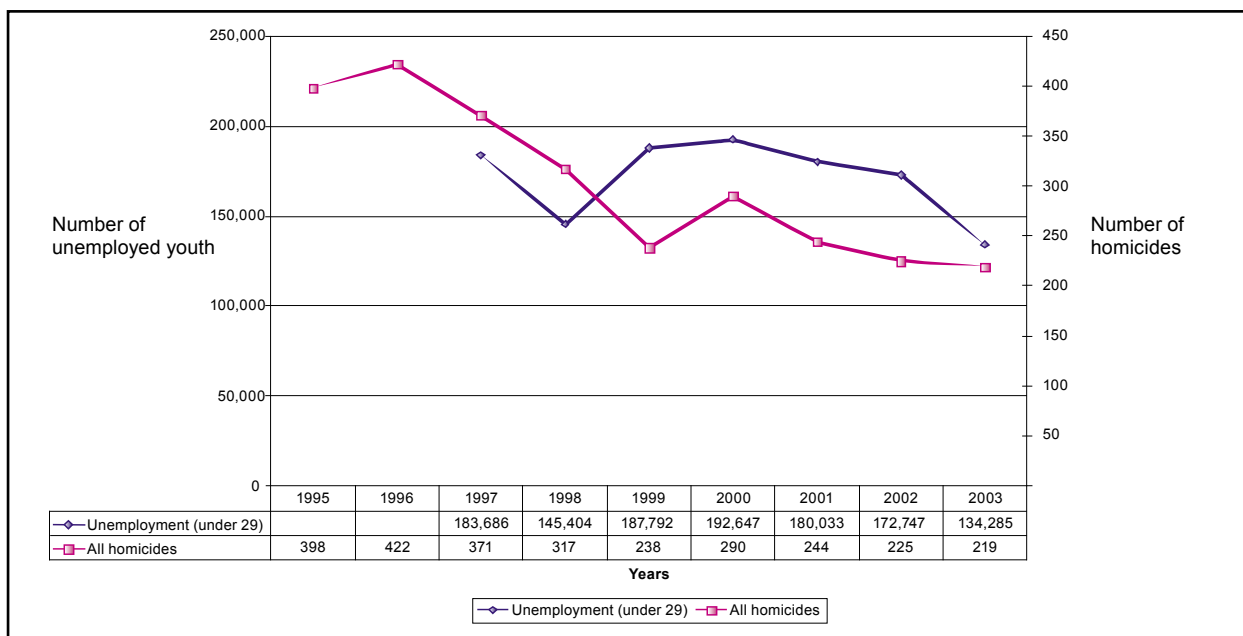


Figure 10: Homicides and youth unemployment.¹⁷²

The second important factor at work in driving crime rates downward is demographics. Bulgaria's population has been rapidly ageing and declining during the period 1990 – 2003, dropping from around 8.7m to 7.7m people. Low birth rates and a high emigration rate among people under 35 years of age are the causes of this decline. Among these emigrants have been criminals, who, like their law-abiding fellow citizens, have sought opportunities in Western countries.¹⁷³

In view of the decrease in recorded crime between 1998 – 2002, this section concentrates more on trends in gun-crime statistics than absolute numbers of crimes. Figure 11 below shows the average number of gun crimes (crimes in which firearms were used) per 100,000 persons that occurred each year in the different regions of the country over the same period. It shows that two regions have a notably high occurrence of gun crimes in comparison to the rest of the country – Sofia-region (not to be confused with Sofia-city) and Pleven. A possible explanation for the higher incidence of gun crime in these regions may lie with the activities of organised crime groups which are known to have a strong presence in both areas.

In order to determine whether there is a link in Bulgaria between rates of gun crime and the availability of SALW, the research team examined the correlation between the number of gun crimes in the different administrative

¹⁷⁰ National Employment Agency <<http://www.nsz.government.bg>>.

¹⁷¹ See for example Raphael, 2001.

¹⁷² Sources: NSI/Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, National Employment Agency.

¹⁷³ *Deutsche Welle*, 27 November 2003; *Monitor*, 22 September 2003; *Dnevnik*, 14 November 2002.



regions and: (a) the number of registered firearms in a specific region, (b) the number of confiscated illegal/stolen firearms in the region (as a proxy for the number of illegal weapons there). The statistical analysis shows that the incidence of firearms crimes has a stronger correlation with the number of the registered weapons in the regions than with the number of confiscated illegal weapons. Yet data provided by the CHDO shows that more crimes are committed with illegal weapons. One possible explanation is that the number of confiscated illegal weapons in the different regions is not a good proxy for the real distribution of illegal weapons, perhaps because the efficiency of police forces in seizing illegal weapons varies across the country. Another possible explanation for the observed stronger relationship with the number of registered weapons is that most unsolved gun crimes are actually committed with registered weapons. Nevertheless, the strong relationship shows that there is a clear link between the crimes committed with firearms and the number of registered weapons in the different parts of the country. A recent event serves to reinforce the point: in January 2005, police arrested 49 people believed to be connected to a prostitution ring in the town of Pamporovo. Altogether the group was found to be in possession of eleven registered pistols. When this fact came to light, the Mol's Chief Secretary demoted the directors of the CHDO in three district police departments in the Plovdiv region, on the grounds that their offices had issued weapons permits to people with criminal records.¹⁷⁴

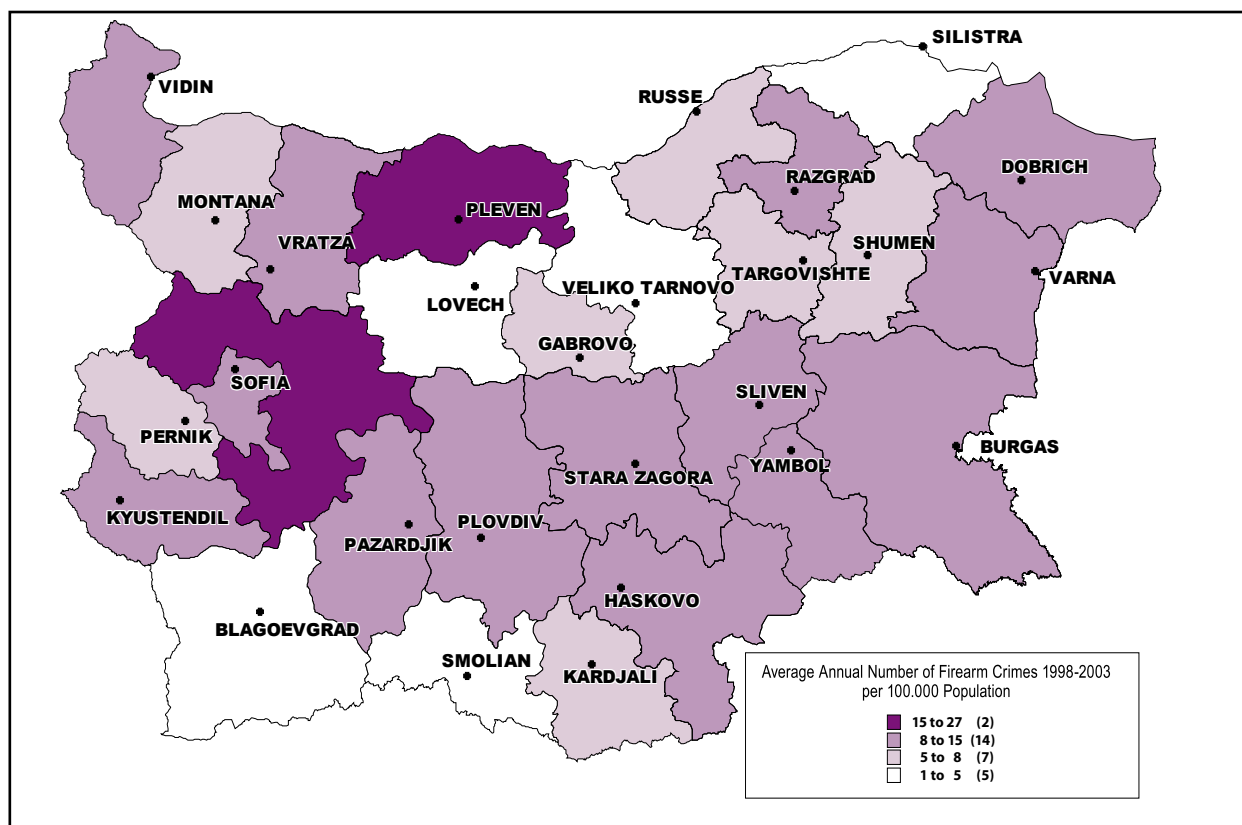


Figure 11: Average annual number of gun crimes per 100,000 persons (1998–2003).¹⁷⁵

2.2.1 Illicit possession, production and trade in SALW

The illegal possession, production or trade in firearms, ammunition and explosives are covered by Penal Code Articles 337 and 339. As Table 22 shows, in recent years the trend with respect to all crimes under Articles 337 and 339 has been in keeping with the general crime trend. After a sharp increase that resulted in 1,511 registered cases in 1996, the number of recorded crimes of this type had fallen almost by half by 2000. Fluctuations for the next three years pointed to no significant change. As the table also shows, between 1998 and 2003, the share of the proportion of crimes recorded under these articles which featured only weapons has increased.

¹⁷⁴ Banker, 22 January 2005.

¹⁷⁵ Source: Mol, NPS.



	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (6 mo.)
Article 337 & 339	1,511	1,283	1,207	1,083	743	829	628	702	538
Firearms only	-	-	166	154	105	127	150	189	-

Table 22: Number of reported crimes involving illegal manufacturing, trade, transportation, or possession of arms.¹⁷⁶

Box 7: Demographic profile of offenders

It is interesting to note the perpetrators of crimes involving the illegal manufacturing, trade, transportation or possession of arms in Bulgaria, is quite different from that of other crimes. Firstly, 99 percent of all offenders are males as against 95 percent for all other crimes. More unusual still is the age structure of the offending group. Police records show that on average, 62.3 percent of all crimes are committed by individuals between the ages of 14 and 29. However, this age group constitutes only 23 percent of the perpetrators charged under Articles 337 and 339 of Bulgaria's Penal Code. Also, individuals over 50 years of age generally commit only 5 percent of recorded crimes, while they commit 28 percent of crimes related to the illegal possession of crime weapons. One plausible explanation for the observed differences is that a large proportion of the offenders are ex-factory workers who have resorted to illegally manufacturing and selling weapons and are now aged between 50 and 60 years. The recidivism rate for this group is also somewhat lower than for other crimes – 77 percent of the perpetrators are first-time offenders, while for all other crimes the average is 65 percent.

Table 23 below gives a detailed comparison of all categories of gun crime for 2002–3. The types of crime included in the table are those in which the use of weapons is a significant element, or has an important social impact, viz homicide, property-crimes, hooliganism, as well the 'illegal manufacturing, possession and storage of firearms, explosives, and ammunition'. From the table below it is obvious that the two important categories that need to be examined are armed robberies and homicides. Here the non-reporting of crimes is an important element. However, while Crime Victimization surveys, such as those ones conducted by Vitoshka Research (2002 and 2004) show that some part of the gun crimes that occur in Bulgaria go unreported, the data set does not support statistically valid conclusions about the extent of the problem.

GUN CRIME AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CRIME *						
CRIME AS CLASSIFIED BY PENAL CODE ARTICLES	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Homicide (Article 115-127)	19.09%	14.56%	14.95%	13.83%	19.07%	20.85%
Attempted murder (Article 115-116-,118)	13.36%	14.50%	28.07%	22.53%	23.46%	21.94%
Deliberate serious bodily harm (Article 128, 131, Par.1.5)	4.21%	2.21%	9.88%	8.54%	6.59%	4.49%
Robbery (Article 198-200, excl. motor vehicles)	4.49%	4.31%	6.53%	5.84%	2.71%	2.15%
Illegal Production, Possession, and Use of Firearms, Ammunition, and Explosives (this is the percentage of firearms within the entire category)	12.92%	13.95%	13.34%	13.20%	15.45%	17.06%
Gun crimes as a percentage of all crimes	0.54%	0.55%	0.56%	0.55%	0.47%	0.49%

Table 23: Gun crime as a percentage of total crime (1998–2003).¹⁷⁷

Note: Percentages are for particular entries under the Penal Code. So, eg in 1998, SALW were used in 19.09 percent of all crimes ascribed to violations of Articles 115-127 of the Code. The final row shows in what percentage of all recorded crimes SALW were used. Several facts should be borne in mind when using the above data. Firstly, while latency for non-gun-related crime has increased slightly for the 2001 - 2004 period, there is no evidence that this is the case for gun-crime. Since latency for other types of crime included in the table (eg murder, armed robbery), are also thought to be low or insignificant, the observed changes, may be viewed as realistic.

¹⁷⁶ Source: Mol, NPS. These crimes refer to the crimes registered under the Penal Code Articles 337 to 339. Article 337 includes the illegal manufacturing, storage, sale, transportation, import, export of all arms and explosives. Article 338 includes the storage or transportation of arms and explosives without the mandatory safety measures. There are only a few cases under this article. Article 339 includes the illegal possession of arms and explosives.

¹⁷⁷ Source: Analysis based on data from Mol, NPS. A more extensive version of this table, which includes data for other crimes over a longer period is available from Center for the Study of Democracy, <<http://www.csd.bg/en/euro/arms.php>>.



Finally, it is worth noting that the above data and analyses depend for their veracity on reporting patterns and police systems for collecting and managing data. Perhaps the most important consideration is what proportion of actual crime goes unreported. A number of surveys have indicated that Bulgaria's levels of unreported crime are low compared to that of the USA and much of Western Europe.¹⁷⁸ However, recent studies conducted by CSD have shown that the latency rate for reported crime actually increased during the above period.¹⁷⁹ If other factors remain the same, as people become less inclined to report crimes to the police, official statistics tend to register a decrease in crime levels anyway. One of the main factors that determines the public's propensity to report crimes is their level of confidence in the police, a topic which is covered in more detail in Section 3.2.

2.2.2 Homicide

Firearm homicides represent a significant share of all homicides in Bulgaria and the proportion of murders committed with a firearm has been on the increase since 1999. The information presented below in Table 24 is based on a comparison of NSI and police data. While the police data is based on reports from district police departments, the NSI data is compiled using death certificates, which are filled out by registered doctors. These certificates are sent to the municipality where a statistical database is kept and the NSI then collects data from municipalities around the country.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately these two data sets do not agree, not only on the total number of homicides but particularly with respect to firearm homicide. As previously noted, this is likely to be because cases that involve military personnel are subject to the military court system and will not appear in police statistics. Besides the NSI, no other state body collects homicide information from all sources. Other possible reasons for discrepancies would include cases where medical staff report the death as a homicide, but the death is re-categorised (eg as a suicide), following a post-mortem.¹⁸¹

Table 24 below shows the official annual homicide rate in Bulgaria per 100,000 people. It shows that while absolute numbers of both homicides and firearms homicides have been decreasing in line with the general population decline in recent years, the percentage decrease per head of population has been much lower for firearm homicide than the general homicide rate (12 or 28 percent depending on whether NSI or police data are used).

YEAR	POPULATION	NSI DATA				POLICE DATA			
		NO. OF HOMICIDES	HOMICIDE RATE	NO. OF FIREARM HOMICIDES	FIREARM HOMICIDE RATE	NO. OF HOMICIDES	HOMICIDE RATE	NO. OF FIREARM HOMICIDES	FIREARM HOMICIDE RATE
1998	8,256,800	317	3.84	88	1.07	351	4.25	67	0.81
1999	8,210,600	238	2.90	51	0.62	309	3.76	45	0.55
2000	8,170,200	290	3.55	70	0.86	301	3.68	45	0.55
2001	7,913,300	244	3.08	73	0.92	282	3.56	39	0.49
2002	7,868,900	225	2.86	65	0.83	221	2.81	45	0.57
2003	7,750,000	219	2.83	74	0.95	192	2.48	49	0.63
Percentage change 1998-2003			-36%		-12%		-87%		-28%

Table 24: Firearm homicide and homicide rate per 100,000 people.¹⁸²

At 0.95 per 100,000 people the Bulgarian firearm homicide rate is much below that of other Central and Eastern European countries.¹⁸³ The comparative figures do, however, include the countries of the former Yugoslavia and

¹⁷⁸ A commonly advanced explanation is the enduring habits of the Communist period, during which people were strongly encouraged to report all suspicious activities, whether criminal, or merely anti-social.

¹⁷⁹ CSD, 2002.

¹⁸⁰ Order No. 16 from 21 August, 1996 on the Organisation of Hospital Medical Care in State Hospitals, State Gazette No. 76 from 06 September, 1996.

¹⁸¹ Interview, Kolev, 23 November 2004.

¹⁸² Source: NSI/Mol, NPS.

¹⁸³ SAS 2004, pp199-200.



Soviet Union, where violent conflicts and ethnic tensions in several states have resulted in high overall firearm homicide rates. It should be noted that Bulgaria's firearm homicide rate is still more than twice that of Western Europe.

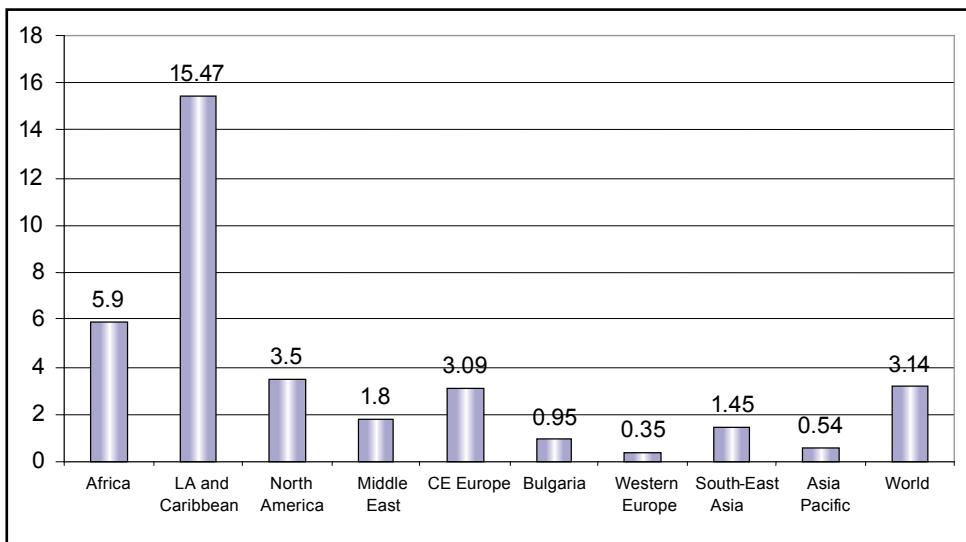


Figure 12: Firearm homicide rate (per 100,000 people).¹⁸⁴

2.2.2.1 Youth and firearm crime

One worrying trend is a gradual increase in the number of young victims of firearm crime during the last five years, particularly 16–18 year olds (see Figure 13). The two graphs below show the total number of under-18s who have fallen victim to crime, or who have participated in gun crimes from 1998 - 2003. Although the graphs show an increase in the number of young victims over the period, the number of perpetrators has remained relatively stable. The total number of under-18s reported as having been victims of gun crime has also remained small.

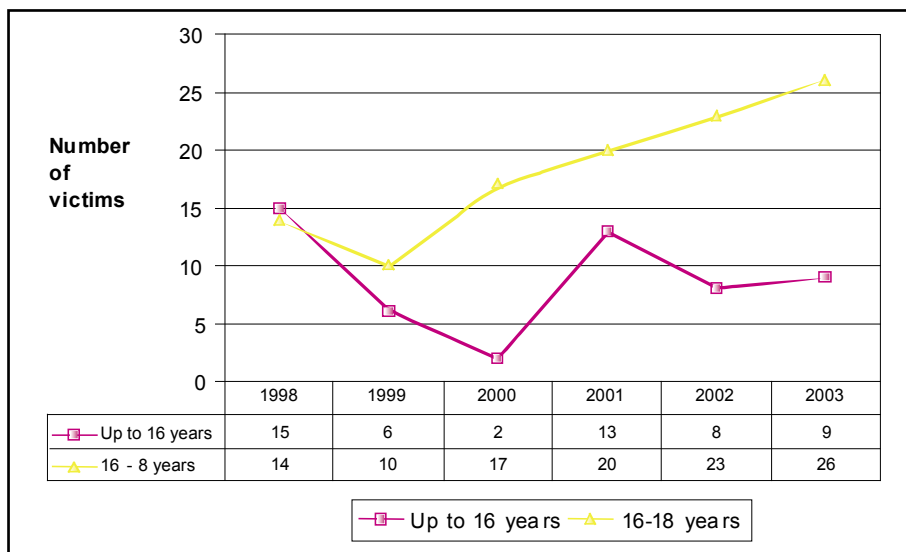


Figure 13: Number of under-18's reported as having been victims of gun crime.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Source: Data on world regions is from WHO, 2002. Data on regions varies by country but is generally 1997 – 1999 period. Bulgarian data is for 2003 and is based on NSI data.

¹⁸⁵ Source: Mol, NPS.

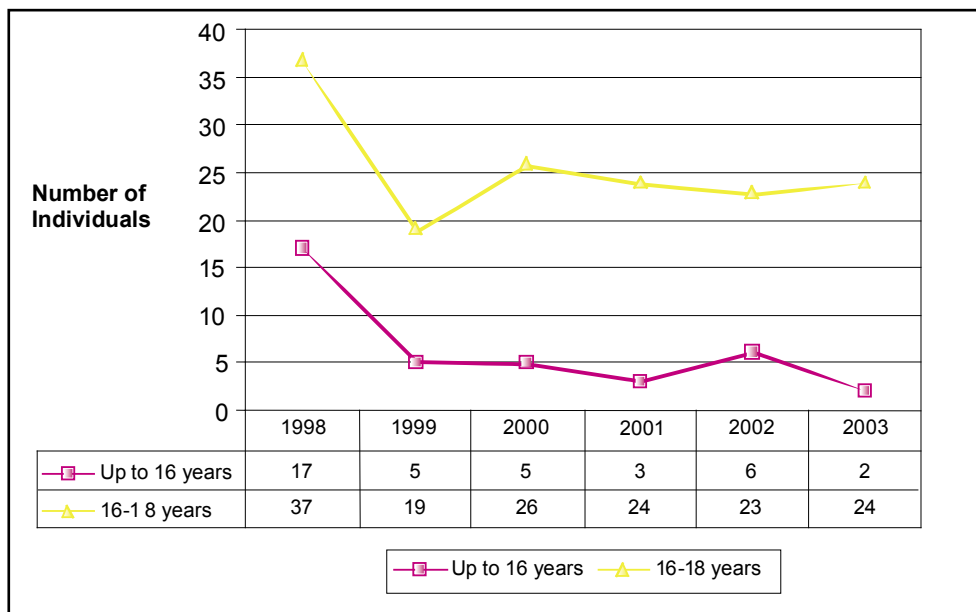


Figure 14: Number of under-18's reported as having committed gun crimes.¹⁸⁶

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of incidents	19	28	18	9	6	7	6	4

Table 25: Homicides and attempted homicides committed by under-18's.¹⁸⁷

2.2.2.2 Gender and firearm homicide

According to NSI data, since 2001, the share of female gun crime victims has doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent, to the point where it exceeds the global average of ten percent (see Figure 15 below). Media reports indicate that domestic violence accounts for a significant portion of these crimes, particularly murders.

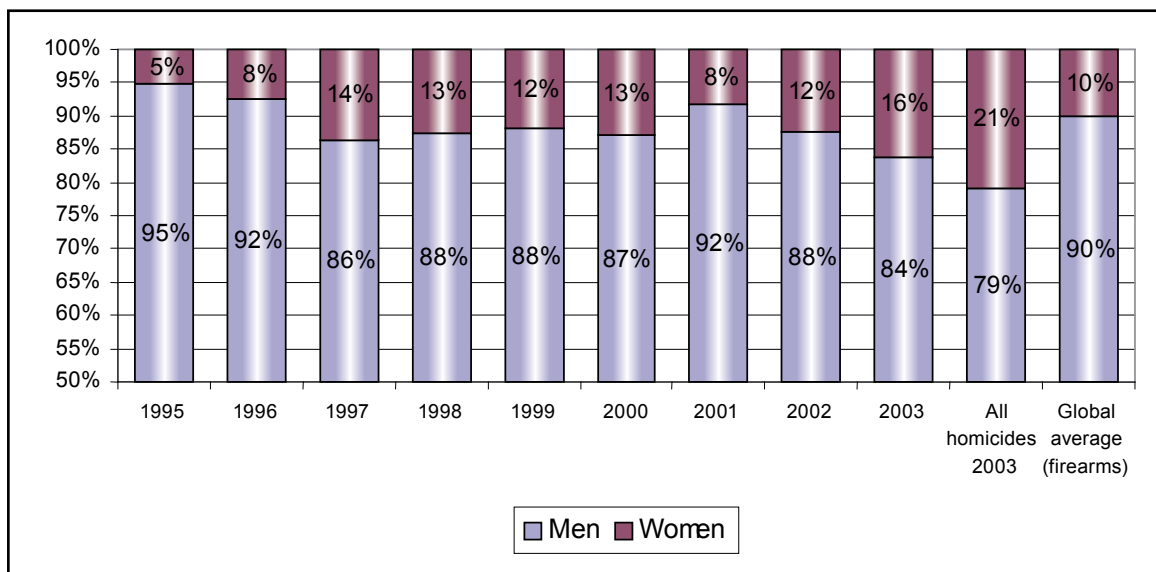


Figure 15: Firearm homicide victims by sex (1995–2003).¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Source: Mol, NPS.

¹⁸⁷ Source: Mol, NPS.

¹⁸⁸ Source: NSI/SAS, 2004.



The table below indicates that the majority of the firearm homicide victims, particularly the men, tend to be above 30 years of age.

AGE	FEMALE	MALE
Up to 30	33%	27%
30–50	42%	52%
over 50	25%	21%

Table 26: Victim age profile (2003).¹⁸⁹

2.3 Impact on development

Although this research shows that SALW are having negative effects in Bulgaria, primarily in connection with crime, negative economic impacts are not readily apparent. Imprecise medical data did not allow the costs of firearms injuries occurring in the country to be estimated with any precision. However, since the number of all firearms casualties remains comparatively small, it is reasonable to conclude that public health costs resulting from firearms misuse are not a significant impediment to economic development in contemporary Bulgaria. In fact, when compared with other public health threats such as road traffic accidents, the costs imposed on the country by firearm casualties look small in comparison. While there are, on average, 16 accidental firearm deaths in Bulgaria a year, transport accidents accounted for an average of 1,055 deaths over this period.¹⁹⁰

It is more difficult to judge the effect of widespread feelings of insecurity among the population on social and economic development. The lack of confidence that HHS and FGD respondents typically showed in government, institutions and society generally do suggest a hypothesis, namely that by undermining confidence in institutions, insecurity and corruption are hampering economic growth. Nevertheless, it is fairly clear from the HHS that in most cases SALW proliferation does not lie at the root of public perceptions of insecurity (see Section 3.1). Moreover, the general public's feelings of insecurity are not shared by international business. According to a leading international risk assessment organisation, the Control Risk Group, weapons proliferation and gun crime are not perceived as particularly big issues and therefore do not impact on Bulgaria's global security and investment risk ratings.¹⁹¹

2.3.1 Developmental impact of SALW smuggling

Although SALW proliferation in Bulgaria may not have significant effects on public health, or pose an immediate threat to community security, there are likely to be developmental costs associated with the illicit production, use and smuggling of SALW in and through Bulgaria. Smuggling in particular has discernible effects. So far as can be determined, the main impact of the SALW successfully smuggled out of Bulgaria has been to increase the firepower of organised crime structures in Western Europe. SALW being smuggled out of Bulgaria are known to have found their way to countries as far afield as the UK and Spain. For example, in November 2003, Spanish police, supported with information supplied by their Bulgarian counterparts, arrested six Bulgarian nationals in Gandia, Spain. They were found to possess 50 spray-gas pistols (apparently from Bulgaria), that had been remodelled into working hand-guns. In addition, there were seven Kalashnikov assault rifles.¹⁹² In their submission to the United Kingdom All Party Parliamentary Group on gun crime, the UK Association of Chief Police Officers quoted Bulgaria as the source of illicit altered Baikal spray guns, which are being recovered in increasing numbers from criminals across the UK.¹⁹³ In another recent seizure, Italian border police at the sea-port in Venice found 40 automatic

¹⁸⁹ Source: NSI.

¹⁹⁰ Average calculated for 1995 – 2003 based on NSI data.

¹⁹¹ Interview, Stratton, 21 October 2004.

¹⁹² MoI press release, 14 January, 2004.

¹⁹³ All Party Parliamentary Group on Gun Crime, November 2003, p 22.

hand guns, 40 silencers, several thousand rounds of ammunition, laser-optical sights, and detonators, hidden in special compartment in a car coming from Bulgaria.¹⁹⁴

In countries such as Spain and the UK, which serve as the end-point for Bulgarian SALW traffickers, there will certainly be negative effects on levels of crime and perhaps even terrorism. However, there is also reason to presume that countries along the trafficking routes suffer detrimental effects connected with the gangs operating in their territory, Bulgaria included.



Figure 16: Known smuggling routes for SALW illegally trafficked from Bulgaria.¹⁹⁵

In addition to hampering legitimate business, SALW smuggling networks, as a form of organised crime, hinder social development in other ways, particularly by undermining the workings of state institutions and imposing higher security costs (see Box 8).

¹⁹⁴ *New Television*, 08 November 2004. One explanation offered by the Bulgarian police is that the firearms were destined for Bulgarian criminal groups based in Italy – see *Sega*, 09 November 2004.

¹⁹⁵ Source: CSD/Saferworld analysis.



Box 8: Organised crime and gun violence

The expansion of the European Union to 25 members has increased the opportunities for organised criminal groups and increased the territories from which they can operate. Romania and Bulgaria are due to join the EU in 2007, but already organised criminal groups are involved in a wide range of activities that impact upon EU countries. Bulgarian organised crime groups are notorious for their skills in currency counterfeiting, forging credit cards and different types of documentation, including identity and travel documentation. They are also particularly active in vehicle crime across the EU and the trafficking of human beings for sexual exploitation. While the illicit trafficking of firearms is not widespread nor the main activity of any one organised crime group, Europol anticipates that the practice is likely to increase as organised crime groups resort to more violent means. Eastern Europe's status as a major source of trafficked weapons is also likely to exacerbate the problem.

In recent years criminal activity in Bulgaria, especially in Sofia, has noticeably intensified. 'Underground-combat' has erupted on several occasions with dozens of incidents of murder and attempted murder. Although efforts have been made to counter the rise in mafia-related gun violence, authorities complain of the difficulties in successfully prosecuting assailants. Often, witnesses are intimidated against testifying, lawyers refuse to take on cases and evidence disappears at the hands of corrupt police officials. Although legislation is in place, it is not enforced and corruption and a lack of capabilities limit the effectiveness of police to deal with powerful organised crime groups. Practically no major criminals have been successfully prosecuted in recent years, mainly because of corruption and a malfunctioning judiciary.¹⁹⁶ The authorities' impotence was illustrated in October 2003 when Interior Chief Secretary Gen. Boyko Borissov, recommended to Sofia citizens that they leave restaurants immediately if heavily guarded businessmen enter the establishments. Clashes between organised crime groups have resulted in more than fifty mob hits in the past three years, including the following high-profile incidents:

- In December 2003, Bulgarian media reported the authorities' concern that the shooting of an alleged contraband lord Konstantin Dimitrov would provoke a 'war' between rival groups.
- In December 2003, two assassins dressed as monks shot drug dealer Dimitar Christov and two of his bodyguards to death in Sofia.¹⁹⁷
- Underworld boss Milcho Bonev and five of his bodyguards were shot dead in July 2004 by assassins dressed in police uniforms.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Europol, pp 17-18, 2.

¹⁹⁷ *Dnevnik*, 23 December 2004.

¹⁹⁸ *Novinite*, 10 October 2003; *Novinite*, 7 November 2004; *SF Chronicle*, 12 September 2004; and *Novinite*, 22 December 2003.

3 Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)

3.1 Perceptions of security

A strong sense of discontent and insecurity pervaded the FGDs, with participants often dwelling on the serious economic and social problems that Bulgaria has struggled with for many years, including low incomes, unemployment, high crime, corruption and a public culture of impunity. Great distrust in the state and its institutions was expressed at any opportunity and government-led reforms of various kinds criticised. In general, expectations were pessimistic, perhaps unduly so. Events such as NATO membership and moves towards EU accession were often framed in terms of the imposition of Western conditions. Perhaps only the younger participants felt uncomfortable with the negative mood of which other discussants seemed accustomed to. Young people in discussions were more likely to emphasise the role that individuals can play in changing conditions and to talk in the first person rather than third person terms, “Everyone complains that the state isn’t functioning. If everyone realises that he or she is part of this state, as individuals or part of the group, they can help the state develop.” (V,5).¹⁹⁹

In general, FGDs on security issues evoked a certain nostalgia for times past, and people sometimes questioned whether there could be security nowadays at all, “There isn’t a single aspect of security that we didn’t lose.” (I,8). HHS results showed economic concerns to be paramount, with arms and violence rated by very few as a major factor causing insecurity (see Figure 17). When asked how the level of their personal security had changed during the last year, just under 10 percent of respondents stated that it had deteriorated, while most (79.2 percent) felt it to be stable.

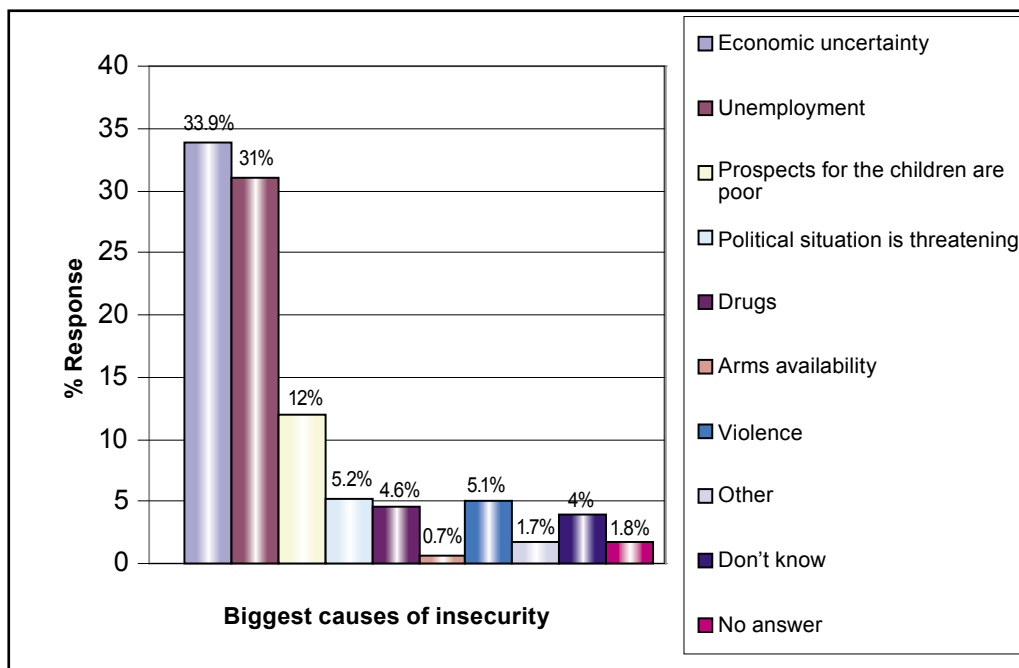


Figure 17: What is the biggest cause of insecurity to you personally and to your family? Base N = 1250.

The question of crime tended to dominate discussions of security and despite only 17 percent of people falling to crime annually²⁰⁰ the HHS found that a majority of Bulgarians are afraid they will become a victim of crime in the future. Crimes against property were uppermost in people’s minds, with burglary rated as the most common crime committed against people in the previous three months:

¹⁹⁹ Information contained in this section of the report is derived largely from the findings of FGDs and HHS conducted around the country during July 2004. References to comments made during FGDs denote the number of focus group (Roman numeral), and respondent (Arabic numerals), as detailed further in Annex A.

²⁰⁰ Bezlov et al. 2005, p.5.

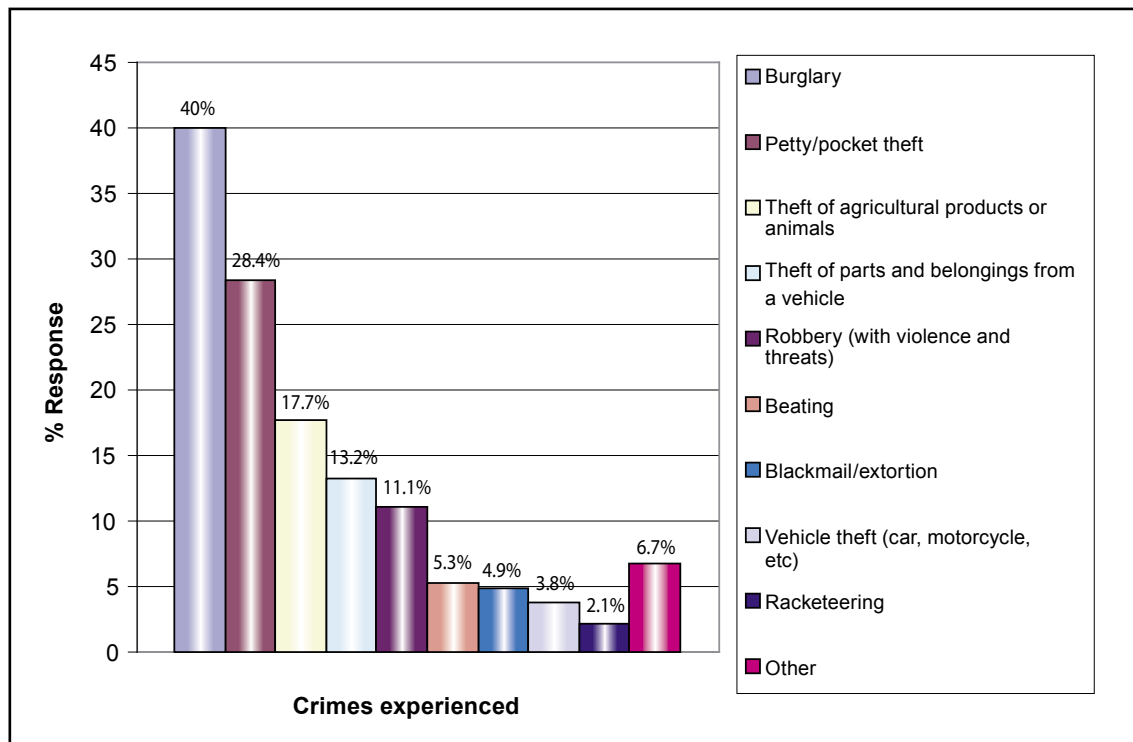


Figure 18: Of what crime were you or your household a victim? (during the last three months) (Base = 91).

In FGDs it was clear that most participants blame the Roma minority for the bulk of these crimes. Participants had some idea of Roma living conditions, but most perceived the Roma as not wanting to work. For their part, the Roma FGD participants felt threatened by discrimination and racial violence meted out to the darker-skinned boys in the community by ‘skinheads’, ‘normal Bulgarian boys’ and the police (VI,3,8,9). They noted that whenever there is unemployment or poverty, their community comes out worst and that these conditions explain the criminalisation of some Roma, “90 percent in the state steal. The big fishes steal, using documents and stuff. We from the minorities steal, but not as they do.” (VI,2).

Other forms of theft and violence against the person were also serious concerns for FGD participants. Less visible forms of crime such as tax dodging or the misuse of official powers were raised frequently in discussions and were seen as indicative of a moral decline that has occurred since 1989. ‘The state’ was often said to be ultimately to blame for causing these crimes.

Feelings of insecurity vary by region with the rich and propertied in Sofia and Varna experiencing high anxiety. The Kyrdzhali and Kazanlak groups (where the contraction of the defence industry has led to higher unemployment) were more likely to point to unemployment, low or irregular incomes, inadequate social security systems and inequality as their major concerns. In Gotse Delchev participants felt that compared to other areas they have relatively low levels of unemployment and crime. Instead, it was the national problem with organised crime and day-to-day law-breaking that concerned them most. Like the ethnic-Turkish group in Kyrdzhali, this group noted the existence of inter-ethnic tension in the area.

FGDs allowed respondents to elaborate on the social tensions in contemporary Bulgaria that concern them most:

- **Rich vs Poor:** the rich, it is said, can afford anything, be it goods or power, “they pay in advance to prevent control.” (V1,3,5,6,7).
- **People vs Politicians:** “they ruined the country in 14 years both economically and morally and they continue to do so.” (II,2).
- **Ethnic Majority vs Minorities:** some members of ethnic-Bulgarian groups showed hostility of varying degrees towards Pomaks and Turks. During the discussion in Gotse Delchev, Pomaks were said to have large stores of

arms, and to have a residual gun culture (11,3,5,8,10). Recurrent suspicion of the Turkish minority, sometimes hostility, was apparent in the other focus groups as well (see Box 9). Conflict between the majority population and the Roma minority is much more overt. Some Roma, it was said by participants, “gather in crowds to steal”, while others do so to cope with racism. Before too long some suggest, “those who are robbed will start to shoot.”

- **State vs Citizens:** ‘the state’ is often referred to in discussions as an alien entity, as distinct from particular politicians, parties or institutions. In this formulation the state is accused either of being unable to solve social problems, or unwilling to do so because of certain interests. The problems with crime and insecurity are no exception it seems, “the state generated this insecurity.” (1,11), “the state doesn’t want security. For fourteen years already it tolerated this powerlessness, this lawlessness that reigns outdoors.” (1,8).

Box 9: Attitudes towards the Turkish minority

Recurrent suspicion of the Turkish minority, sometimes hostility, was apparent in focus groups across the country. Memories of the conflict with Bulgaria’s Turks, however short-lived, were quite fresh. Some FG participants raised the possibility that members of the ethnic Turk community might, in extremis, take revenge one day for the expulsions that occurred during the 1980s.

“They bear hatred towards us, that is why they are arming in case some day...if inspired...some day they may rise, they just need a sign, they are united. In Macedonia...without being offended, having their names changed, they rebelled. And what about ours here... if they set their mind to send us off from here, as in Kosovo, they will do it.” (11,3,4,5,10).

The backdrop to this animosity is the empowerment of the Turkish population in recent years and the increased political influence of the ethnic-Turkish party, Movement for Rights and Freedoms. In recent years ethnic Turks have become economically better off. Ethnic Bulgarians, though they have not suffered as a result, apparently feel nervous at the rapid advancement of the Turks, and by extension, Pomaks (curiously women took a much more active interest in this question, and seemed more concerned than men that the continuing advancement of ethnic minorities could have negative consequences for ethnic Bulgarians.)

During a discussion in Kyrdzhali among ethnic Turks, participants also raised fears about ethnic conflict arising out of political manipulation. They emphasised their peacefulness and what they saw as the cynical manoeuvrings of politicians who might instigate trouble. Like ethnic Bulgarians, they sometimes referred to the case of the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo as demonstrating the ease with which ethnic conflict can be fomented.

3.2 Perceptions of security providers

Of those HHS respondents who claimed to have fallen victim to crime, a small minority stated that they had contacted the police and the crime had been solved. More than a third claimed not to have contacted the police at all.

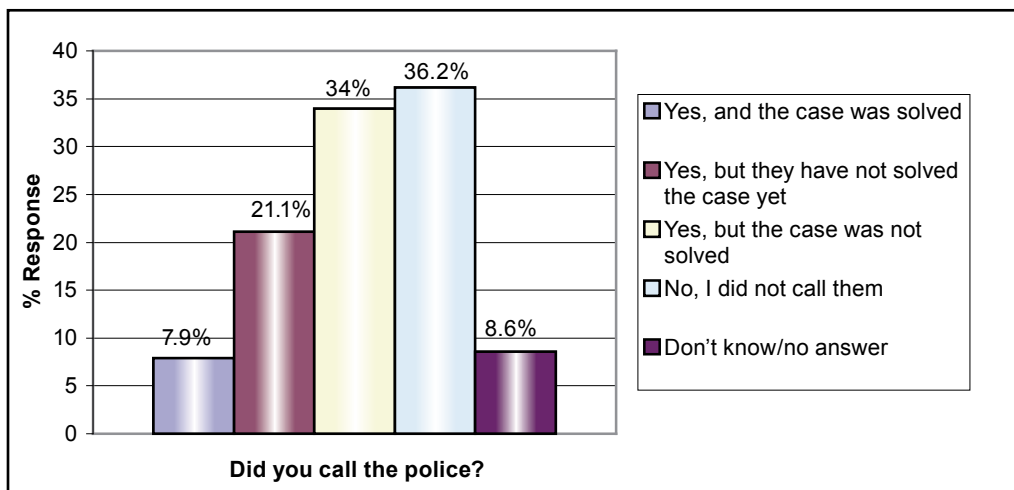


Figure 19: Did you call the police? (Base N = 91).



In FGDs the police were typically described as being ineffective, inadequate, uninterested and unprofessional. Numerous personal experiences were recounted of waiting in vain for police help after a crime, or of the tortuous procedures for making statements that use up a ‘bucket of ink’ without results. It seems that even in small towns people feel they cannot rely on the police. “18 and 19 year-old boys, just finished their military service become policemen. They have no presence, no physique. They don’t inspire respect, they’re not authoritative.” (III,10,11). Allegations of police corruption were also frequently made, particularly in regard to the domestic firearm permit system which many participants claim is rife with corruption. “Push them some money and you’re ready. No one asks who you are, where you are from or why...500 Leva – 200 Leva for the course itself, 300 Leva for the ‘sponsorship’.” A typical scenario was described in this way, “They came, gave us the questions in advance, we paid. Then they filled out the forms and left.” (II,5). Although some participants said they had filed applications for a weapons permit, but given up because they found the procedures too onerous, no one stated that the reason they do not, or could not, obtain a weapon was that they cannot get a licence. Respondents also claimed that Mol has problems in exercising authority over applicants from the military, since military personnel find it humiliating to have ‘some sergeant-major’ assess their fitness to bear arms.

Yet while the NPS did not appear to inspire a great deal of confidence in most participants, HHS results showed that state institutions are the first that people look to for security, with the police registering by far the highest rating of any agency that would be used in case of future criminality (75.1 percent in cases of threat to the person).

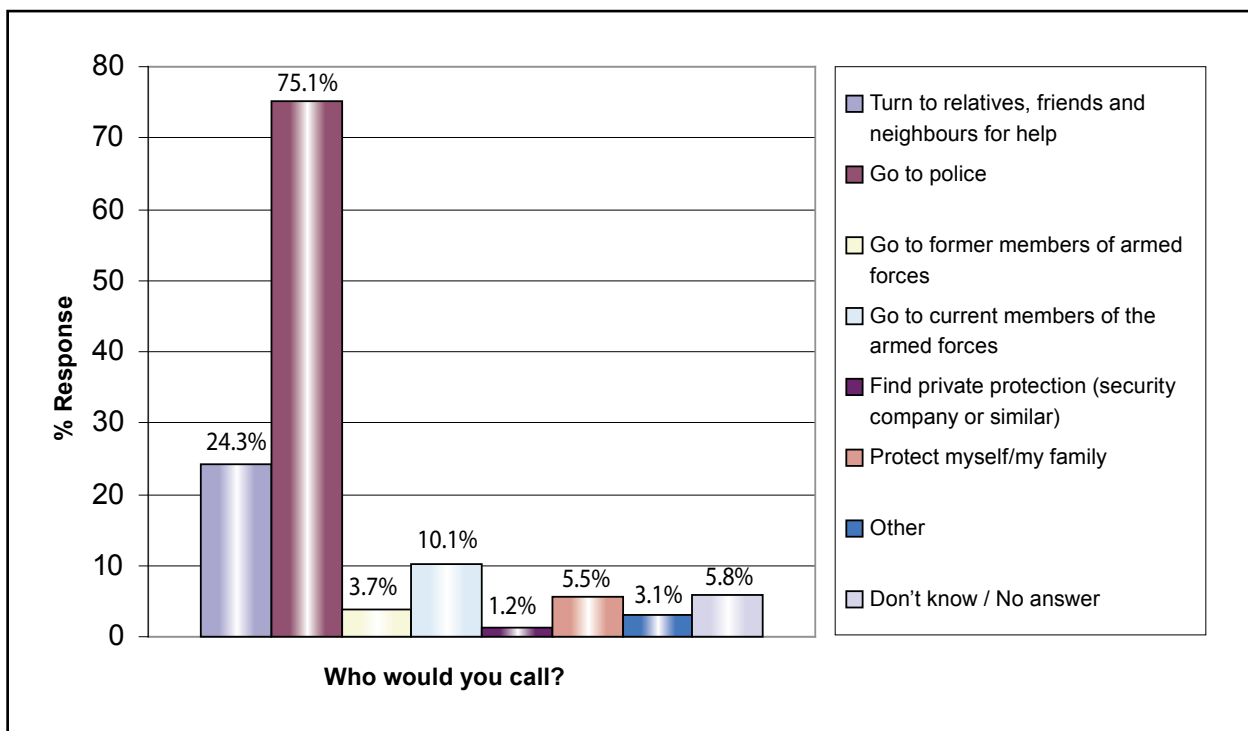


Figure 20: Who would you call if someone threatened you or a member of your family? (Base N = 1,250).

People insist that the state must do its job. In spite of the popularity of private security companies they were not perceived as a substitute for the police. The attitude of resignation towards the police was summed up by one respondent thus, “we have the uniforms, so why not have someone walking around in them?” (III,7).

An important exception to this is the feelings of Roma FGD participants, who did genuinely seem to fear the police and resent the way they are treated by many officers.²⁰¹ Roma participants ascribed their frequent run-ins with police officers to a mean temperament on the part of the officers, which leads them to, “target us just

²⁰¹ There have been a number of cases where international attention has been drawn to police brutality against Roma in police custody. A survey in 2001 found that 40% of interviewed prisoners reported police officers using physical force against them during arrest. US Department of State, 2003.

because we are gypsies”. They stated that there were no circumstances under which they would seek police help, because they believe no one would take their side. It was more common for Roma participants to allege that the police are themselves criminalised.

However, not all the blame was placed on the police. A good number of other FGD participants expressed the view that the police arrest criminals but then the courts set them free, leaving the police de-motivated. They also understand that police officers are lowly paid and need more respect, “in England they are armed only with sticks but they inspire respect.” Even those who criticise the police harshly feel that they are not the root of the problem, “No matter whether he carries a stick or a gun, whether there are two Kalashnikovs or a tank, if there is no state behind his back...”

There was spontaneous mention of a new proposal currently being debated in some circles in Bulgaria: residents’ organisations formed specifically to watch over private property. These voluntary units, more a topic for discussion than a reality at this point in time, appear to be something between a ‘neighbourhood watch’ and a militia. The idea behind such organisations is that propertied, and therefore motivated, citizens form a mutual-protection society composed of volunteers. The deterrent effect of arms is seen as being central to the success of these groups, though those who give the most vocal support for such organisations often appear to have retribution for past crimes in mind.

3.3 Knowledge of SALW

Although most FGDs participants considered themselves as ‘partially’ aware of small arms issues, general knowledge of the topic was strong, and a good number of individuals (particularly males) displayed detailed knowledge. Participants’ knowledge and understanding of the issues was determined largely by the source of their information. The following groups of people showed a good degree of awareness:

- **Males:** the highest levels of awareness were seen among ex-soldiers or weapon-owners. These individuals took greater interest in the arms market and the domestic proliferation and regulation of arms (I,4,6,7; II,2,5,7; IV; II,5; I,2, 3, III,6,7,3; V,9,11,12; VI,1,3).
- **Females:** those who trained for sports shooting in their younger days, or had family members whose profession connected them to weapons, had a good level of awareness (II, 3, 11). It was also more usual for those who had gained their knowledge from books, films, or friends, to be female, (I,3,5,9,10 and II,12).

There were of course those who demonstrated little or no knowledge or interest, in some cases despite having served in the military (I,8). Young people (16–21 years) most often fell into this category (VI, 2,4,5,6,7,8,9).

Safe handling: Basic awareness of safe storage procedures tended to be high:

	GUNS SHOULD ALWAYS BE STORED UNLOADED	GUNS SHOULD ALWAYS BE STORED LOCKED, WHEN NOT IN USE
Strongly agree	80.0 %	83.2 %
Somehow agree	10.2 %	7.9 %
Neither agree not disagree	2.3 %	1.6 %
Somehow disagree	0.3 %	0.4 %
Strongly disagree	0.6 %	0.7 %
Don't know/No answer	6.5 %	6.2 %

Table 27: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (Base N = 1250).



However, even among those who had a basic awareness of small arms, the type of knowledge exhibited varied. It was not uncommon, for example, to find a male FGD participant who had done military service, been trained to shoot, but did not know how to store or handle weapons.

- **Domestic laws:** Most male FG participants had a broad idea of the procedure for obtaining a weapon licence, which includes submitting an application form, taking an exam, learning to shoot and taking a psychological examination. They were aware that the Mol oversees the application procedure and that in order to be legally allowed a weapon for self-defence, a justification must be offered (the example commonly given is that one is a small businessman who carries lots of cash on a regular basis). They were also aware that it is forbidden to carry arms in a public place and that weapons must be stored in securely in the home.
- **Production:** Leaving aside the participants of the FGD held in Kazanlak, whose members were ex-Arsenal employees, a sizeable number of respondents were familiar with Bulgaria's production companies, their locations, names, products and even prices. The military plants at Kazanlak and Sopot are clearly well known, while those at Lyaskovetz, Tyrgovishte and others have a lower profile. The plants that had been connected in some way with scandals (eg illegal exports, thefts) were well-remembered for their connection to those events. Awareness of Bulgaria's association with the production of Kalashnikovs was fairly universal, the AK-47 being highly lauded, but enthusiasts among the respondents could also reel off the names of a range of brands, from Shipka to Zig-Zauer and Berettas. Home-made weapons were also commented on as being popular, as were electric-shock weapons and gas-spray guns.

3.4 Perceptions of 'gun culture'

FGD participants tended to be of the opinion that although Bulgaria has a proud history of producing and exporting weapons, there is no deeply embedded culture of weapons possession. Only 1.2 percent of HHS respondents thought that tradition is one of the main reasons why Bulgarians want to possess weapons. Instead, most FGD participants trace Bulgaria's current problems with SALW back to the difficult transition from Communism, and to recent increases in crime, particularly the organised variety. It was clear from most discussions that participants feel Bulgaria is different and better off than its neighbours with respect to gun culture and SALW proliferation more generally.

Although this is probably true, a few qualifications may be in order. Firstly, HHS questions on the topic of celebratory fire produced some unexpected responses. Of the 12 percent of HHS respondents who claimed they had personally witnessed the use of a weapon, 50.4 percent claimed that the weapon was used at a celebration. This finding was backed-up in FGDs, where many respondents claimed that celebratory shooting is all too common on public holidays, at weddings and at traditional country gatherings. Secondly, it is worth noting that Bulgarians attach a special prestige to hunting and to the use of weapons for this purpose. As Figure 26 in section 3.8 shows, 'sports shooting / hunting', is the third most commonly cited reason among HHS respondents for wanting to own a legal gun (32.3 percent). Hunting has always been perceived as an elite activity in Bulgaria. During the Communist era, party leaders were well known for their apparent love of the sport, at a time when most citizens were denied this right. Today, although hunting is accessible to anyone who can afford it, the image of the hunting elite continues to capture the popular imagination. Recently, a leading daily newspaper devoted a double-page spread to an examination of the hunting habits of key politicians and business leaders, paying special attention to their choice of weapons.²⁰² The country's flourishing legal trade in weapons, serviced as it is by numerous gun shops, magazines and websites is ample proof of, if not a 'gun culture', then a 'gun sub-culture'.

3.5 Perceptions regarding the availability of SALW

There was a widely held view among FGD participants that small arms are easily available across the country. The first channel that came to people's minds during discussions is the nationwide network of gun shops, with the black market mentioned second. For many, the black market trade was associated with open-air markets where it was said that Russian, Chinese and sometimes Bulgarian-made weapons can be bought. Several participants cited markets in the towns of Dimitrovgrad and Blagoevgrad as obvious places to buy weapons, "I was at the

²⁰² *Trud*, 16 September 2004.



market...saw a kettle and I liked it...I asked how much it was...and the guy, a Russian, says ‘you want a full set or not?’ He opened the kettle and inside there was a Makarov pistol.” (II,5). The NSCOC, however, has not found these markets to be of any higher risk than other markets in the country.²⁰³ FGD participants would insist that if you want a weapon illegally, it can always be found, “there are people for anything everywhere.”, “if one asks, the answer will come from somewhere.” (III,6,7,8,10,11; V,3,4,6,7,10; V,2,3,6; VI,6).

Those wishing to obtain more sophisticated weapons were advised by group members that they are not so easily available – contacts and references are necessary at several levels of the networks. This also avoids the troublesome legal procedures, “you may have to send back the same documents a hundred times, and each time the state takes a fee.” (I,4).

In fact, participants clearly felt that the legal and illegal channels for SALW in Bulgaria overlap considerably and are often controlled by the same people. Firstly, the idea that registered gun shops somehow sell illegal weapons was occasionally raised, though no evidence was offered. Secondly, some participants sensed a more profound blurring between legal and illegal channels. These people held that the “big fish”, the “strong men of the day”, have interests in both markets, sometimes naming prominent businessmen (II,2,3,5,10). Presumably many years of corrupt public administration, scandals at arms producing plants, and high-profile illicit exports have left these participants cynical about all those who deal in, or purport to control, arms.

Manufacturing plants

When asked where weapons are most common, or most easily acquired, participants spontaneously respond Kazanlak: “you go to Kazanlak,...enter into a café and ask.” (III,6,7,11; V,7).

Most participants considered it quite obvious, and not a matter deserving great approbation, that ex-production line workers from the arms plants have now turned to illegal, home-based production of small arms. The case of Arsenal was always cited, where lay-offs have been severe. It was said to be a routine operation to modify a Russian Izh gas-spray gun, which can be easily equipped to take live cartridges, “any good fitter can do this, and there are tens of thousands of fitters who sit unemployed.” (I,6). Since those still working at the plants are badly paid, they consider it natural that some succumb to the temptation to smuggle parts out. “You put a barrel under your shirt and leave.” (I,6,7; II,5).

The public’s perception of widespread illegal theft by Arsenal employees was contradicted by members of the Kazanlak FGD, which was comprised mainly of ex-Military Representatives employed jointly by the MoD and Arsenal to ensure Quality Control. They insisted that each barrel is individually marked during manufacture and logged and that this documentation is securely stored. They claimed to have heard of the occasional attempt to smuggle parts out, but that these had been few and people who attempt it would be caught. Their concerns centred more on ‘half-legal deals’ and the antics of ‘big bosses’. Many were convinced that networks of crooks do benefit in some way from dubious shipments out of the plants, but that these people have political protection. They remember the strikes of more than a decade ago, and claimed that occasionally during that period, trucks filled with weapons left the plant for an unknown destination.

Those living in more rural areas suggest Sofia as the place to purchase a firearm: “the biggest crime is there, the biggest market is there.” (II,2). Even participants in Gotse Delchev who saw their own area as associated with illegal weapon trafficking to some degree, pointed to Sofia as the place to buy a weapon, because, “here you have to know somebody who is a trafficker...here it is a small city, he will be afraid to sell to a non-native.” (II,7). Among this group those who acknowledged that trafficking activities go on still had an impression of it being a small-scale business that involves one or two weapons at a time.

Distribution from state institutions

As previously noted, with the dissolution of Communist-era state structures in the 1990s, some weapons were distributed in an unplanned way. FGD participants claimed that when the ODC was dissolved, pneumatic guns were sold off first, then small-calibre military weapons. According to one former ODC employee, “they took them

²⁰³ Interview, Gaidarski, 09 November 2004.



to Blagoevgrad, then to Sofia and I didn't see where they went...and I haven't seen Margolin pistols sold in any of the gun shops." (II,7). The participants' common perception was that the higher-ranking military officers and state officials would furnish themselves with several weapons, each free of charge. But the previous Communist-era control systems were also thought to have been corrupt, and the regulations for the purchase of weapons by those for with long service widely disregarded: "no one was observing it...if there were fifty people in the regiment, give the list and it's done." (II,5). "There lies the real trouble, then every second person got a gun." (II,7).

Stockpile thefts

FGD members were also in no doubt that official stockpiles of weapons and ammunition continue to be stolen, with some participants claiming that thefts are usually an inside job (II,5,7). They recalled numerous cases where weapons had disappeared from military depots, either gradually or suddenly (I,1). "During 1993, 16,000 machine-gun bullets disappeared, five boxes." (II,5). "I was responsible for the arms and was compiling the statistics. During my employment, each year up until 1995, 40–50 automatic guns were stolen from the ground forces, and 60–70 pistols, throughout Bulgaria. After that time it was smaller scale, but thefts still went on." (II,5).

Cross-border smuggling

When discussing cross-border SALW smuggling, FGD participants would often contrast the relatively small profits made by the individuals doing the dirty work of carrying weapons across borders, with the real money said to be made by the bosses, 'millionaires from Petrich', 'local and central guys in power.' These respondents also felt that nowadays private companies export arms illegally under the protection of the state using false customs documents and other types of fraud. The proof was said to lie in the fact that the media sometimes reports a case that is later hushed up, and also in the fact that an ordinary citizen cannot register to import and export arms without paying \$20,000 for a permit (II).

"I crossed the border with Macedonia twice in the past to sell fuel during the war in Bosnia". (II)

"We sold 100 mortars to Macedonia but they never reached Macedonia. Rather, they entered Skopje, then went to Belgrade and from there to Bosnia." (II)

- Respondents discuss trafficking between South Eastern Bulgaria and Macedonia.

In the FGD held in the south east of the country, it was clear that the trade in small arms which has taken place over the years with Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was popular. Although official transactions have occurred, respondents tended to focus more on the illicit trading which has happened, particularly during periods of crisis. One interesting perception was that whereas in the past, the trade was predominantly one of exports from Bulgaria, now, the traffic goes both ways. The examples given did not just include cross-border trafficking by individuals, but 'wholesale' deals in which stocks held in army depots were sold with the complicity of officers. The attitude to this business appeared to be one of acceptance. Even so, participants in this group asserted that an international network, or networks, controls the black market in arms, the routes and actors often being linked with drug trafficking. Groups singled out for their involvement in these networks included ethnic Albanians, Pomaks and Bulgarian special forces. Pomaks were thought to have good knowledge of the 'green border' areas where official crossing points do not exist.

3.6 Perceived distribution of SALW

Some FGD participants were not shy of figures (quite different from the real ones), stating that there are "up to 500,000" official weapons owners in the country (I,6); that 240,000 hunters are registered (IV,1,8); or that up to 80 percent of owners and managers of commercial companies possess personal arms (I,3). According to one participant, there are, "at least as many illegal arms as there are legal ones" (II,5). When asked to justify these claims, respondents would point to cases of thefts from military depots, the uncontrolled distribution of official stocks in the 1990s, and the make-shift production of weapons by home producers. According to some participants, there are lots of people "just walking around with guns" despite the law to the contrary. Although 31 percent of respondents stated that one cannot see people other than security forces carrying weapons anywhere, other respondents claimed that firearms can be seen in a number of different locations:

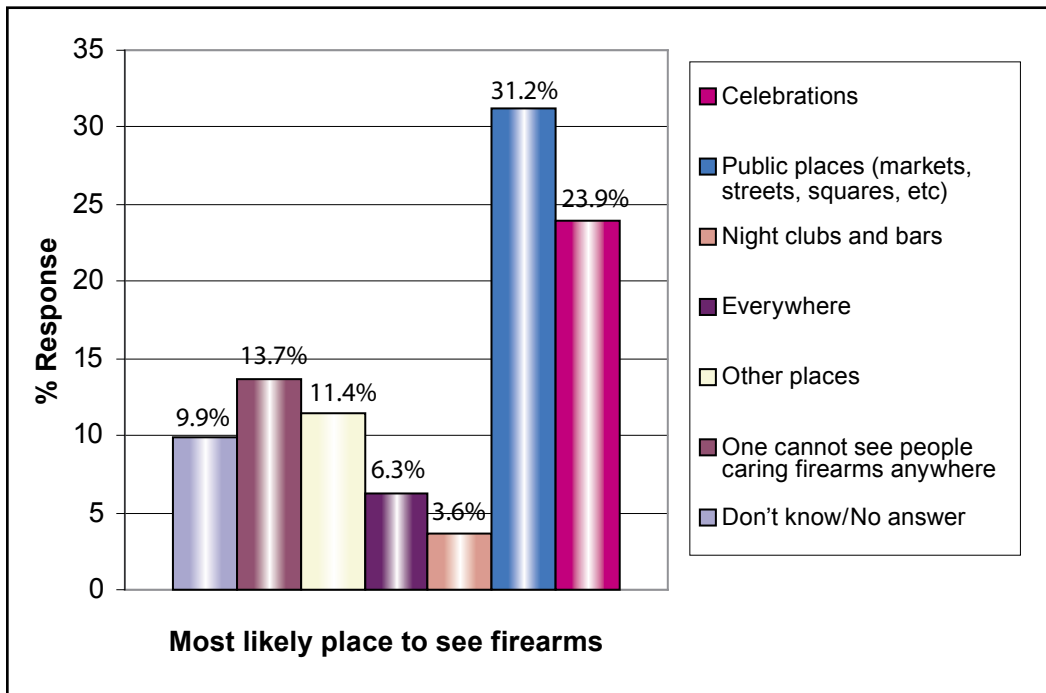


Figure 21: Where are you most likely to see people (excluding police or army) carrying firearms in your town? (Base N = 1250).

While the Kalashnikov assault rifle is commonly identified by FGD participants as Bulgaria’s ‘best’ weapon, it is not thought to be widely available in the country. In contrast hunting rifles and Makarov pistols, of varying legality, were felt to be widely available. Modified and home-made weapons were also said to be widely available and the overwhelming feeling is that make-shift factories staffed by skilled workers from downsized arms plants are manufacturing or modifying sizeable numbers of weapons (see also section 1.2.2.3 for the results of in-depth interviews with factory workers).

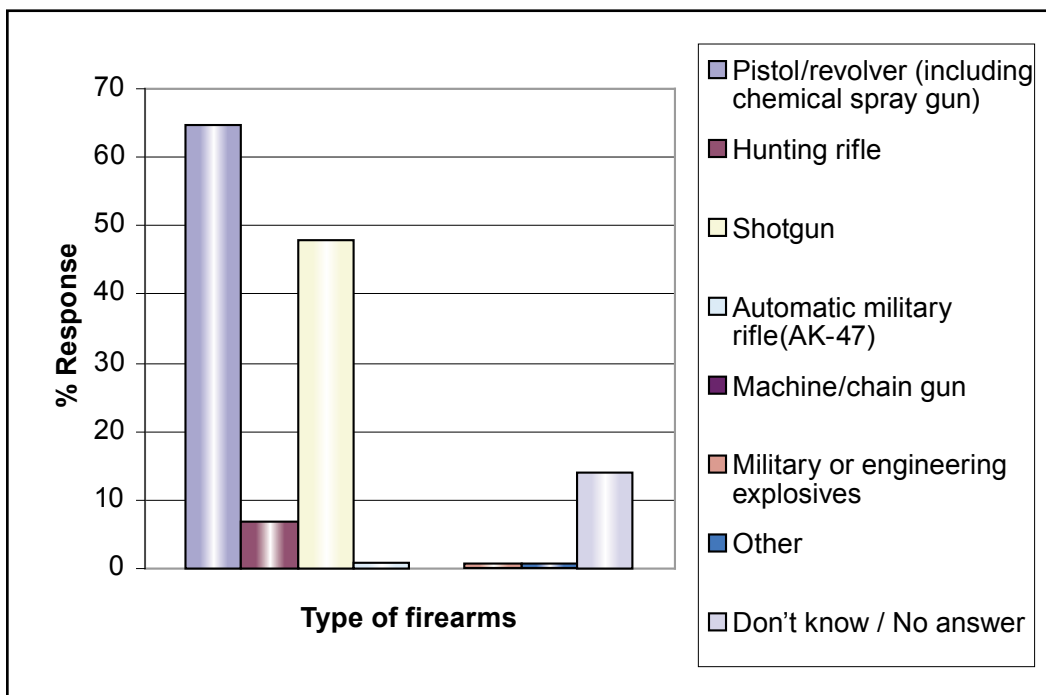


Figure 22: What type of firearms do you know that people from your neighbourhood have? (Base N = 312).



Just under a third (29.1 percent) of HHS respondents felt that all or most gun owners behave responsibly, while a majority felt either that many irresponsible people own firearms (40.8 percent), or that only a few gun owners are responsible (21.1 percent). As section 2 shows, the level of firearms casualties in Bulgaria is low by the standards of the region. Other factors such as the high visibility of weapons in public places, visibly poor handling standards, or the frequency of celebratory shooting might well explain this response.

FGD participants identified a number of different social groups as likely to have legal weapons, namely the military and police, private and public security guards, former members of the security forces, businesspersons, farmers, owners of companies, country houses, farms and other types of real estate. HHS results show that perceived levels of gun ownership (legal and otherwise) by social group broke down as follows:

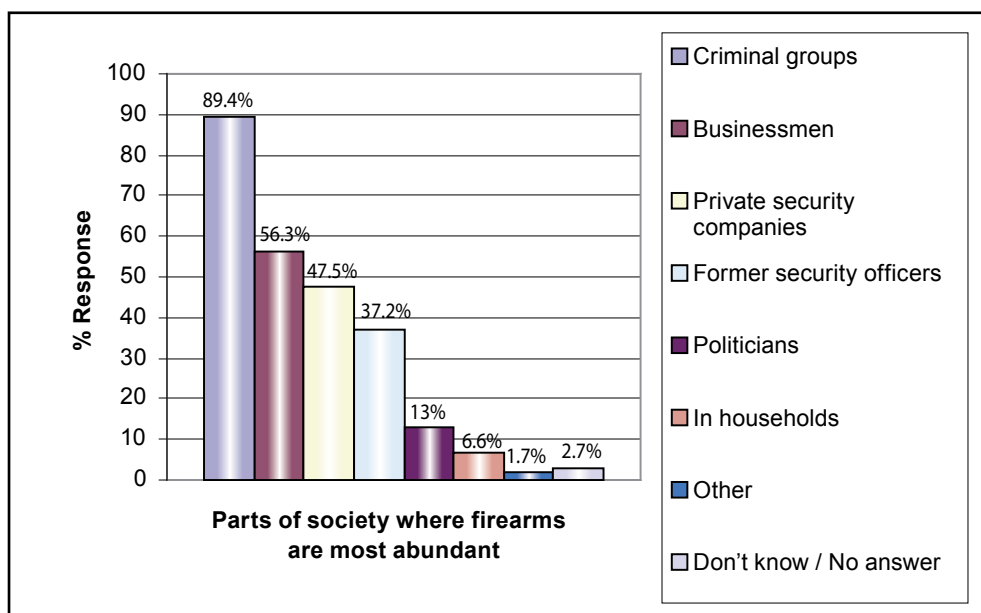


Figure 23: In which parts of Bulgarian society are firearms most abundant (except in the police, army, gendarmerie, etc?) (Base N = 651).

Particular geographic or social patterns were also identified in FGDs – areas close to military depots or factories, mountainous areas, villages and Turkish regions were all cited as having higher than average levels of weapons proliferation. In the FG held in Gotse Delchev, participants claimed that small arms are unusually common in the area and that the weapons held certainly include illegal ones. Participants also stated that the trafficking of weapons occurs in the area. Among this group the gun-fights that occurred between local criminal gangs some years ago were seen as evidence of the incidence of trafficking and illegal possession (II,10). The age group identified as most likely to have weapons was the 26–35 year-old bracket, with 36–50 year olds coming second. Nineteen to twenty-five year olds were only rated by 9.2 percent of respondents as the most likely age group to possess weapons. The Roma discussion group members’ estimated that ‘up to ten percent’ (VI, 1,4,6) of their communities have illegal guns, a result that would confound the Bulgarian public who do not perceive the Roma as being armed.

3.7 Perceived impact of SALW

FGDs indicate that although the public perceives the level of weapons proliferation in Bulgaria to be significant, it is seen as much lower than that of Western Balkan states. The relatively low priority that HHS respondents give to firearms problems in comparison to other factors shows how widespread this view is:

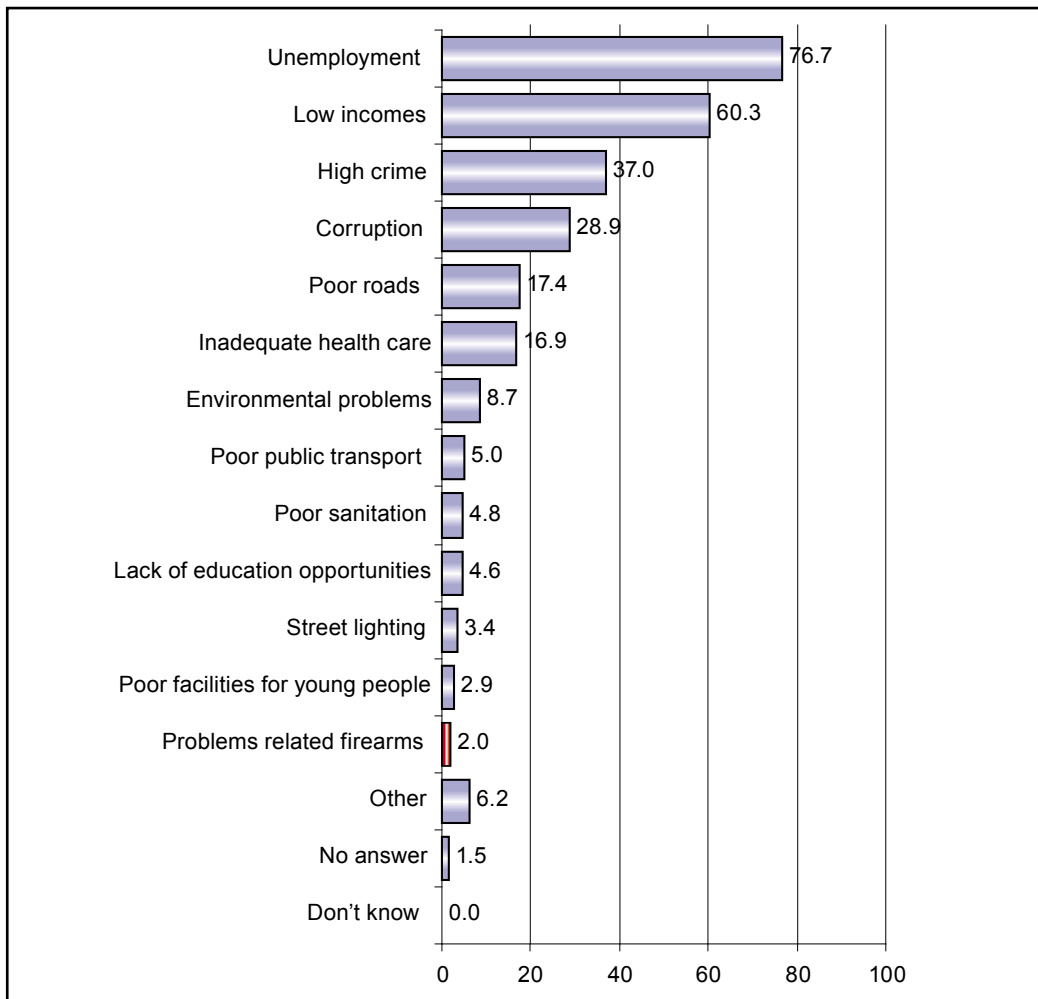


Figure 24: In your opinion, what are the three worst problems your community faces at this time? (Base N = 1250)

The effects too are not felt to be severe. However, in line with participants' negative feelings about the future, concerns were aired that should conditions in the country worsen further, the arms market that apparently functions well enough could blossom further. As noted above, 41 percent of respondents agree that firearms are a concern to their community, though it may not be their paramount concern. The HHS showed that respondents had nuanced views about the security implications of weapon possession. Respondents were split as to whether personal possession improves security for the individual, but those who believed that it does were less inclined to say that personal possession also improves communal or family security.

	SAFER	MAKES NO DIFFERENCE	LESS SAFE	NO SECURITY AT ALL	DON'T KNOW / NO ANSWER
The individual	42.2	19.0	8.8	16.5	13.5
His family	33.6	21.6	11.0	19.2	14.6
Community in general	10.4	17.9	20.5	34.8	16.5

Table 28: In your opinion, to what extent does personal firearms possession increase the level of security of... (Base N = 1250)

The HHS results also showed a clear correlation between those respondents who had never seen people carrying firearms in their neighbourhood (apart from the police and army officers that is), and perceptions of



community safety. Of those who never saw firearms in their area, 21.1 percent felt that the level of security of their neighbourhood was higher than elsewhere, a percentage that was far lower among those who claimed to see weapons around regularly. By and large, the younger FGD participants felt that obtaining, or learning to handle weapons was not something of interest.

3.8 Attitude towards SALW possession and use

“Arms? I adore them.” (II, 8)
 “I like the way they look.” (III,8)
 “I’m terrified by the thought that I may be touching something like that.” (I, 11)
 “They should invent a weapon to destroy all weapons.” (I,1)

When weapons were first mentioned in FGDs, participants displayed a range of emotional attitudes from indifference, through to fear, disgust or pride. Some associated weapons with danger, others with protection. For some, weapons meant pleasure, for others, they were just seen as a regrettable necessity.

Negative: Those most likely to display negative emotions towards small arms were: females, the best- educated, the least-educated, the young, and members of ethnic minorities. Those with negative

attitudes towards weapons tended to associate them with a set of uncontrollable risks, either for society or the user, risks connected with the carriage and storage of weapons.

The majority of FGD participants had no intention of acquiring weapons. The reasons they gave were few in number and recurrent:

- Fear of guns (association between firearms and risk).
- The perceived uselessness of guns.
- Absence of perceived threat (particularly common among respondents from small towns).
- A preference for other methods of self-defence (including knives (III; VI), electric-shock weapons (III,9) and gas-spray guns (III,4).

HHS respondents opted for the following reasons not to own a legal weapon:

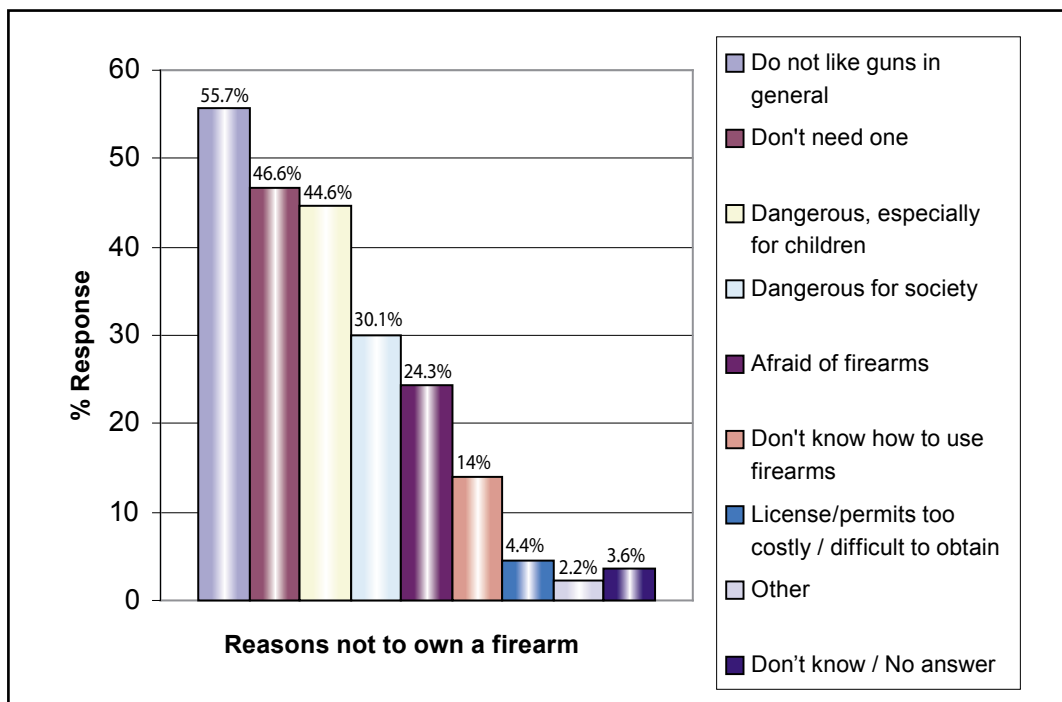


Figure 25: What are the three main reasons why you would choose not to own a firearm legally? (Base N = 922)

“Arms are dangerous, they are created to destroy.”

“More arms in the hands of the population means more murders, they should be totally eliminated.”

“You cannot just shoot anyone who will stand in your way – there should be some other way of handling things. The most important thing is to have dialogue.”

Only a tiny portion of HHS respondents (4.4 percent), cited a ‘costly and difficult’ permit application system as a reason why they would not choose to own a firearm. Indeed, the great majority of those who had already obtained firearms stated that the licensing regime did not discourage them from getting a firearm. If the current regime is discouraging only a small fraction of potential applicants, one might question the point of any relaxation of the permit application system. In fact, the public appear to be in favour of a stricter permit regime – a small majority of HHS respondents (50.5 percent) felt that a stricter system will increase security in Bulgarian society.

Those FGD participants who associated weapons with uncontrollable risk would refer variously to the inherent aggression within people, the stresses of everyday life, or the influence of drugs and alcohol as factors that might lead to the use of weapons. Several older males mentioned a desire to dispose of their weapons because of the trials that everyday life presents them, which they feel less-and-less able to cope with. All of these people feared that the weapon might turn against its owner, harming rather than helping him (I,7; IV,3,5,9; V,7). The problem of safe storage was also mentioned. The dominant perception was that there are an undue number of accidents in the country that are the resulting either from inept handling or poor storage practices. Some participants noted a desire to be rid of weapons lest they become a “dangerous toy”, for children (I,1; III,10, V,3).

Positive emotional reactions were more rare, and any approval was generally couched in more rational terms. One of the common justifications given was an admiration for design or functionality, with hunters, sports shooters, employees of weapons plants and the ex-military (generally men over thirty), being more likely to talk in these terms. The use of weapons for professional or recreational reasons was entirely accepted by these participants. Those who displayed an approving attitude were more likely to see the weapons themselves as having useful functions, including protection, and a means to acquire self-discipline. But although these respondents are more likely to talk of a ‘right’ to arms, most dwelt on the problem of crime and the state’s perceived inability to protect citizens. Several motives for possession emerged during FGDs:

- **General insecurity:** the most commonly expressed motivation was to deal with ‘insecure’, or ‘hard’ times (I,5, II, 10). When asked to explain further, participants would typically refer to a media story. The protection of family, and even more so, property, turned out to be the main motivation for gun ownership or acquisition.
- **Crime prevention:** participants with this motivation emphasised the impudence of today’s criminals and the idea that a ‘gun behind every door’ would deter them and reduce burglaries.
- **Retribution:** this group of participants were more radical, emphasising their desire to use weapons, particularly in case of burglary.
- **‘Just in case’:** as one participant put it, “it’s just the psychology of the Bulgarian, to have it, just in case.”
- **Thrill-seeking:** several FGD participants spoke of a ‘hunting instinct’, or ‘the thrill of shooting’. In the mountain region of Gotse Delchev this was the most commonly cited motivation. It was generally acknowledged that the use of weapons for hunting or sport is acceptable and even attracts prestige.
- **Professional reasons:** positive associations with small arms were strong among FG respondents in Kazanlak, whose working lives had revolved around weapons for many decades. For most, possessing a weapon is natural enough since it evokes craftsmanship and presumably creates nostalgia for the stable working environment of past times.

The ‘just in case’ mindset was often attributed by ethnic-Bulgarian participants to members of the Pomak and Turkish community. Most participants in the FGD held in Gotse Delchev were convinced that every Pomak house has a gun (II,5). Where ethnic minority participants did display this motivation at all, it was mainly evident among females.

Twenty-six percent of HHS respondents stated that if they or another member of their household could own a



firearm legally, they would choose to do so, with 67 percent answering ‘no’. Since only 6 percent of the respondents currently own a firearm, one might reasonably expect the number of firearm owners to increase in coming years if supplies remain available. Among those who possessed or aspired to possess weapons, there was a common enough range of declared motives, including self-defence, hunting, sport, status, or the collection of souvenirs (including awards to ex-military personnel).

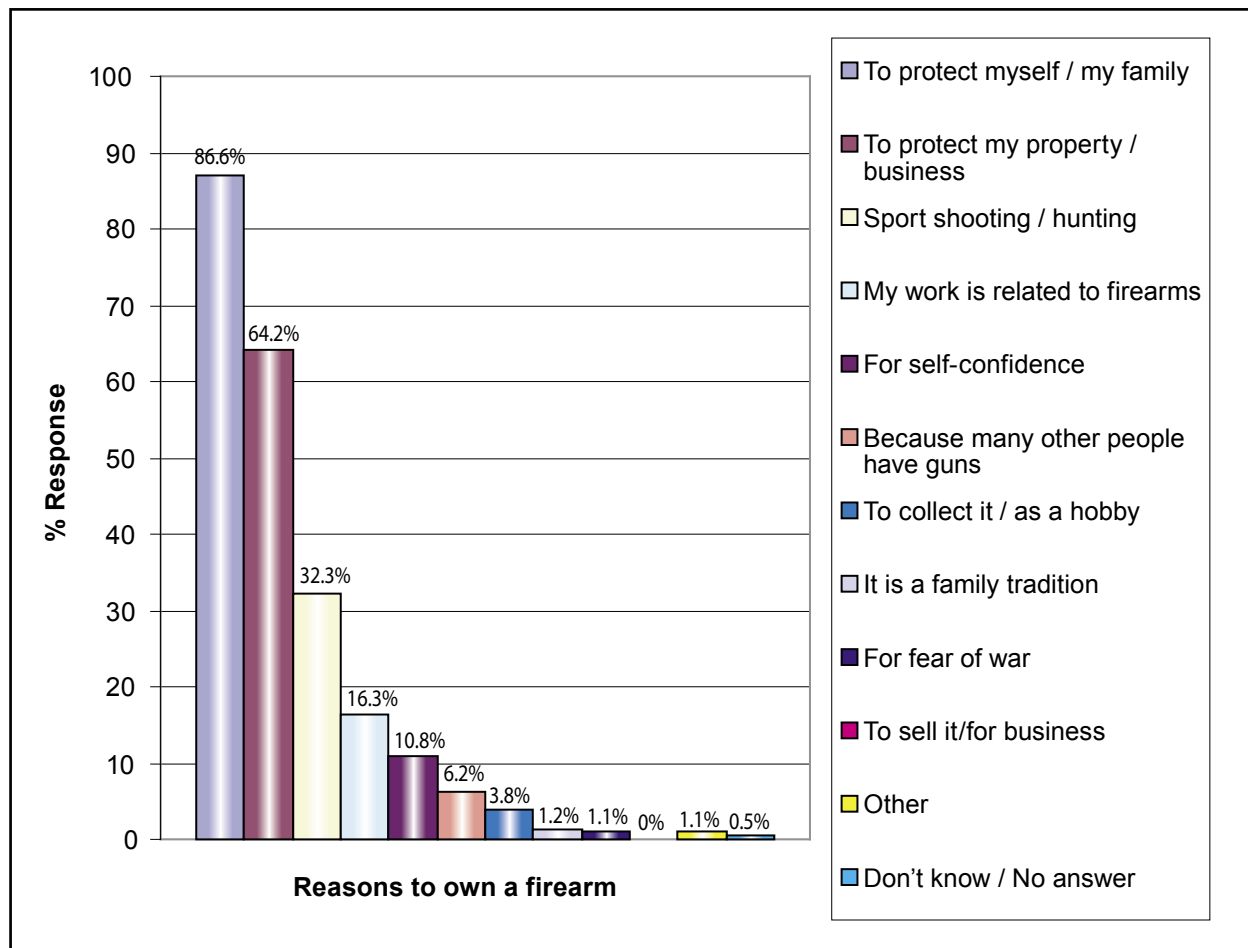


Figure 26: What are the three main reasons why you would choose to own a firearm legally? (Base N = 329).

When the motives for personal armament were probed further in FGDs, the crime prevention function weapons was usually emphasised, particularly in relation to property crime. Many participants had the idea that weapons do not need to be used, but only brandished at thieves in order for them to flee. In combination with an assumption that the state is unable to protect citizens from rising crime, this preventative notion apparently allows many who would not want to acquire a weapon themselves to sympathise with those who would. It appears that there is a certain degree of tolerance for citizens who acquire legal arms for self-protection, “I don’t approve of people who carry arms, but I am somehow aware that there is a need for it.” (V, 5, 6, 10).

The HHS showed that victims of crime are slightly more likely to be willing to purchase a firearm than those that have not been a victim.²⁰⁴ The table below shows how people with different experiences of crime answered the question: If you or other member of your household could own a firearm legally, would you choose to do so?

²⁰⁴ The question used in the HHS was, “Have you been victim to a crime in the *past three months*.” Since people’s attitudes towards weapons possession are likely to have been shaped by their experience over a period longer than three months, only tentative conclusions can be drawn on this relationship.

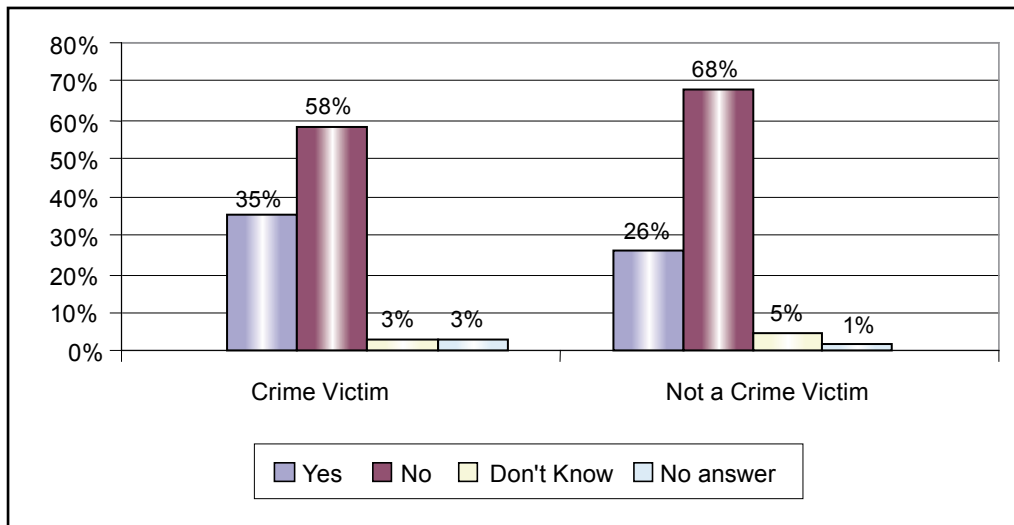


Figure 27: Victims of crime vs desire for weapons.

Whatever respondents' feelings about personal weapons possession, there was a widespread presumption among most that members of public bodies, whether concerned with government or security provision, should be permitted to keep weapons at home. Despite this, only two percent thought that any adult should be allowed to keep weapons at home, while 18 percent felt that no one should. There were also clear disparities between the views of the male and female populations, with women making up 62 percent of the respondents who believed that no one should be allowed to keep firearms at home.

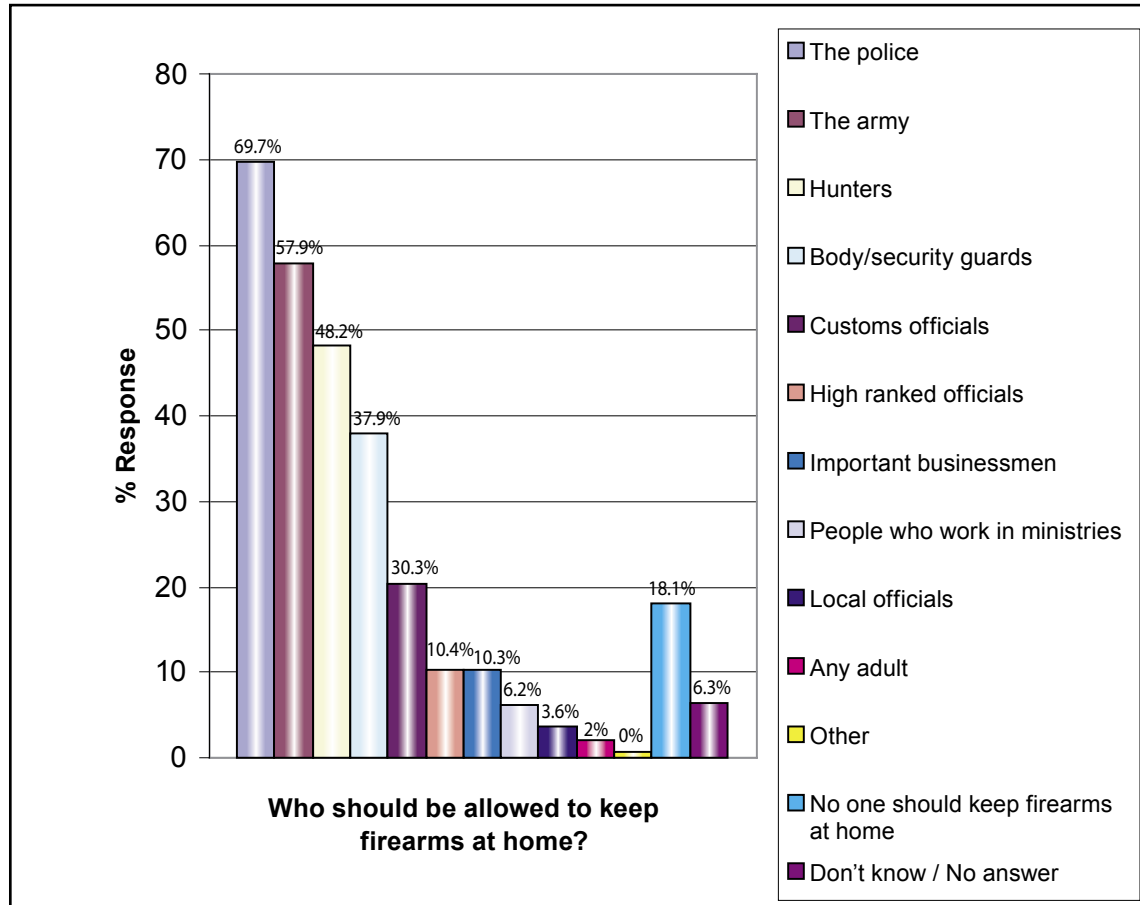


Figure 28: Who do you think should be legally allowed to keep firearms at home? (Base N = 1250).



Those with more liberal attitudes towards domestic gun control were more likely to claim a willingness to shoot criminals who invade their private property. They also tended to assess the current law as being unrealistic, “in reality the one who is attacked usually has no choice and no time to choose. It should be like in the USA – if anyone puts his foot on private property, you are allowed to shoot.” (I,1,2,5; VI), “I prefer to be guilty in the face of the law but to protect my family.” (I,2). Cases where the victim of an attack was unfairly convicted for killing or injuring thieves were mentioned (I,4), as was the futility of firing warning shots.

It was generally the wealthier focus group participants who expressed a readiness to administer instant justice with the help of firearms. The HHS also showed that wealthier respondents were more likely to express a desire to own a firearm. Yet very few respondents cited cost as a reason not to obtain a gun. If low income is not an impediment for gun ownership because of the perceived low costs, the attitude of wealthier respondents can be attributed to a desire to protect their material goods (it should also be borne in mind though, that the majority low-income respondents are older people or residents of villages and small towns where crime rates are much lower).

Box 10: Property-related crime in Bulgaria

Property-related crime has become the subject of a heated debate in contemporary Bulgaria, a debate which has seen prominent public figures call for the liberalisation of firearm legislation in order to give citizens the opportunity to protect their property. The fact that most property crimes are allegedly committed either by drug-addicts or low-status social groups such as the Roma appears to be an important factor in this debate. The contempt in which many Bulgarians hold these groups makes it easier to call for a more liberal arms regime as a response, with whatever consequences that may have. In August 2004, the leader of one of the largest trade unions in the country, Podkrepa, stated that high crime rates in Bulgaria are in large part due to organised crime groups aided by rich Roma individuals. Stating that the Roma integration has failed, he saw the only way to counter Roma crime as following the American model and allowing everyone to have a firearm at home.²⁰⁵

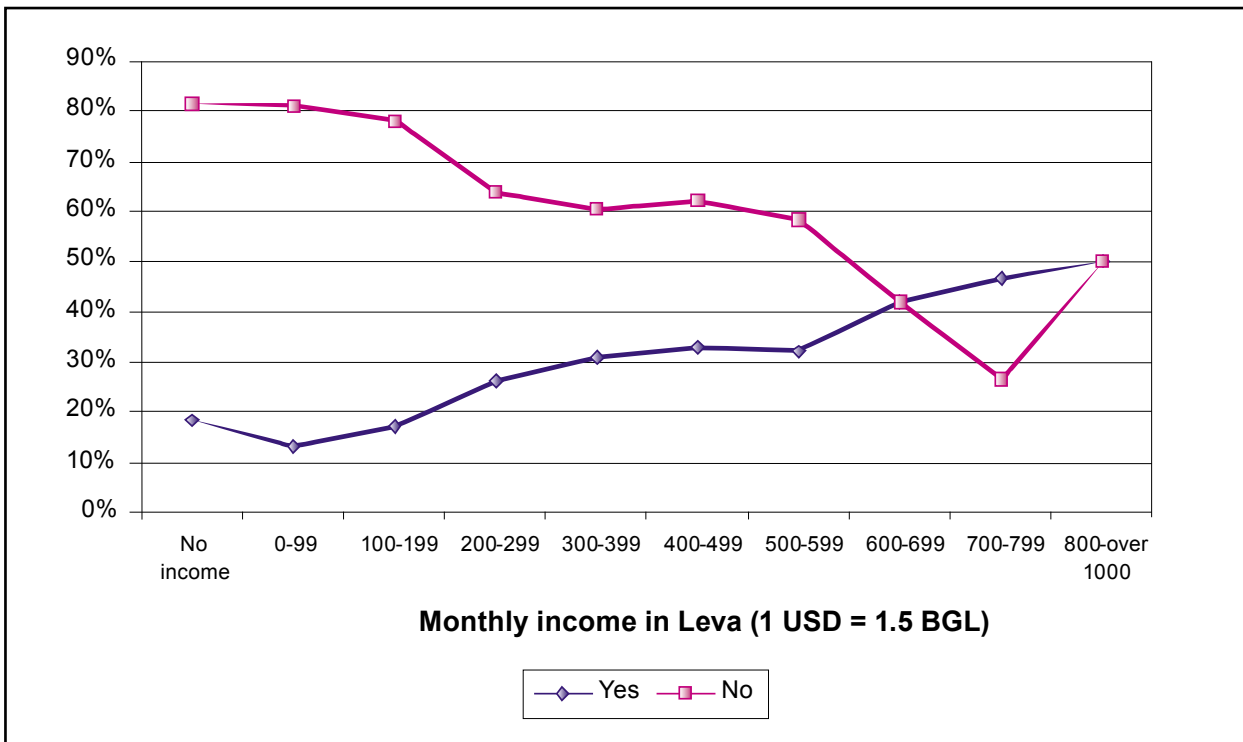


Figure 29: Income vs desire to acquire a weapon.

²⁰⁵ Novinar, 11 August 2004.

One comment serves to illustrate the feelings of this social group, “I am not some kind of coward, I’m a man with a family and a business to protect. If there are twenty Gypsies coming, I take out a Kalashnikov and that’s it” (I,6). This fantastic scenario is exaggerated, but variations on this theme were occasionally heard in discussions. As the HHS showed, the most ardent advocates of a more liberal domestic arms control regime are those who fear crime, or have been personally affected by it. Perhaps unsurprisingly the reaction of Roma focus group participants to this sort of remark is one of horror. As one participant protested, “you can’t kill someone for stealing a TV set!”

3.9 Attitude towards domestic SALW control

Two opposing views were evident among respondents in regard to domestic SALW control. One view that might be termed ‘liberal’, was that the small arms proliferation currently observed in Bulgaria demonstrates the difficulty, or impossibility, of domestic small arms control.

The **liberal** argument ran as follows. It is obvious that the state is failing to cope with violence, therefore it should allow the possibility for self-defence to those wishing to do so – people should be permitted to possess legally-held arms and to use them where necessary. If a person decides that he or she needs a weapon, it can always be found and if he or she is inclined to use it, sooner or later it will be used regardless of the legal restrictions on use. At best the law is an irrelevance, because the Bulgarian citizen is inventive enough to dodge any law, as the well-known practice of modifying gas-spray guns shows. At worst the current legal restrictions are just another way for the public administration to raise money. Pronouncements about public safety are a cover. The state wilfully complicates the procedure for acquiring weapons in order to raise money, both legally and through bribes. In this view it is not the type of weapons that matters, but how they are used. Instead of spending state time and funds on regulating weapons, the emphasis should be placed on dealing with criminals and on educating the public how to store, handle and carry weapons.

People of this persuasion were more likely to favour the formation of self-defence organisations.

Box 11: The Liberalisation argument – an extreme case

A small number of respondents who favoured liberalising Bulgaria’s domestic arms control regime also advocated a radical solution to crime:

“These remaining two years until our accession to the European Union should be used as a gratis period so that some of those who are most cheeky can be shot – that’s why the arms possession regime should be relaxed. Temperate terror... people must have arms...so that when one of those guys breaks into my house I can shoot him. If he breaks into your house you shoot him too. In this way, they would disappear in a few years.” (1-6)

The contrary view was that greater control should be exercised *precisely because* Bulgaria faces problems with small arms proliferation. Those who made the state control argument tended to make a connection between Bulgaria’s troubled political and economic transition and the proliferation of small arms. They characterised the transition period as anarchic, using phrases such as ‘we opened the bottle’. Since crime on the present scale was impossible under Communism they conclude that a strong government and a powerful state can handle the ‘chaos’. The solution therefore is for the state to marshal its forces and place strict limits on everything from firearms possession to the profiteering of private businesses. A majority of this group felt that military industry should be subject to similar controls. One group strongly in favour of tight domestic controls were young people in the bigger cities.

In recent years the question of domestic firearms control has become a matter of public debate and political interest in Bulgaria. Arguments for harsher penalties for illegal possession began to be heard on the back of several high-profile drug-related assassinations in which automatic or semi-automatic weapons were used. The General Secretary of the Mol, Boyko Borissov, has made the case for harsher penalties on several occasions. A second line of debate ensued after a well-known trade union leader, Konstantin Trenchev, called for relaxed gun controls as a way to fight petty crime and property thefts, crimes for which he largely blamed the Roma minority. Human rights and Roma NGOs responded by denouncing the proposal as inspired by racism.



The Bulgarian gun-rights debate has two distinctive camps. One side finds its inspiration in the USA, and the National Rifle Association's views on gun rights. It is supported by several non-governmental associations of gun owners, gun-store owners, and defence industry business associations (see sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). Its opponents, who are in favour of tighter controls, do not have a strong civil society base, but benefit from the tacit support of the MoI, MoD and particularly the police, since most officers favour a society in which guns are the security services' prerogative. Based on the responses to questions about a number of different arms control measures, including restrictions on the possession and trade in weapons, HHS results point to tighter, rather than laxer controls on SALW as the majority choice of the public:

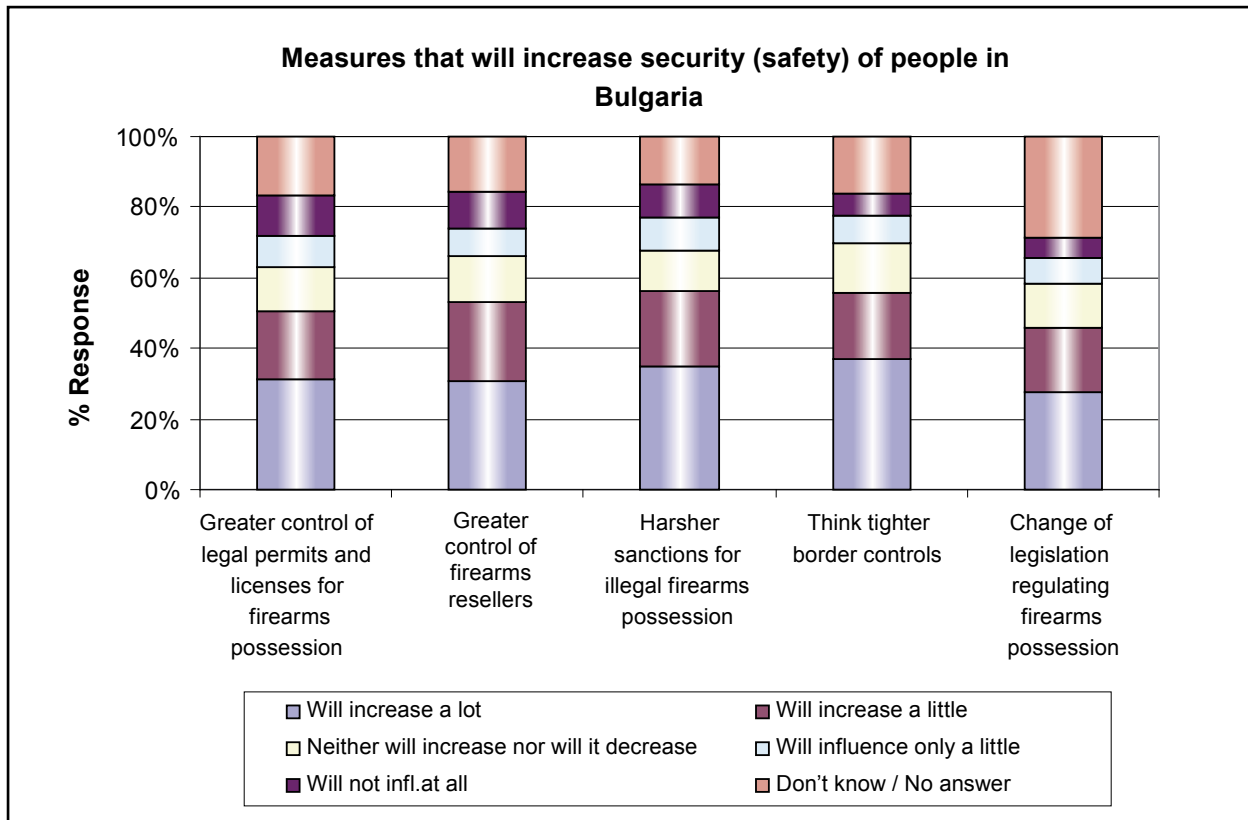


Figure 30: Measures that will increase security (safety) of people in Bulgaria (Base N = 1250)

3.10 Attitude towards controls on production and transfer

The typical range of attitudes displayed by FGD participants towards SALW production by Bulgaria was as follows:

- **Production should cease entirely:** Opportunities for military conversion should be better explored so as to eliminate arms production without raising unemployment. Since “it is not always possible to have markets for this stuff,” the state should concentrate its efforts on ensuring that equipment and labour is re-allocated efficiently (V,9,11).
- **The arms industry should be re-nationalised:** Privatising defence companies has primarily benefited foreign competitors or corrupt bosses. Conversion plans have never worked and Bulgaria's incredible expertise in the field remains valued around the world (I,6). When the state owned the arms industry, it “used to be the engine of the rest of production.” (IV,1).
- **A mixed sector with state oversight:** The right blend of market incentives and state ownership and control is needed. There should be no further reduction in legal production because that only encourages illegal production.



It is worth noting that whatever mix of freedom and control over SALW production participants favoured, they were unanimous in thinking that weapons will continue to be produced in Bulgaria, if not legally, then illegally.

FGD members were well aware that Bulgaria exports small arms. By far the dominant view among the public is that the arms export business is a lucrative one and therefore of great importance for the economy of a country whose budget is stretched. A popular view was that arms are mostly sold to ‘third world’ countries. Iraq, Iran, India and African and Latin American states were all named, as were Western countries, including the USA and UK. Participants were also aware of the existence of international arms export control agreements and of the UN embargo system in particular. Although their appreciation of the reasons for a particular destination being under embargo were sometimes confused, the basic norms that transfer control regimes embody seemed to be understood. At the same time, however, respondents would point out that “*this doesn't mean we are not selling*” (I,1). There was an assumption that sales can always be arranged, using “private companies and/or mediator countries” (I,4,8). However, for most participants, a desire to see the country's arms industry perform well was tempered by fairly well-developed ideas about the need to restrain arms transfers to take account of moral and legal factors. HHS questions on official SALW transfers also showed that most respondents want controls to be applied to exports.

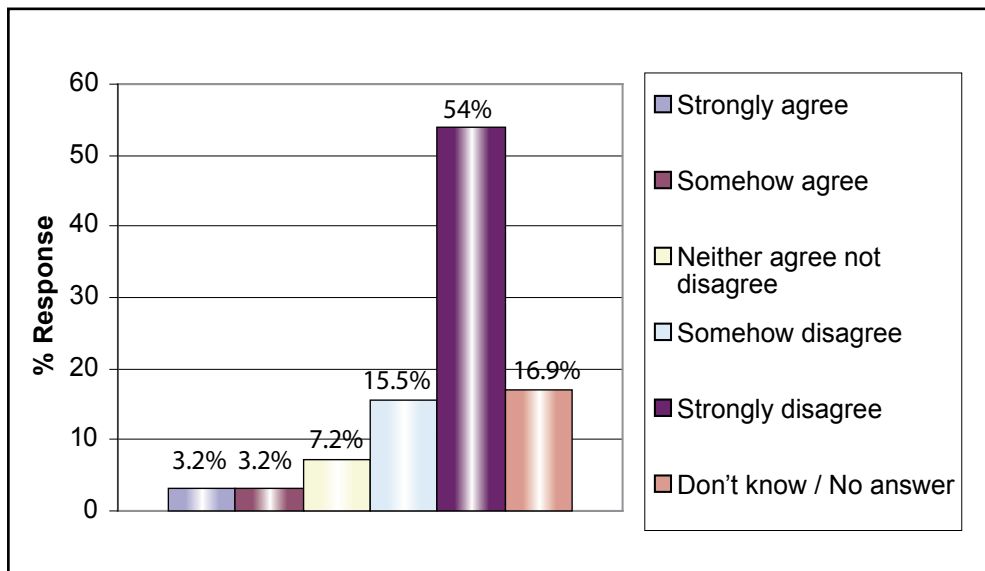


Figure 31: To what degree do you agree with the following statement, “The Bulgarian Government should export arms to any possible buyer irrespective of what they will be used for?” (Base N = 1250)

Further questioning shows that respondents had well-formed opinions about the sort of destinations that Bulgaria should, and should not, export to.

Yet 39.8 percent of respondents stated that they did not know whether the government's current efforts to apply controls in this area were adequate. This compares with only 10.8 percent who claim not to know how well the government is doing in combating organised crime, or 13.7 percent in the case of anti-drug trafficking campaigns. One possible interpretation of this figure is that most respondents are not interested in international arms transfers, as is generally the case with other questions of foreign policy. However, participants in FGDs tended to have well-formed opinions about arms transfers, and a good level of knowledge of well-publicised illegal cases. Bearing this in mind, an alternative explanation is plausible – that a good part of the 39.8 percent of respondents would in fact venture an opinion if the government was to make information about arms transfers publicly available.

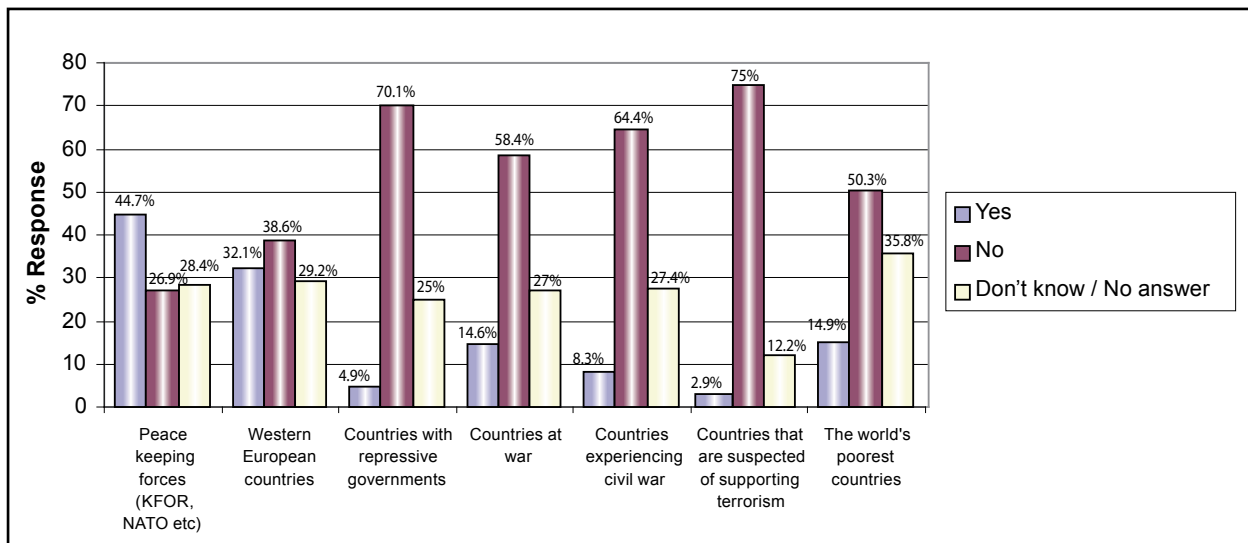


Figure 32: Do you approve of Bulgaria selling arms to any of the following? (Base N = 1250)

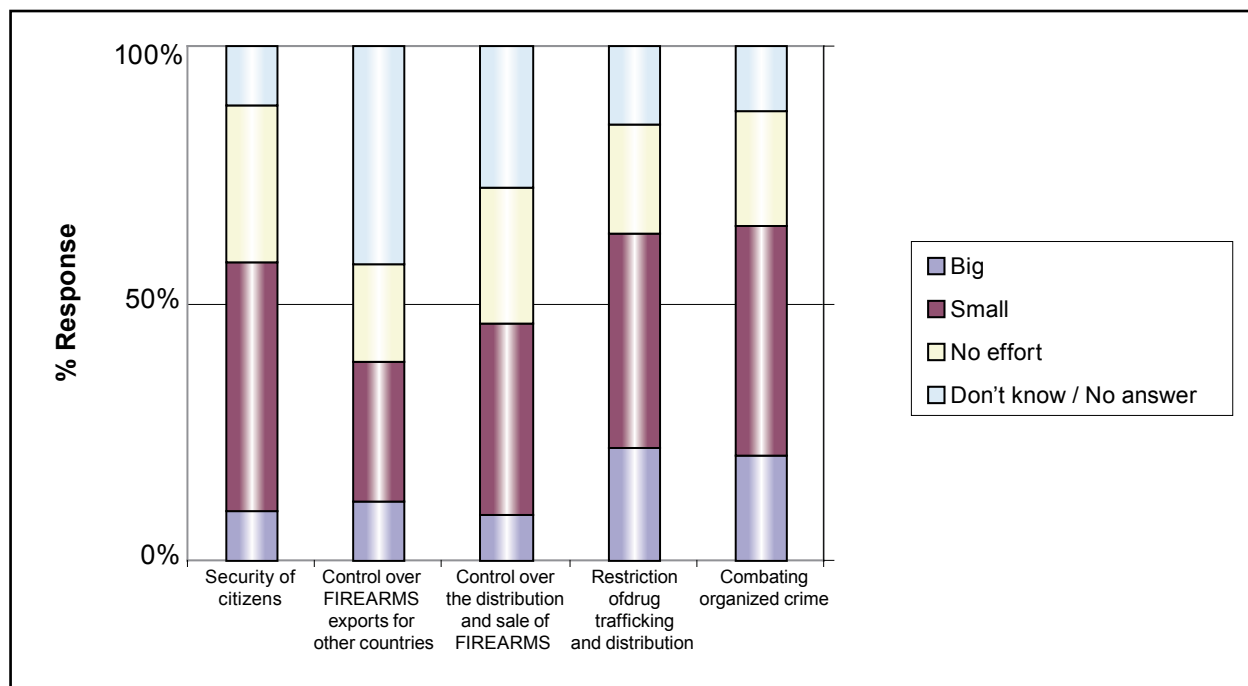


Figure 33: In your opinion, how much effort does the government apply in each of the following areas? (Base N = 1250)

Negative attitudes to exports are in most cases related to people's general (negative) attitude towards arms (I,2,3; V,1,8; VI,6,8):

- It is inhumane and immoral to sell arms.
- It is hard to control the ultimate use of exported weapons which may one day turn against you (V,1,6; VI,6,8).
- The benefits from such a trade will always go to select individuals, not the common man (III,8).



“There are only disadvantages, no advantages. Pensions dropped, and salaries too – everything. All this used to go to the budget.” (II,5)

“The volume of arms exports before could easily cover [Bulgaria’s] external debts.” (II,2).

- Focus group respondents who perceive a connection between reduced social spending and the contraction of the arms industry.

Positive attitudes towards arms exports appeared to be connected to perceptions of arms as having protective/preventative qualities, eg it was generally accepted that there is no problem with exports to the armed forces of other countries.

There was a widespread attitude that countries ‘prone to violence’ are not acceptable trading partners, and that there should be strict controls on transfers to countries that: support terrorism (V; VI); are ruled by dictatorships (V; VI); or are undergoing armed conflict (IV; V; VI). Some indignation was shown at the fact that infamous illegal exports such as the TEREM or ‘Albanian deal’ cases (I,4; II,2,5,7) have not resulted in any serious prosecutions.

Another common opinion was that it is somehow unreasonable or abnormal to have strict controls over SALW inside the country while exporting weapons to other countries. “What if the people in those other countries choose to reason in the same way and decide to restrict usage of arms in their countries, but to export them here?” (V,6). The group that most often expressed this view was younger people in larger towns. Their reasoning was moral rather than commercial or political. Young people were also the most likely to counter the argument that ‘if Bulgaria doesn’t export them, somebody else will’, by emphasising the country’s responsibilities: “the point is that it would not be our country...no need to always think about the others, of third or fourth parties, etc...they can sell each other whatever they want, it is up to them. The essential thing here is that we don’t sell.” (V,9). Women were also far less likely to support the sale of weapons to repressive governments or to countries experiencing war and civil war, with females constituting only a third of respondents supporting these exports.

For the older generation, however, particularly elderly rural males and ex-military personnel, the pride of place that Bulgaria used to hold in the world’s arms markets is cherished more fondly. There was a perception among this group that during the years of restructuring and privatisation, state officials abdicated their responsibilities to the country by surrendering the markets that had been so painstakingly built-up over decades. Quite unrealistic figures were sometimes cited by these respondents when they gave estimates for the contribution that the once-healthy defence industry made to state revenue (by one estimate the military-industrial complex earned Bulgaria \$1bn in 1995).²⁰⁶ Governments, past and present, were criticised by this group for allowing industry to be downsized. Participants often disagreed on whether government officials were guilty only of caving in to Western pressure, or of benefiting personally, though the explanation that the officials who took these decisions were somehow involved in the arms business and stood to gain from privatisation was actually the more common one. Among this constituency there was great resistance to the idea that legitimate forces such as better competition or necessary restructuring had brought this pressure to bear on Bulgarian industry. This constituency was also more likely to dismiss the idea of arms embargoes as ‘imposed from the outside’.

The range of justifications offered by middle-aged and older men, particularly with military backgrounds, for an unrestricted arms trade are instructive:

- There is no place for ethics in business, “ethics are for the church” (I,6,8).
- If Bulgaria stops exporting, others will continue.
- Ending sales to conflict zones won’t stop the conflict: “who can say what’s the truth for Macedonia, after all, it’s their business” (II,2, 5,7).
- Countries with conflicts are the natural markets for arms producers – rich countries are peaceful, “their armies are fully equipped” (III,7; V,3).
- States have a right to purchase arms regardless of the type of political system they enjoy.

²⁰⁶ BTV, 21 October 2003.



- It is naïve to think that arms shipments can be controlled from the point of departure to arrival – transactions are complex and recipients will re-sell, so why delude oneself that controls are possible? (I,4,8).
- One man's terrorist (or dictator) is another man's freedom fighter (II,2; IV): "The UN list of terrorist states includes five countries, whereas the USA list twenty-eight."
- Major arms producing companies are powerful enough to deliberately provoke unrest or conflicts so as to enlarge their markets, so controls are pointless.
- Professions of humanity and moral conduct in the arms trade are themselves used as a business tool (I,4,5,8; II,2,3,5,7; III,7; V,6,7; VI).

3.11 Attitude towards SALW destruction

Most respondents were divided as to whether the destruction of surplus weapons was a futile or ridiculous idea. All were convinced that Bulgaria has huge stocks of arms and ammunition – "we have enough stored weapons to arm five armies or more...the army keeps it, they don't have a market." (IV,5) – but most seemed either unable or unwilling to envisage the destruction of such vast amounts. From this, one can conclude that the public are not well informed about the ongoing efforts by Bulgaria to destroy surplus SALW, though the public's general lack of trust in government institutions and experience of poor SALW management in recent years may also explain scepticism about SALW destruction. Although former military/arms industry personnel were more likely to understand that unsafe ammunition requires destruction, they held that "there is no such procedure for arms, they are simply subject to regular prophylactic technical inspections" (IV,1,4).

3.12 Attitude towards SALW collection

Most respondents were equally sceptical when questioned about the feasibility of voluntary weapons collection. The range of objections raised was as follows:

- No objective assessment can be made of the required level of weapons possession: "If one has two guns, does it mean that one is excess? This is silly! Of course one would be needed at home and the other at the country house."
- Voluntary collections are no substitute for anti-crime measures – "Criminals should be collected, not arms!"
- Levels of weapons possession will not drop until the state and its security providers function better.
- Previous attempts at mass weapons collection and seizure have failed and will do so again: "It would fail as it did on September 9th,²⁰⁷ (II,3); "Weapons were just hidden, the same would happen today." (IV,1,8).
- Collections in other Balkans countries (Albania was most commonly cited), have failed to return significant numbers of weapons. "People kept enough for themselves to wage a mini-war" (I,4).
- The patterns of supply and demand for weapons are constant, so that arms will be re-imported to replace those that are collected (I,7).

Because of the level of scepticism among FGD participants, no one form of collection scheme, or incentive structure, could be clearly identified as suitable for use in a future SALW collection:

²⁰⁷ A reference to the date on which the Communist Party came to power in 1944. In 1946 the new government instituted a weapons collection scheme designed to retrieve weapons in the possession of former combatants. It was thought to be only a partial success.



	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY	UNLIKELY	VERY UNLIKELY	DON'T KNOW / NO ANSWER
Harsher sanctions for illegal firearms	7.8	23.5	26.0	22.7	20.1
Crime is reduced	5.1	19.3	27.7	24.3	23.6
The police are more effective	11.1	27.9	22.5	15.9	22.6
The economic situation improves	6.6	19.6	24.0	21.6	28.2
Immunity from prosecution offered in return	6.0	22.1	22.4	23.3	26.2
Agreement is to be made with local authority	5.8	18.0	22.2	21.5	32.4
Social development programme	3.0	9.9	21.0	27.4	38.7
Lottery offering prizes	7.9	15.4	21.2	30.8	24.7
Amount of cash is offered	8.9	21.9	21.4	25.2	22.6

Table 29: In your opinion, how likely is it that people illegally owning firearms will turn them in if... (Base N = 1250)

Part of the background to this scepticism is undoubtedly the endemic distrust in institutions among the public, which affects confidence in any state initiative. FGD participants even tended to view the idea of a cash buy-back of weapons as somewhat ridiculous, suggesting either that the price for weapons would be set too low, or that no incentive at all would inspire enough trust in such a process or in the collection agents. They suggested that most Bulgarians would suspect whoever ran such a scheme of having hidden motives and would fear fraud, betrayal or prosecution. “People have no trust in anybody...least of all a guy coming to the door to ask what I have” (III,9). As the graph below shows, the public would place trust in very few organisations to conduct a weapons collection, among them international organisations and NGOs. Nevertheless when asked to identify the actors that people would be most likely to trust in the event of a weapons collection, the police were rated as the most popular institution by far:

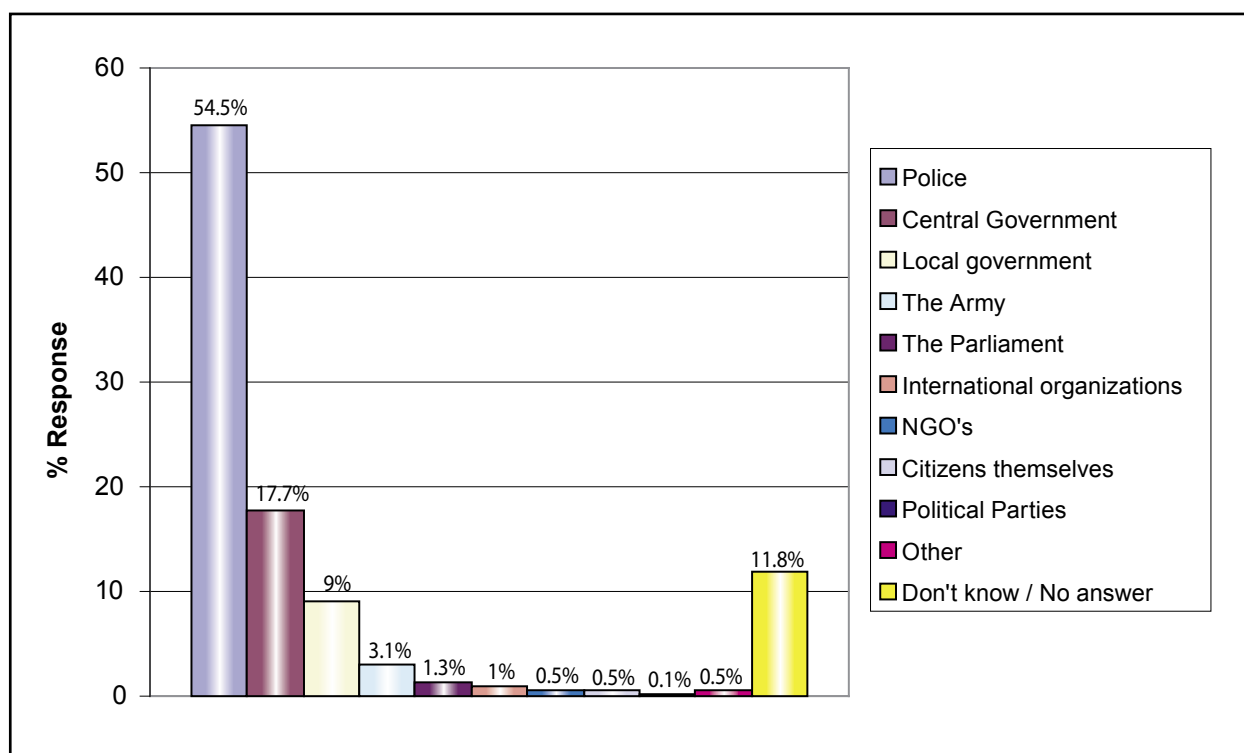


Figure 34: If a voluntary firearms collection was begun in your community, who do you think should be responsible for the collection of firearms? (Base N = 1250)



However some social and geographic groups were more supportive of the idea of weapons collection than others. Of all the focus group members, those in Sofia were more inclined to think a weapons collection feasible, provided it was accompanied by a large-scale awareness campaign run by trustworthy persons. In other groups it was apparent that women, young people and ethnic minorities (especially Roma) tended to favour tighter controls on possession more than other respondents. In several cases these respondents raised the idea of weapons collection and seizure as a precursor to a ban on all civilian possession, except hunting and sports weapons. This group did not see a restrictive regime as realistic in the near future though, because of a perceived acquiescence by both society and the state in the face of growing SALW proliferation, and because they did not consider agencies that would need to implement any new controls as being at all reliable.

“If nobody had arms I wouldn’t want to have one either.” (III,8).

“Who would convince me that if I handed in my gun, my neighbour would also hand in his? Nobody could convince me of that.” (III,10,11).

As noted above, ethnic Turks and Roma who participated in discussions were more likely to state a preference for total civilian disarmament. Their support for such measures was tempered by a concern that disarmament should be cross-community – they would be willing to hand in any weapons only on condition that others did too. Ethnic Turks who participated in FGDs had not forgotten the disarmament campaign that the Communist government forced upon their community during the so-called ‘Renaissance Process’ in the late 1980s. They remember the confiscations of legal as well as illegal weapons during house-to-house raids. Consequently there was clearly some concern that a future disarmament campaign might target them unfairly (III,6,11). The coercive measures used in parts of the Former Yugoslavia were also remembered well. Roma respondents also appeared to view a society without civilian small arms possession as desirable, but insisted such a thing could only be achieved by means of house-to-house searches. They identified the public destruction of weapons as an important confidence-building measure.

Despite pockets of support, the attitude towards weapons collection was sceptical. Apart from respondents who favoured a very liberal domestic arms control regime, it was felt that more systematic controls rather than amnesties was the answer – “stricter control at a higher level” (I,10; II,7; III,11). The suggested measures included targeting the black market, and carrying out periodic checks on those with weapons permits (II,1; II,7, 10). It should also be noted that by far the most supportive constituency for SALW control interventions in general were the young and highly-educated respondents surveyed. Their support for tighter domestic controls also extends to tighter controls over production and export.



4 Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)

4.1 Legislative and regulatory framework

Bulgaria currently has two main laws that control SALW. The 1995 *Law on Control of Foreign Trade Activity in Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies* (LCFTADGT, last amended in July 2002) provides the legal foundation of Bulgaria's arms transfer control system. A second law, the 1999 *Law on the Control of Explosive Substances, Firearms and Ammunition* (LCESFA), last amended in September 2003, covers weapons production, acquisition, possession, use and the domestic trade in weapons. Both laws have an accompanying regulation governing their implementation. Other relevant laws include the Penal Code and government decrees cited elsewhere in this report. In addition, each government agency that is involved in SALW control has its own internal regulations and standards. In addition, Bulgaria is party to a number of international arms control instruments that cover SALW (see Section 4.1.2 below).

4.1.1 Internal SALW controls

The LCESFA controls all activities by individuals or legal entities other than the MoI or MoD which have their own internal regulations. The first part of the LCESFA lays down the rules for **production, internal trade and transport** of all firearms, explosives, and ammunition. It stipulates that all three activities may only be conducted by legal business entities and that those engaged in the production, trading, rental or remodelling of firearms must keep a detailed register of the products and clients concerned. Transportation of firearms, explosives or ammunition may only be undertaken once a permit has been obtained from the MoI. According to the LCESFA, all SALW produced in Bulgaria must be marked at the point of manufacture with a unique, user-friendly, alphanumeric identifier which allows the manufacturer and year of manufacture to be identified. The law also requires that the technical production manuals for different types of SALW detail the font and location of the markings required on particular weapons. Those engaged in producing, trading, exchanging, renting, or repairing explosives, firearms or munitions are required under Article 3 to register the type, mark, model, calibre and serial number of weapons, as well as the name and address of the supplier and recipient. The LCESFA makes no special provision for cases of licensed production overseas (the process whereby a company in one country allows a second company in another country to manufacture its products under licence).

The second part of the LCESFA deals with the **acquisition, storage, carriage, and use** of firearms. It states that permits for the production, trade and transportation of explosives, firearms and munitions may not be issued to persons who have criminal records, are mentally ill, or are under treatment for addiction to alcohol or drugs (Article 12). Separate permits are required for the possession and carriage of weapons. This section of the law also stipulates which types of weapons are legally permissible, and for which purposes. Hand guns are the only types of firearms that civilians may use for self-defence, while rifles (described as 'smooth-barrel and grooved guns'), are permitted for hunting. Hand guns and hunting-rifles are permitted for sports purposes, while the weapons permitted for a fourth category of 'cultural use' (eg film production), includes all kinds of hand guns, hunting rifles as well as automatic weapons. Where the need has been demonstrated, citizens are allowed to own up to two hand guns for self-defence, provided the barrel does not exceed 300mm in length. Automatic weapons may be used for the protection of high-risk sites, but only with MoI approval.

The above weapons may be carried in public places for the purposes for which they were issued. Those possessing weapons for self-defence may only carry one weapon. Hunting weapons must be carried to designated hunting areas disassembled, and ammunition carried separately. Weapons may not be carried under the following circumstances: at political, trade union and cultural events; at sports events (unless necessary for the event itself); in entertainment establishments between 10 pm and 6 am; during and after using alcohol or narcotic substances. The concealment of weapons is prohibited at all times, except during the provision of professional security and protection services. At no time must weapons issued for guarding, self-defence, sporting or cultural purposes be carried or stored with a bullet in the barrel (Articles 15a and b).

The regulation on the law's implementation sets out the process for awarding permits for the possession and carriage of weapons by civilians. It details how permits may be obtained, what documents are required, how weapons must be stored, as well the grounds on which permits may be denied. Permits are typically issued



for three years (for production, trade, storing, carrying, using or repairing weapons), or for three months (for transportation, sale, import, export and transit) (Article 5).

Individuals wishing to acquire weapons for self-defence must submit a range of information and documentation (Article 41). This includes: the type and number of weapons and munitions required; proof of need; details of the intended means of storage and acquisition; a medical certificate from the National Investigation Office certifying that they are not subject to any criminal proceedings; a certificate issued by a medical establishment declaring that they are not suffering from a mental illness;²⁰⁸ and a certificate to prove they have successfully passed the officially recognised weapons handling examination. Those applying for a hunting or sports permit are subject to lesser requirements but must submit proof of their membership of a club. Businesses, including sole traders, need to present fewer documents (Article 40). The requirements that employees of the Mol and MoD must meet are the most relaxed of all. They mainly have to show proof of their tax status, place of employment, and an acceptable means to store weapons.

The LCESFA, and the regulation on its implementation, also define the storage procedures that must be followed, stating that, "...persons who have acquired firearms shall be obliged to protect them against theft, losing and access of other persons and in handling it to take precautions for non-admittance of accidents or injuries." (Article 48.1). Mol personnel are permitted under the law to make on-site inspections of weapon owners' storage practices, though these seldom occur.

The LCESFA also provides for the creation and maintenance of a Central Registry of Firearms by the Mol, which must legally contain: data on issued and refused permits, including the identity of the individuals and organisations concerned; descriptions of the weapons, explosives and munitions which they are permitted; and records of any offences by these entities, or punishments imposed. The Registry is currently a computerised system, which allows rapid access to data. Some SALW control agencies though, such as the NSCOC, are not connected to it and must make time-consuming written requests for information contained in it.²⁰⁹

Subsequent sections of the LCESFA also cover the **destruction of firearms, explosives, and ammunition** and the **trade** in second-hand parts of non-repairable firearms. The regulation on the law's implementation (Article 81) specifies which destruction methods are permissible. Explosives and ammunition may only be destroyed using detonation or burning, or chemical treatment in exceptional cases. The institution or company carrying out the destruction must also meet the requirements of the *Regulation on Labour Safety During Destruction Processes*.

Articles 24 to 31 specify the penalties for those violating the law. Finally, sections of the LCESFA also outline the basic principles on imports, exports and the transit of arms, ammunition, and explosives. The text generally refers to the LCFTADGT but does specify the activities to be carried out by the NPS in regard to the issuing of export licences (see below).

4.1.1.1 Regulation of Private Security Companies

In February 2004 the Parliament adopted a comprehensive *Law on Private Security Business*. This law included provisions for the creation of a 'Single Automated Central Register' for all licences and registrations issued to PSCs under the law (Article 42). It is also intended that the register contains records of the number of weapons in use by PSCs. In addition, in August 2004, the Mol and the police released instructions for the six-day mandatory training course that each security guard needs to undergo before starting work. Part of this training course (called the *Minimum* programme), includes a module on the rights and duties of private security guards, including the legal ramifications of using firearms as well as tactical training. In addition, just like every other gun owner, private security guards have to undergo a three-day training course on safe handling of firearms.

²⁰⁸ The medical conditions were relaxed in July 2003. Those applying for a weapons permit are no longer required to pass mental health tests at a specialist Mol facility, but may receive testing at regular clinics. Further, permits can no longer be denied because of 'misuse of drugs and alcohol', 'systematically disturbing the peace' or 'putting national security in danger'. *Novinite*, 16 July 2003.

²⁰⁹ Interview, Gaidarski, 01 December 2004.



4.1.1.2 Responsible institutions

Domestic SALW control is primarily the responsibility of Mol institutions, the NPS and NSCOC. The NSCOC also works in collaboration with others to combat illegal arms trafficking, including the NBPS and NSS within the Mol and the Customs Agency within the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Several of these agencies also have a role to play in enforcing arms transfer controls whether in scrutinising licence applications, monitoring transactions, or providing follow-up control, as described in the next section.

4.1.2 Transfer controls

In July 2002 the National Assembly passed major amendments to the LCFTADGT. A new regulation on the implementation of the law was also adopted. The amended version of the 1995 LCFTADGT and the regulation on its implementation became effective in the second half of December 2002.²¹⁰ The law provides for a two-tier control system whereby companies wishing to trade in ADGT must first obtain a licence to do so, before applying for specific permits for particular transfers. Companies importing dual-use goods and technologies (but not arms) are exempt from licensing for economic reasons. They do, however, require permits for individual transactions. Trading licences are issued by a body known as the Interministerial Council on the Issues of Military Industrial Complex and Mobilisation Preparedness of the Country (Interministerial Council), whose structure is described further below. Crucially, in addition to would-be exporters/importers of ADGT, companies acting as intermediaries (brokers, transporters, financiers and other consultants) must also be licensed by the Interministerial Council. Licences are initially issued for one year but may be extended for an additional three years.

The export control system applies to all types of ADGT as specified in the List of ADGT.²¹¹ Bulgaria has amended its List of ADGT in line with the Common Military List of the EU.²¹² A catch-all clause is also applied providing for the control of non-listed dual-use goods and technologies, in compliance with the policy of EU member states.²¹³ By law the List must be regularly updated to reflect decisions by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), EU and OSCE, or every six months.²¹⁴ Companies may be issued with either a full or a limited licence, which permits them to trade in a range of goods laid down in the List of ADGT.

The amended LCFTADGT and the regulation on its implementation introduced comprehensive provisions to control the activities of brokers for the first time in Bulgaria's history. Any brokering activities that take place on the territory of Bulgaria (the legislation does not have extra-territorial scope), are now subject to the same regulations as direct exports. Bulgarian officials view the introduction of stronger brokering controls as a major step forward,²¹⁵ which together with the introduction of harsher penalties for those violating the arms trading laws (see below), prove that Bulgaria is, "...strongly committed to a consistent and responsible policy of export controls."²¹⁶ A list of all companies licensed to broker ADGT in foreign markets can be obtained from the Interministerial Council (the most recent list is included at Annex D, as is a list of licensed shipping companies).

Those companies that successfully acquire a licence to trade in arms must then seek and obtain a permit for each individual transfer of ADGT, regardless of whether the transaction is an export, import, transit, or re-export of goods. Once awarded, transaction permits are valid for six months but may be renewed for an additional six months.²¹⁷ Permit applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Interdepartmental Commission on Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (Interdepartmental Commission), whose role is considered in more detail below. Although, as in other parliamentary democracies, government ministers are to be held accountable to parliament, there is no established parliamentary mechanism for pre- or post-scrutiny of ADGT licensing decisions.

²¹⁰ Like the LCESFA, the scope of the LCFTADGT does not extend to control of weapons or ammunition belonging to the Bulgarian Armed Forces, nor to foreign army and police contingents transiting the country. LCFTADGT, SG No. 75/2002, Article 1.

²¹¹ Last updated on 31 March 2004 and published in *State Gazette*, No.35 from 28 April 2004.

²¹² 'Council Regulation (EC) No 149/2003 of 27 January 2003', *EU Official Journal*, L30/1 (05 February 2003).

²¹³ LCFTADGT, Article 13.

²¹⁴ Article 2, para 4. See also 'Report by the Bulgarian MFA to COARM, 19 March 2003, DS 8/2003'.

²¹⁵ Interview, Stoeva, 23 September 2004.

²¹⁶ Passy, 11-12 November 2002.

²¹⁷ LCFTADGT, Article 4, § 4.



The Interdepartmental Commission judges applications against a range of criteria, including: the validity of presented documents, the type of goods, the broker, the shipper, the end-user, political considerations, the impact on regional peace and security at the point of destination, notified denials from members of the EU or the Wassenaar Arrangement as well as the country's national interest and international obligations (see Table 30).²¹⁸ The decision-making process within the Interdepartmental Commission is consensus-based, which allows each participating agency to bring its views to bear (see below). The procedure by which each Ministry considers particular permit applications is well established – each Ministry has a dedicated department that analyses the documents supplied in a particular case and then advises the Minister as to what the Ministry's position should be. At present though there are no detailed guidelines on how to interpret and apply export criteria such as those contained in the EU Code of Conduct.²¹⁹

COMMITMENT	RATIFICATION / ALIGNMENT / ACCESSION DATES
Wassenaar Arrangement	July 1996 ²²⁰
EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports	August 1998
EU Joint Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons	December 1998 ²²¹
OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons	November 2000 ²²²
UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects	July 2001 ²²³
Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferations of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)	November 2001 ²²⁴
Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime	February 2002 ²²⁵

Table 30: Arms transfer control instruments pertaining to SALW to which Bulgaria is a party.

In April 2001, a Decree issued by the Council of Ministers established a 'consolidated list of countries and organisations' to which prohibitions or restrictions to the transfer of weapons and related equipment applies. The Decree provides for the list to be amended in accordance with resolutions and decisions adopted by the UNSC, EU and OSCE.²²⁶

In addition to introducing controls over arms brokering, the 2002 amendments to the LCFTADGT also included new provisions to improve identification of end-users. Every ADGT transaction requires end-use(r) certificates

²¹⁸ Zakov et al, p 8.

²¹⁹ Interview, Atanasov, 24 September 2004; and remarks by Vladimir Vladimirov, Head of Arms Trade Control Department, Ministry of Economy, at Bulgarian Red Cross Seminar on Non-Proliferation of SALW, Sofia, 03 - 04 November 2004. Sofia, 04 November 2004.

²²⁰ Bulgaria was an early member of the Wassenaar Arrangement, joining in July 1996. See <<http://www.wassenaar.org/docs/History.html>>

²²¹ EU Joint Action of 17 December 1998 on the EU's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (1999/34/CFSP).

²²² FSC.DOC/1/00, 24 November 2000. The Council of Ministers approved the OSCE Document on 01 February 2001. See BICC/BASIC/Saferworld/SAS, p 106.

²²³ On 07 March 2002, the Council of Ministers adopted a Decision for the approval of the United Nations Programme of Action on SALW, which tasks different government institutions with the implementation of the principles, norms and requirements contained in the PoA. 'All involved institutions have designated an authorised point of contact, thus creating an effective mechanism for its implementation'. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 2.

²²⁴ 'Regional Statement of Support For the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan', Budapest, 27 November 2001, <<http://www.stabilitypact.org/salw/reg-statement-support.doc>>

²²⁵ The Protocol was ratified by the National Assembly on 19 June 2002 and the instrument of ratification was deposited on 6 August 2002. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 2.

²²⁶ List of countries and organisations towards which the Republic of Bulgaria applies prohibitions or restrictions on the sale and supply of arms and related equipment in accordance with UNSC resolutions and decisions of the EU and the OSCE, SG 34/2001.



Box 12: The EU Code of Conduct

The EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports is the most restrictive international arms transfer control agreement in existence. By aligning itself to the EU Code in August 1998, Bulgaria made an undertaking to assess all future export licence applications for military equipment and dual-use goods on a case-by-case basis against the provisions of the Code. These provisions include the use of eight criteria to be taken into account when considering licence applications. Licences are to be denied in cases such as those where there is a risk of diversion, or of the goods being used to facilitate human rights abuses, or where the arms transfer may aggravate an armed conflict. Bulgaria is also required to make use of a common list of military equipment covered by the Code, and to circulate to other EU member states a confidential report on its defence exports and the implementation of the Code annually. The 1998 alignment to the EU Code also bound Bulgaria to abide by all guidelines, decisions and positions related to arms transfers adopted by the EU. These include the EU Joint Action on SALW and the EU Common Position on Brokering.

The EU Code of Conduct can be viewed at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/cfsp/sanctions/codeofconduct.pdf

(EUCs) and the exporting company or broker must submit an EUC provided by the end-user's national authorities during the permit application process. This certificate is verified by agencies working within the Commission: the MoE (in consultation with the recipient country's import control authorities), the MFA, through diplomatic means and the MoI and the MoD. Exporting companies are now required to include a re-transfer clause in all contracts for ADGT export, to the effect that the end-use(r) may only be changed with the agreement of the Interdepartmental Commission.²²⁷ The same conditions apply if the end-user changes its broker.

A post-shipment verification element is also included in the current system – the LCFTADGT requires the exporting firm to submit a Delivery Verification Certificate, confirming end-use(r), issued to the Interdepartmental Commission by the authorised bodies at the point of destination within three months of a licensed transfer occurring. The Interdepartmental Commission and Interministerial Council are both entitled to require an exporting firm to include a provision in its contract for the physical inspection of the delivery by Bulgarian authorities after shipment. Such checks are, however, rare, given the expense involved.²²⁸

Transiting arms shipments are also subject to regulation under the current system. In order to pass through Bulgarian territory each individual shipment of ADGT requires an authorisation, from the Interdepartmental Commission. In order to obtain an authorisation, the company organising the shipment must present permits for the export and further passage of the goods, as supplied by the exporting country. By law the Commission has ten days to check the documentation and provide an answer to the applicant company.²²⁹ Companies applying to import or re-export goods into Bulgaria, or to transit goods through the country must submit evidence of the goods' origin to the Interdepartmental Commission. The LCFTADGT makes no special provisions for the transshipment of ADGT.

Amendments to the LCFTADGT also increased the penalties in cases of violation of the law. Previously, the fines amounted to between 25 and 250 Bulgarian Leva (EU 12 – 125). The new texts lay down fines ranging from 5,000 to 50,000 Leva (EU 2,500 – 25,000) for private individuals. For companies the fines are even higher, amounting to double the value of the transaction (Article 19.). Article 233 penalises the illegal trade in dual-use goods and technologies with up to eight years imprisonment or a one million Leva (EU 500,000) fine. Article 337 penalises illegal trade, production and transfer of explosives, arms, and ammunition with up to six years imprisonment (two to eight years for civil servants). Article 339 penalises the illegal acquisition and ownership of explosives, arms and ammunition. The crucial matter of law's enforcement is dealt with in Sections 4.2.1, 4.2.4 and 4.2.9.2).

Apart from the controls detailed above, each company trading in ADGT is subject to a number of additional controls that include:

- Inspection and monitoring by the Customs Agency and NBPS at specific border crossings.
- Monitoring by the intelligence agencies within the MoI and the MoD, such as the NSS.

²²⁷ LCFTADGT, Article 15.

²²⁸ Interview, Genov, November 2003. See also interview with Dimiter Zhalev, MFA, cited in HRW, April 1999.

²²⁹ Regulation on implementation of LCFTADGT (SG 102/95), Article 30b.



- The cargo shipping company also needs to be licensed by the Interministerial Council.
- Defence and arms trade companies under the MoD are obliged to obtain personal approval for all transactions from the Minister of Defence.
- Licensed companies must designate a senior employee (management level or above) to take responsibility for each transaction's compliance with the law.
- Licensed companies must keep a register of their transactions.
- The requirement to obtain a permit from the CHDO.²³⁰

4.1.2.1 Responsible institutions

According to the LCFTADGT, the Interministerial Council, Interdepartmental Commission, MoE, MoI and Customs Agency are together responsible for the law's implementation. Each of these institutions has the legal right to request information from companies that could help with the control of exports. They are authorised to perform on-site inspections at customs points or to make enquiries with other state bodies or foreign governments where necessary. The Interdepartmental Commission is also permitted to perform on-the-spot delivery verifications in recipient countries, though in practice as noted above, these are rare.²³¹

Interministerial Council

Established in 1993, the Interministerial Council designs and implements the state's policy on manufacturing and trading in ADGT. The Interministerial Council is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy. Its members are the Deputy Ministers of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Finance, Interior, Transport and Telecommunications, Regional Development and Public Works and Energy, as well as the Director of the National Intelligence Service and the Deputy of the General Staff of the Bulgarian Armed Forces. The Secretary of the Council is appointed by the Prime Minister and is responsible for supervising the implementation of its decisions. Although the Council once employed a staff of around 20 people, nowadays it employs only three civil administrators.²³² It carries out the following specific activities in controlling trade in ADGT:

- Issuing licences for manufacture and export of ADGT.
- Maintaining a register of persons licensed to conduct foreign trade and transport arms.
- Acting as arbiter in those circumstances where consensus on an export permit application cannot be reached within the Interdepartmental Commission and the case is referred to the Interministerial Council.
- Co-ordinating nominations of members to the management and control authorities in the state-owned arms manufacturing and trading companies and submitting to the Council of Ministers recommendations for the restructuring of such companies.
- Advising on the inclusion of new products in the List of ADGT.
- Advising on issues related to Bulgaria's membership of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the OSCE, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, as well as to its commitments within the Australian Group and, among other control regimes, the Missile Technologies Control Regime.

The Interministerial Council must consider a company's reliability before granting a licence, taking into consideration the following:

²³⁰ Regulation on implementation of the LCESFA (SG 1/2002) Article 61, § 1. To receive the CHDO permit the companies wishing to transfer ADGT need to submit documents specifying the type and quantity of ADGT to be transferred, the country of origin/destination, the border post where the export or import will take place, the identification numbers of the individuals carrying out the transaction and the details of the security arrangements for the transportation of the materiel. At the border, the documents are also inspected by the NBPS.

²³¹ LCFTADGT, Article, 17.7. In such a case the responsibility for carrying out inspections is allocated to specific ministries as required, Gounev et al, p 37.

²³² Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 4.

- The reliability of storage facilities for ADGT.
- The adequacy of organisational mechanisms for protecting classified information.
- Compliance of foreign companies with the laws of the country of their registration.²³³

Interdepartmental Commission

The Commission, which meets about twice a month, is the key body in arms transfer control system and is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the LCFTADGT.²³⁴ It is based within the MoE and chaired by the Minister of Economy. Like the Interministerial Commission its primary members are at the Deputy Ministerial level. It includes two representatives from the MoE, two representatives from the MoD and one representative each from the Mol and the MFA. The Commission's main responsibility is to issue permits for:

- Exports and imports of arms.
- Exports of dual-use goods.
- Transiting shipments of arms.
- Transit of radioactive, explosive, flammable, oxidizing, corrosive, bacteriological (biological), toxic and pathogenic goods.

If required, the Commission may solicit the opinion of specialists from other institutions when assessing permit applications. It also has a legal right to delay a decision where further information is deemed necessary, or to verify EUCs of concern.²³⁵

Box 13: Export and import permits denied by the Interdepartmental Commission²³⁶

The table below shows the number of export and import permits supplied by the Interdepartmental Commission from 2001–2003. Although the number of denials was provided, the MoE were not able to provide detailed explanations of the reasons.

PERMIT TYPE	YEAR		
	2001	2002	2003
Export permits	178	285	248
Import permits	296	135	169
Denied permits	6	7	N/A

Table 31: Permits issued or denied by the commission

Four Mol agencies are involved in enforcing arms transfer controls: the NPS, NSS, NSCOC and the NBPS. Their duties vary somewhat, but they are expected to work co-operatively with respect to the licensing of traders, pre-transaction investigation and in monitoring transfers and performing any follow-up checks.

4.1.2.2 Proposed amendments to the current system

The existing system for arms transfer control has improved incrementally since 1995 and further changes are to be expected in the future as the situation changes. Recent proposals for reform have come from two directions. On 18 October 2004 two MPs introduced draft amendments to the LCFTADGT to parliament. The proposed amendments concern the registration regime for brokers. The first amendment allows brokers that are registered "...according to the laws of the countries members to the EU, NATO, as well as other member countries in the export-control regimes to which Bulgaria is a party" (sic) to trade in arms or dual-use goods and technologies without a trading licence issued by the Interministerial Council.²³⁷ The second proposed amendment would require all brokers to be legally registered as commercial entities in Bulgaria (currently, off-shore or foreign brokers simply have to register with the Interministerial Council). While the second amendment would serve to tighten the

²³³ Zakov et al, 2003, p 7.

²³⁴ Article 66, § 2 of the regulation on implementation of the LCFTADGT (SG 102/95).

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Source: Interdepartmental Commission.

²³⁷ Law for the amendment of the LCFTADGT, Parliament online draft-law database <<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=bg>>, p1.

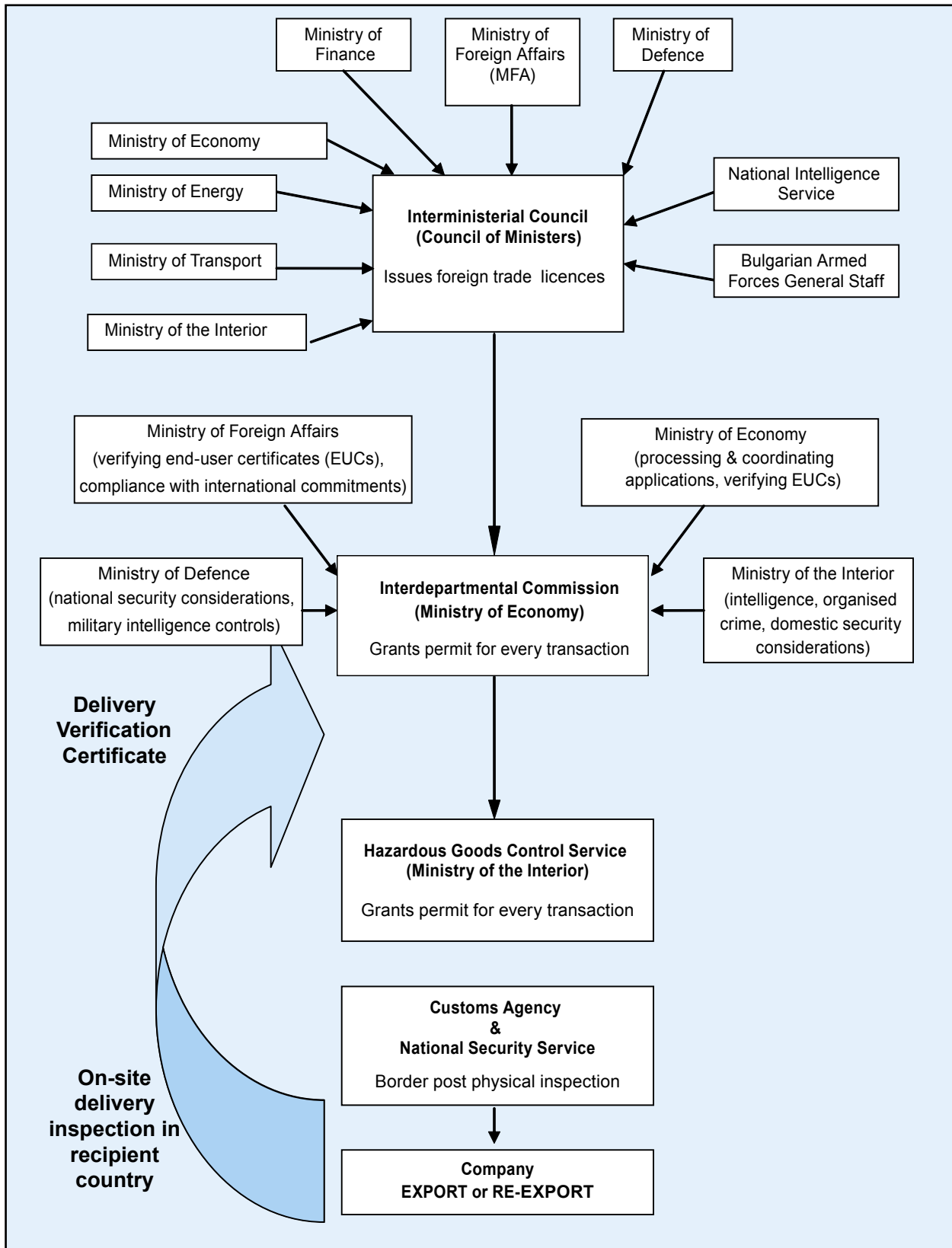


Figure 35: Institutional system for arms transfer control.

Source: This chart is based on a chart in Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NATO Information Centre, *Strengthening of the Arms Export Control System in the Context of Bulgaria's Membership in NATO*. Sofia: 2003. p11.



existing controls on brokers even further, the first amendment could weaken Bulgaria's controls on brokers in cases where they are registered in countries with laxer brokering regulations.

Proposals have also originated from a second source. In late 2002, the Bulgarian think tank CSD formed a working group of experts from the MoD, MFA, Mol, MoE and the University of National and World Economy to examine the new arms transfer control system and recommend changes as necessary. The group's conclusions were introduced in a report entitled 'Weapons Under Scrutiny', launched in April 2004. The report concluded that the amended arms transfer control system is substantially improved both in its scope and application; however, it also made a number of recommendations for its further improvement. In particular, the report called for changes to the structure and workings of the Interdepartmental Commission that would help resolve conflicts of interest, diminish the concentration of discretionary powers held by single individuals (especially the Secretary), counteract the risk of corruption and devote more attention to the impact of arms transfers on conflict, instability, human rights and development goals.²³⁸

4.2 Organisational capacities

4.2.1 National Police Service

The NPS is an important agency in relation to SALW control in Bulgaria in several respects. Firstly, the CHDO within the NPS has a key role to play in issuing permits, both for the international transfer of SALW and for the internal possession, use and trade in SALW by companies and individuals. Secondly, as the country's main law enforcement agency its officers are responsible for apprehending those who contravene the laws regarding the possession and use of SALW. Thirdly, NPS officers are armed with hand-guns and assault rifles. The control, or lack of it, exercised in the course of their duties is also an important matter.

Despite having such a key role in the control of SALW, the NPS has been criticised throughout the post-Communist era for human rights abuses, a poor track record in dealing with rising crime and endemic corruption.²³⁹ The organisation also suffers from understaffing, inadequate resources and a shortage of technical expertise.

The Bulgarian public is generally thought to have little faith in the police's ability to combat crime. Many FGD respondents interviewed during this survey did indeed display weariness and despondency when discussing police capacities, especially in relation to dealing with organised criminal networks and protecting citizens' property. Nevertheless, HHS results show that most respondents do not express dissatisfaction, with only 15.5 percent stating that the police are 'not efficient'.

One possible explanation is that while there is indeed frustration at crime levels and police efficiency, the high visibility of the police service made it an obvious target for declaratory statements during the in-depth discussions of the security situation and overall state capacities that took place in FGDs.

Corruption perception surveys reveal that the general public perceive the police to be heavily corrupt, second only to customs officials and magistrates among public officials. However, a survey undertaken in October 2003 reported a decrease in perceived corruption among police officers but an increase in perceived corruption among tax officials.²⁴⁰ There are also signs that public perceptions of the police are improving. According to ongoing research, in 2004, 62 percent of the population had a positive perception of the police, compared to 32 percent with negative perceptions. This represents a substantial increase since 2001 when only 40 percent held positive views against 50 percent negative.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Gounev et al, Executive Summary.

²³⁹ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, <<http://www.bghelsinki.org/special/en/police.html>>.

²⁴⁰ US Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27830.htm>>.

²⁴¹ Alpha Research, September 2004, <<http://www.aresearch.org/doc.php?en=1&id=49>>.

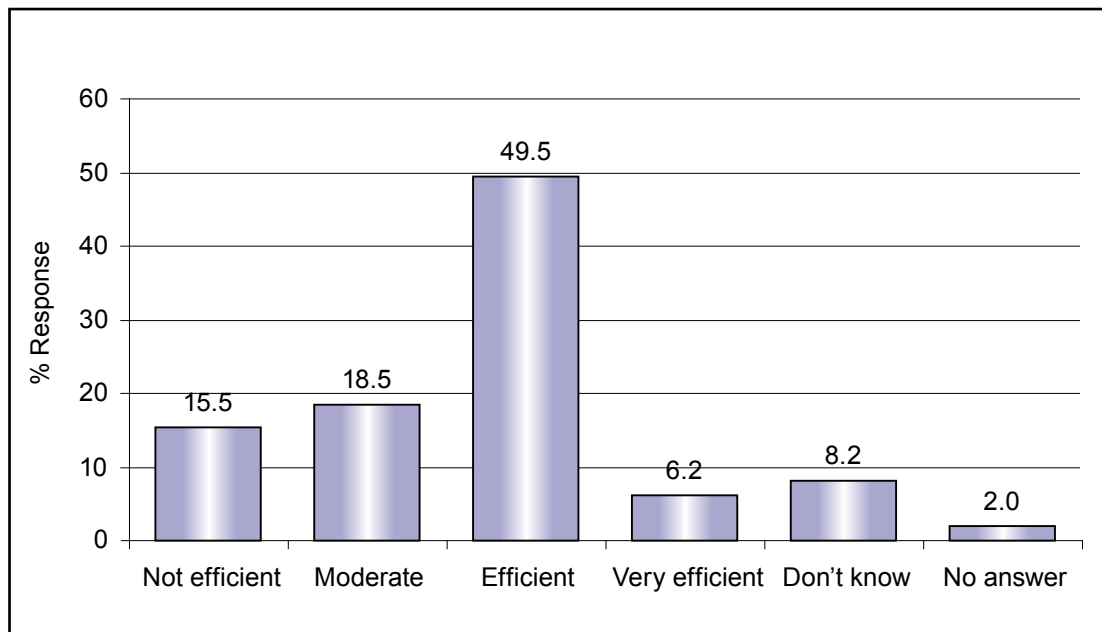


Figure 36: How efficient do you judge the police to be in solving crime and protecting people? (Base N = 1,250).

4.2.1.1 Administration of permits

With respect to the control of arms transfers, the NPS is one of four Mol agencies (along with the NSS, NSCOC and NBPS), which is allocated a role in arms transfer control by the LCESFA.²⁴² Once the Interdepartmental Commission has approved an export permit, companies must obtain additional permits from the CHDO.²⁴³ To receive the CHDO permit the companies wishing to transfer ADGT need to submit documents specifying the type and quantity of ADGT to be transferred, the country of origin/destination, the border post where the export or import will take place, the identification numbers of the individuals carrying out the transaction and the details of the security arrangements for the transportation of the materiel. No specific concerns were communicated to the research team in regard to this aspect of the NPS's SALW control activities.

The CHDO's responsibilities in regard to civilian firearm matters include:

- Maintaining the Central Firearms Register of all legally-held civilian weapons.
- Inspecting SALW producing factories and guns shops.
- Issuing end-user certificates for weapons purchased by the Mol or to dealers importing firearms and ammunition for civilian purposes.
- Issuing permits for all imports, domestic production, transit, usage and possession, testing and storage of SALW.
- Overseeing the storage and destruction of illegal SALW that have been confiscated by police.

Of all the above duties, the research team chose to examine the NPS's role in administering the civilian weapon permit system in the most detail, since appropriate controls in this area are of vital importance in combating the internal proliferation of SALW. As explained in Section 4.1.1, the requirements when applying for a weapon permit include, among other things, payment of a fee, and for those who seek a weapon for 'self-defence', the requirement to supply 'proof of need'.

Many of those applying for a permit typically submit a letter explaining that the crime level in their neighbourhood is unduly high as proof of their need. This is often deemed sufficient proof of need, but since no clear guidelines

²⁴² Regulation on implementation of the LCESFA (SG 1/2002) Article 61, § 1.

²⁴³ Ibid.



exist as to what constitutes a genuine need for a firearm, many applicants are also declined a permit. In addition it takes several weeks, numerous documents and between EU 100 and 200 to complete the permit process (the average monthly salary in Bulgaria is around EU 150). Weapon owners interviewed during the research frequently expressed their dissatisfaction with the bureaucratic application process.²⁴⁴ FGD participants often made the allegation that a bureaucratic application system in which the applicant's need for a weapon is judged by vague criteria results in widespread corruption, while NPS officers are usually not keen to approve permit applications because they fear the proliferation of even registered weapons in the country. FGD participants were of the view that a bribe always wins the day (See section 3.2). In January 2005 the head of the NPS publicly criticised five district police chiefs for allowing known criminals to acquire a legal firearm (see Section 2.2 above).

4.2.1.2 Use of armed force

As a body coming under the authority of the Mol, the role of Bulgaria's police is set out in the Law on the Mol (Article 80), as well as a number of other laws, secondary legislation and internal instructions. Under Article 80, police use of weapons, including firearms, is permitted solely and as an extreme measure, in the following cases:

- During armed attacks or threats with firearms.
- To free hostages or kidnap victims.
- For indispensable defence.
- After a warning, against a person committing or having committed a general crime, if this person offers resistance or tries to escape.
- After a warning to prevent escape of a person detained by the regular procedure for committing a crime.

This law obliges the police, if a weapon is to be used, '...to possibly secure the life of the person against whom it is aimed and not to imperil the life and health of other persons' (Article 80, Paragraph 2). The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC), a leading human rights organisation, holds that Article 80 of the Law on the Mol undermines international standards of firearms use, since it permits the use of lethal weapons in cases of suspicion that a petty crime has been committed and to prevent the escape of a detained petty criminal. International standards on this matter are set out in Principle 9 of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which states that, 'Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defence or defence of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives. In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.'

The BHC has monitored the use of force by Bulgaria's security services since 1994 and while making it clear that poor judgement or incompetence rather than official policy is to blame, has criticised the use of armed force by NPS officers on more than one occasion.²⁴⁵ Following widespread criticism, the NPS has shown increasing willingness to co-operate with international organisations and NGOs to implement reform. The BHC and the Council of Europe organised two training seminars for police officers in 2000 on Human Rights, and curricula at the Police Academy and the Officers' Schools have been expanded to include Human Rights-related training in the compulsory courses.²⁴⁶ Experts from EU police forces have also been seconded to work with the NPS. In the field of Human Rights, the EU praised the NPS's efforts in setting up a Community Policing Strategy, and the subsequent training of police officers (while still emphasising the need to address corruption, especially within the traffic and border police).²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, monitoring teams still claim that progress at senior levels

²⁴⁴ Interviews with weapon owners during October 2004.

²⁴⁵ Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, March 2002.

²⁴⁶ US Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27830.htm>>.

²⁴⁷ 'Justice and home affairs in the EU enlargement process – Bulgaria', <http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/fsj/enlargement/bulgaria/wai/fsj_enlarge_bulgaria_en.htm>



is not matched lower down, and that there have been negligible efforts in police practice at the working level.²⁴⁸ There are still recurrent cases of police brutality and during 2003 there were nearly 400 investigations into crimes reportedly committed by the police.²⁴⁹ In June 2003, *Instruction I-167* was published, which introduced measures aimed at preventing unlawful detentions and the misuse of physical force and firearms during arrest and detention. According to the BHC, these and other measures that aimed to increase protection of human rights by police also appear to have had positive effects.²⁵⁰

4.2.1.3 Combating SALW crime

Information supplied by the NPS shows reasonably high clear-up rates for most recorded firearm crimes, with the partial exception of those crimes that are also property-related. While for non-firearm related crimes, the clear-up rates are well under 50 percent, the rates shown in Table 32 below are generally much higher for firearm-related crimes. There are two reasons to be cautious about what on the surface appears to be evidence of efficient action against SALW crime by the NPS. Firstly, as noted in Section 4.2.9.1, the police are apt to charge suspects under Articles 337 and 339 of the Penal Code when sufficient evidence cannot be obtained for other crimes. While this does not change the fact that those so charged will have committed the crime in question, it does skew the statistics in this direction. Secondly, the data includes cases in which the police merely identified rather than arrested a suspect. Thirdly, the police statistics necessarily only cover reported crimes, not unknown or unreported ones and the scale of under-reporting for crimes such as robbery or larceny, for the different years, ranges between 50% and 70%.²⁵¹

ALL FIREARM CRIME BY PENAL CODE ARTICLES	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Homicide (Article 115-127)	71%	69%	59%	65%	78%	78%
Premeditated homicide (Article 115-116, 118)	66%	76%	67%	72%	82%	63%
Attempted homicide (Article 115-116, 118)	84%	82%	75%	78%	74%	71%
Bodily harm (Article 128-135)	87%	84%	75%	79%	90%	95%
Crimes against property (Article 194-200, 206-217)	45%	42%	31%	37%	45%	50%
Robbery (Article 198-200) (excl. motor vehicles)	40%	33%	26%	31%	41%	47%
Larceny (Article 194-197) (excl. motor vehicles)	32%	42%	17%	31%	33%	33%
Illegal manufacture, possession and use of firearms, explosives and ammunitions (Article 337-339)	95%	95%	93%	98%	97%	97%
Offences against order and the public peace (Article 320-329)	94%	88%	84%	86%	96%	83%

Table 32: Clear-up rate for different types of reported firearm-related crimes (1998–2003).²⁵²

Note: The table shows the percentage of reported firearm crimes for which the police have identified or arrested a suspect.

Although, unlike the NSCOC, the NPS has no special mandate to investigate gun crimes which may be linked to organised – crime groups, its responsibilities obviously extend to combating any violations of the law that have a SALW-related element. As several commentators have noted, policing work in this area is not at present guided by any strategy. In fact this report presents the first analysis of data on SALW crime known to the authors. Lastly,

²⁴⁸ See 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – 2000, (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, 23 February 2001), <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eur/705.htm>>

²⁴⁹ US Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27830.htm>>.

²⁵⁰ 'Human Rights and the Activities of the Bulgarian Police,' Sofia 2004.

²⁵¹ Bezlov et al. 2005 p. 28. The United Nations International Crime and Justice Research Institute's (UNICRI), International Crime Victimization Survey for 2002 and CSD's crime survey for 2004 shows that latency exists even for firearm crimes, such as armed robberies. Unfortunately, the size of the surveys' samples does not allow for a statistically valid analysis of the degree of the problem (eg out of the 1,500 person sample, four individuals reported being victims of armed robberies and two of those stated that they had not reported the crime to the police).

²⁵² Source: Analysis of data supplied by the MoI, NPS.



concerns remain about the police service's inability to solve some high-level crimes of all kinds. While the NPS is only one of the agencies responsible for work in this area, public frustrations are understandably directed at the most visible of all security services. Among the areas of outstanding concern are the unsolved high profile mafia-related assassinations that have taken place in places like Varna and Sofia in recent years and the apparent continued impunity of individuals and organisations involved in the illicit transfer of arms in contravention of the LCFTADGT (See section 4.2.9.2).

4.2.2 National Security Service

Bulgaria's main counter-intelligence agency, the NSS also falls under the jurisdiction of the Mol. Combating the illicit international arms trade is one of the agency's high priorities since the trade is seen as posing a threat to national security. In this work, a strong emphasis is placed on preventing embargoed countries or terrorist groups acquiring ADGT. The NSS's ongoing operations are said to include counter-intelligence, surveillance, detection and interdiction work. Information on the agency's work, structure and resources is classified. Its total staff is estimated at around 4,000.²⁵³

The NSS's in-house intelligence is also brought to bear within the Interdepartmental Commission and the agency is said to play a leading role during preliminary consideration of proposed ADGT transactions.²⁵⁴

4.2.3 National Service for Combating Organised Crime

The NSCOC is tasked with investigating organised crimes of all types within Bulgaria, including SALW-related crimes such as illegal trafficking and production. The agency's main role is to uncover and disrupt criminal structures involved in arms trafficking within the territory of the country, whether local or international. A specialised unit within the agency, the 'Smuggling in Weapons, Hazardous Materials and Proliferation' unit, is responsible for gathering criminal intelligence information, for co-ordinating the work of regional units, and for any international operations.²⁵⁵ With only eight staff for the entire country, however, the smuggling unit is understaffed. Its capacity to conduct operations against illicit producers and smugglers of SALW is therefore severely restricted, and it can only investigate a small number of cases each year.²⁵⁶ In addition to its role in combating the domestic proliferation of SALW, the NSCOC also advises the Interdepartmental Council regarding export licence applications.

4.2.4 Customs Agency and Border Police Service

Bulgaria is faced with an ever-growing threat from cross-border crime, in particular immigration, smuggling, drug trafficking and the proliferation of weapons. It is a major transit route for organised crime syndicates as they seek to penetrate the EU. The Black Sea coast is a particularly crucial area in relation to international criminal activity, partly due to the proximity of violent armed conflict and political, economic and social instability in areas on the other side of the sea to Bulgaria.²⁵⁷ Although the numbers of SALW being trafficked through Bulgaria's borders do not appear to be great (seizures of stolen cars and drugs are far more common), illicit shipments of SALW are continually intercepted at all crossing points.²⁵⁸

The Customs Agency, under the jurisdiction of the MoF, is the main body responsible for the control of imports, exports and transit of SALW through the country. The Border Police (an Mol agency) are also responsible for controlling illegal arms transfers, but although they perform a monitoring role at border check-points, in practice the task falls primarily to customs agents.²⁵⁹ The Agency's Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate

²⁵³ Interviews with various Mol officials, September 2004.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Mol officials, 15 July 2003.

²⁵⁶ Interview, Gaidarski, 02 August, 2004.

²⁵⁷ 'Strengthening Control of the Bulgarian Black Sea Maritime Border: Phase 2 of a Multi-annual strategy to enhance the future external borders of the EU', <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/fiche_projet/document/bg0012-02-seamaritime.pdf>.

²⁵⁸ 2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession', EU Commission, pp 104–106, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2003/pdf/rr_bg_final.pdf>.

²⁵⁹ Tolev, 9 September 2003; also interview, Stoianov, 13 October 2004.



Sega, 1998.

Photo 9: Bulgarian customs officers seize illegal small arms at the Kalotina border check point, on the Bulgarian-Serbia border.

and its ADGT Unit are responsible for co-ordinating arms export control activities. Customs agents are also informed by the Interdepartmental Commission of any export licence approvals. They in turn are required to inform the Mol once a transfer has taken place and are also expected to co-operate with the Border Police in order to prevent trafficking.²⁶⁰

The Agency's duties also include performing follow-up checks on shipments of declared ADGT goods at border points, which should all be recorded by the Agency's Central Customs Headquarters. Agents at each border point are supposed to refer to a checklist of ADGT (based on the List created by the Wassenaar Arrangement and the EU List of ADGT) and are required to check that an exporting company or broker is in possession of all the necessary export permits and licences. However, customs posts are not equipped with the most up-to-date ADGT software such

as Tracker, so checks cannot be carried out quickly. As customs officers attend the loading of all arms shipments and oversee the sealing of containers, physical inspections at border posts are very rare and are almost always intelligence-led.

Since 2002, the Customs Agency's Investigations Directorate has undergone significant changes with the help of British consultants. The Directorate now has field officers at almost all border posts and has started developing a risk profiling and analysis system and methodology. Since 2000, the agency has gradually been introducing an *Integrated Bulgarian Customs Information System*, which is said to have significantly increased customs control capacities and has allowed for quick information exchange and risk analysis. In an effort to limit the risks of illegal arms exports and increase the level of control, in 2003 the Agency specified 23 customs posts through which ADGT could pass. In addition, the preparation of customs documents can now be performed at only sixteen specific customs posts.²⁶¹

Despite these changes, outstanding problems remain. A difficulty in securing cargo areas at border crossings is one of these. At one of the best equipped border crossing points, the Kapitan Andreevo crossing with Turkey, Customs Agents are reported to conduct thorough inspections on about two percent of the trucks entering the country and far fewer of those exiting the country. Even this modest inspection ratio is only possible because the crossing point is equipped with X-ray machines. In contrast, at the two most important entry points for the country, the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas, there is no similar equipment, despite the much larger volume of incoming traffic. Securing the cargo areas at the sea ports is much more difficult and expensive than at land-border crossings. Neither the port of Varna, nor the one at Burgas have adequate surveillance equipment or infrastructure to ensure high security standards.²⁶² This is an important weakness in the border control system for ADGT, since most ADGT shipments leave either by air from Sofia airport and Gorna Oriahovitz Airport, or by sea through Varna or Burgas.²⁶³ Although previous research has highlighted concerns about security at Sofia Airport's multiple entry and exit points, noting cases where goods have been stolen or removed from the airport's cargo facilities without Customs authorisation, security has been improving with the introduction of new equipment.²⁶⁴

Corruption within the customs and border services also present a challenge. It is widely believed that some law

²⁶⁰ Ibid, Tolev.

²⁶¹ Decree no 51/15.04.2003 of the Director of the Customs Agency at the Ministry of Finance, first published SG 39/25.04.2003, amended SG 70/08.08.2003.

²⁶² Gounev et al, Chapter 3.

²⁶³ Interviews with Customs Agency officers, February – March 2004 at Sofia, Varna, and Kapitan Andreevo customs posts.

²⁶⁴ Gounev et al, p.44. Given time constraints, the research team were unable to investigate airport security in any depth, and to verify a statement by the Bulgarian Government to the effect that, "The control exercised through modern technical equipment on airport border check-points makes illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons practically impossible." Correspondence with Mr P Bonchev, MFA, 17 January 2005.



enforcement officers, including those of the NBPS and Customs Agency are complicit in smuggling, and according to research carried out in October 2003, the Bulgarian public perceives customs staff as being the most corrupt of all government officials.²⁶⁵ On several occasions customs officers have been implicated in facilitating illegal arms exports. In the two highest profile cases (the TEREM and Beta Cherven Briag cases), arms destined for Iraq and Sudan respectively were presented as dual-use goods.²⁶⁶ Although the goods in both cases were not SALW, the illicit transfer of any ADGT is highly relevant when considering controls on SALW transfers, given that the same ADGT control system is supposed to regulate transfers of SALW and other ADGT. The fact that Bulgarian companies continue to succeed in illegally transferring a range of goods indicates that the authorities face serious problems in enforcing the reformed ADGT transfer control system. The system's flaws were once again highlighted by the publication of the Iraq Survey Group's *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)* in September 2004, which drew attention to multiple examples where Bulgarian companies had been involved in the transfer of ADGT to the Iraqi regime in contravention of a UN embargo.²⁶⁷

The Bulgarian Government and the EU have been increasing their focus on security of EU and non-EU borders in the light of Bulgaria's expected accession to the EU in 2007. EU-sponsored reports in 1999 and 2000 identified the operational deficiencies of the border police and recommended the introduction of new equipment and a drive to increase professionalism within the service.²⁶⁸ Consequently progress has been made in modernising the agency: legislation was passed in 2003 allowing undercover operations; conscripts are no longer employed in the border police; since April 2003 newly appointed officers receive specialised training courses; and the number of mobile customs units has been increased from five to seven.²⁶⁹ The Customs Agency also periodically conducts training courses and seminars for customs officers on topics relating to the import-export of ADGT, with five courses being run during the first half of 2003 alone.²⁷⁰ In addition, two new patrol boats were launched in December 2003 as part of the EU's Pre-accession assistance programme for Central and Eastern European countries (PHARE), to help Bulgaria update security along the Black Sea coast.²⁷¹ Current staffing levels (the Customs Agency has 3,000–4,000 personnel, the Border Police 8,162) are not thought to be a major concern. By and large, additional resources have been channelled towards increasing the capacity of customs and border police at the larger crossing points. In 2003 the European Commission praised the progress being made by Bulgaria in updating its Schengen Action Plan and its efforts to improve border control.²⁷²

4.2.5 Ministry of Economy

The MoE is at the very heart of the arms transfer control system. The agency responsible for processing applications to transfer ADGT is the Military-Economic Co-operation and International Trade Control Directorate within the MoE. In addition to supporting the Interdepartmental Commission's work, this directorate also assists the government in formulating and implementing its policies for the development of the defence industry and arms trade. Although there is no legal requirement for the head of this directorate to act as Secretary of the

²⁶⁵ US Department of State, <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27830.htm>>.

²⁶⁶ In October 2002 Bulgarian customs officers intercepted a shipment of dual-use Bulgarian-made tractor components destined for Iraq. The police investigation uncovered that the export channel involving TEREM had been operating for about six years, and also included the export of 50 tank engines to Syria. The company in question was the state-owned Targovishte branch of TEREM EAD facility. In October 2003 the current and former CEOs of the privately owned Beta-Cherven Briag were briefly detained and charged with illegal exports of parts for the 122 mm Gvozdika self-propelled howitzer to Sudan along with an unlicensed broker from RIK Co. Beta had allegedly delivered 18 howitzers to Sudan in the preceding years and had continued to export from 22–29 November 2001, 7 months after the Bulgarian Government had joined the EU embargo against Sudan. *Capital*, 18 October 2003.

²⁶⁷ The majority of contracts took place on three occasions in 1999, 2001 and 2003 for military goods varying from night vision goggles, tank engines and maintenance parts to anti-tank missiles. Iraq Survey Group report, pp 114, 137 and 138.

²⁶⁸ 'Strengthening Control of the Bulgarian Black Sea Maritime Border: Phase 2 of a Multi-annual strategy to enhance the future external borders of the EU', <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/fiche_projet/document/bg0012-02-seamaritime.pdf>.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p 99–100.

²⁷⁰ Tolev, 09 September 2003.

²⁷¹ 'Simeon Saxe-Coburg: Bulgaria contributes to strengthening the security within the European Union', <<http://www.government.bg/English/Priorities/PublicOrder/2003-12-09/1861.html>>, 09 December 2003.

²⁷² '2003 Regular Report on Bulgaria's progress towards accession', p 99.

²⁷³ Article 40a, MoE Regulatory Act. (SG 33/2003).



Commission, this has been the case to date.²⁷³

This is a crucial appointment since it carries significant discretionary power – it is at the Secretary's discretion whether to present a permit application to the Commission for consideration. The MoE also provides information and advice on the arms transfer control system for all interested actors. It hosts a website (<http://www.mi.government.bg/ind/lic/arms.html>) that provides the text of relevant legislation, explains the control system, and offers links to the websites of other government agencies and international control regimes. The ministry also runs training events for defence industry personnel to inform them of the required procedures for considering an ADGT transfer.

The administrative capacity of this department received a considerable boost with the appointment of five new staff in 2003. It now has ten personnel, among them a number of defence industry specialists, some of whom are former defence industry employees with hands-on experience. A number of foreign governments have provided direct support to the department. The governments of the Czech Republic and Poland have advised the MoE on how to modify and update its list of controlled goods to take account of goods included in the EU List. The US Government has provided an export control software package, 'Tracker', designed to assist the agency and other relevant ministries in making licensing decisions.²⁷⁴ The system makes it much easier for staff from different departments to share information and allows officials in one country to directly consult with experts in others.²⁷⁵ Although MoE staff have received training in the use of this package,²⁷⁶ legal and administrative difficulties prevent its current use.²⁷⁷

Although the Directorate has benefited from the support provided, the combination of a tighter transfer control regime and the arrival of many new firms, have together generated a growing workload. One staff member noted that a good deal of the Directorate's time is presently being taken up dealing with unnecessary enquiries in relation to dual-use goods, the controls over which companies find it difficult to understand. Given that it is to this department that other ministries often come when seeking detailed information on particular licence applications, it faces a challenging volume of work.

4.2.6 Ministry of Defence

Although two members of the MoD have been represented in an advisory capacity on the Interdepartmental Commission that regulates arms transfers since its creation, the ministry has taken on additional responsibilities following revelations in October 2002 that TEREM, a company owned by and accountable to, the MoD, was violating the arms transfer control system (see Section 4.2.4). As a result of the TEREM scandal, the then Minister of Defence stipulated that all future foreign export transactions undertaken by MoD owned companies would require his personal approval. MoD companies are now required to keep a register of their deals and to report weekly to the Minister for approval. The MoD has stated its intention to appoint export control specialists in all of its manufacturing and trading companies, and to hold a training course for the marketing departments of MoD companies on the workings of the ADGT control system, including the requirements of international arms control instruments.²⁷⁸

4.2.7 Bulgarian Army

The principal responsibility of the Bulgarian Army (within the MoD) with regard to SALW control, is to maintain safe and secure stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, whether they are in active use or designated surplus. The army's storage standards are set out in military regulations, which are in turn informed by those of NATO and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which addresses stockpile management issues among others.

²⁷⁴ Interviews, Lowder 23 September 2004; Atanasov, 24 September 2004.

²⁷⁵ For more information, see <<http://www.ndf.org/html/projects/096.html>>, 25 September 2003.

²⁷⁶ 'Report by the Bulgarian MFA to COARM, 19 March 2003, DS 8/2003'.

²⁷⁷ Interview, Atanasov, 24 September 2004.

²⁷⁸ Gounev et al, p. 42.

²⁷⁹ This section draws heavily on statements by members of the Army General Staff and MoD including: Mihaylov, 11 – 12 March 2003); and Georgiev, 03 – 04 November 2004.



According to public statements by the Army General Staff, there are currently no temporary SALW stockpiles under military jurisdiction.²⁷⁹ Apart from the weapons that operational units require for their routine operations, wartime reserves are stored at seventeen depots across the country. Current Army policy is to move all SALW surpluses to the 137th Central Storage and Technical Maintenance Base (CSTMB), under the supervision of the General Staff's Logistic Command in the city of Veliko Tarnovo.²⁸⁰ The CSTMB is not a new facility and attempts have been made to upgrade storage standards in line with best practices and international agreements. The declared policy regarding confiscated or inadequately marked weapons is to destroy them as soon as possible. Information provided by the MoD in public statements on the subject of stockpile management is outlined below.²⁸¹ Where possible, the information is compared against criteria set out in best practice documents.²⁸² It is, however, difficult to assess the MoD's statements against actual practice, since the research team was unable to make independent visits to storage sites.

Location: Sites should be located away from national boundaries; be accessible by road yet difficult to be approached by unauthorised persons; be at minimum risk of natural catastrophes or extreme environmental conditions; and be distant from large population centres or industrial sites. The location chosen for the CSTMB site appears to be in compliance with these requirements. The army's numerous military bases, at which SALW in active use are also stored, have naturally been chosen with many other considerations in mind.

Construction and maintenance standards: The maintenance of secure arms depots requires specially designed facilities. According to the MoD, the majority of the CSTMB's structures are above-ground structures composed of reinforced concrete or prefabricated concrete elements, secured both with metal doors and combination locks and padlocks. At operational units, wooden doors backed with metal are said to be typical. Windows are normally small and located close to the ceiling, so as to be inaccessible. In all the other cases, windows are blocked with metal grids. Anti-spark lighting is also said to be in use, with switches located outside facilities. There is apparently no heating inside facilities, but devices are installed to measure temperature and humidity and fire precautions such as the routine cutting of nearby grasses and the supply of fire fighting equipment are also said to be in place. The research team were unable to corroborate MoD statements regarding construction and maintenance standards.

Security: According to the MoD, all SALW storage facilities are manned round the clock, in some cases with electronic surveillance systems as back-up. Normally, several guard-posts secure a given site, each of which is typically manned by three to four conscripts. Some consideration has apparently been given to replacing the conscripts with PSC staff, which would offer the advantage of a well-trained, long-term guard force. The Army General Staff has developed a concept for building and installing integrated alarm systems in weapons and sensitive item storage areas. The first Integrated Alarm System (IAS) was developed in 1997 – 1998 and installed at the CSTMB. Two more IASs are already in use and there is a plan to equip all warehouses and storage locations by 2007. Each IAS is said to have a central monitoring station and several sub-systems: perimeter sub-system; violation registration sub-system; sub-system for signalisation of safety within the structures; video-monitoring sub-system; access control sub-system and fire alarm and fire-fighting sub-system. Each SALW storage structure is in turn said to have entrance and internal movement sensors. If an unauthorised entry is noted, the supervisor and if necessary a response force, is dispatched to check the situation. A back-up response force is available at the central station to reinforce the three guard posts. The MoD reports that to date there have been no attempts to breach the system. IASs are operational at all Land Forces SALW storage facilities. IAS installation at Air force and Naval SALW storage facilities was planned for 2003 – 2004, but the quantities of SALW being kept there are negligible. When the installation of all the planned local IASs is completed, the army plans to install modem links to the General Staff Logistic Command so as to allow for real-time monitoring of all facilities.

Record keeping: According to the Bulgarian Army, registers are kept of all acquired SALW according to their type, serial number, quantity and condition. An account of the available SALW is kept at three levels – at company, brigade/battalion level and at army level. So, for example, each company is supposed to give a regular account

²⁸⁰ This site was designated in accordance with the requirements of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty as the facility to which surplus SALW will be transported for storage and destruction.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² These include, but are not limited to, the OSCE Best Practice Guide on National Procedures for Stockpile Management and Security, and the South Eastern Europe Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards/Guidelines (RMDS/G) on SALW Accounting.



of the number of weapons it has assigned for operations. These registers include the serial number and the weapon category. Whenever a weapon is acquired or decommissioned, the change is registered in the books (the system is manual, not electronic), using a specially designed form that must be completed and signed by the responsible officer. Each individual weapon also has its own document.

It is at Brigade or Battalion level that responsibility exists for controlling the transfer of items between individual army units. Records are also kept at this level of the overall quantities within the unit, both in the sub-units and the unit's storage facility. At the highest level (army level), items can also be transferred between separate military units. Once again, records are kept, but this time of the overall quantities within the armed forces (both in the units and in the CSTMB). The inventory management system is said to be controlled by means of:

- Physical checks of the availability by the responsible persons.
- Inventory control during the hand over/take over from one responsible person to another.
- Annual inventories within the units, made by authorised groups of specialists, ending with Inventory Acts, which are put together at a higher level and compared with the overall database.
- Inspections by higher-level inspection bodies and sudden inspections by authorised officers.

In the past the MoD has given assurances that its stockpile management practices are effective.²⁸³ The research team were unable to visit any depots themselves. Most thefts, though, occur not at the depots controlled by the General Staff, but at active military units, where serving soldiers or officers steal arms and ammunition. A combination of corruption and inadequate security at active military units probably contribute to these thefts. Although in one cited case (that involving the theft of ten *Neto* missiles), the Military Prosecutor's office remarked on the poor accounting standards at the depot in question, it is not possible to generalise on the basis of one event.²⁸⁴ However, given the overall pattern of known thefts, it is probably safe to conclude that the oversight of weapons is of a higher standard at the CSTMB, where, in contrast to the army bases across the country, no thefts have been recorded. Members of an international delegation who were provided with access to the CSTMB as part of an assessment visit have stated that to the best of their knowledge, storage systems are satisfactory.²⁸⁵

The agencies tasked with combating stockpile thefts are the MPMCS within the MoD. Together they are charged with countering threats to the MoD's integrity and to national security, including activities such as illicit arms trading, manufacturing or distribution of weapons and hazardous devices of all kinds.²⁸⁶ One of the problems facing these agencies in their work is the lack of a centralised electronic accounting system. However, while adequate storage and accounting practices are obviously the key consideration in preventing the occurrence of thefts, it should be noted that the low salaries and chronic corruption that afflict most public bodies in Bulgaria, are also likely to be present in the army, making prevention more difficult.²⁸⁷

4.2.8 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The MFA has several responsibilities in relation to SALW control. It is responsible for updating the List of countries and organisations towards which the Republic of Bulgaria applies prohibitions on the sale and supply of arms and

²⁸³ In 2002 a SEESAC delegation met with the MoD and were assured that 'the Bulgarian Army has introduced an effective system for safe storage and record-keeping of SALW, preventing thefts and uncontrolled movement of arms and ammunition.'" SEESAC, 2002, <<http://www.seesac.org/about/bulg.htm>>, accessed 06 October 2003. According to the MoD, international inspections, conducted by a joint group of American and Norwegian experts in October 2000, concluded that the Ministry's SALW storage is secure and all arms accounted for.

²⁸⁴ The Chief Military Prosecutor, remarked that the investigation into this case proved difficult due to a, "...bad system of accounting of arms at this military base...as well as difficulties in establishing who was responsible for allowing such [a] theft to take place." 24 *Chasa*, February 2004.

²⁸⁵ Interview, Wilkinson, 03 December 2004, based on information provided during a visit to the CSTB from 30 November to 01 December 2004 by a joint SEESAC/JACIG delegation.

²⁸⁶ Defence and Armed Forces Law, last amended SG 119/2002, Article 40.

²⁸⁷ See the annual publication of Bulgaria's anti-corruption initiative for an assessment of levels of corruption in various public institutions: <<http://www.anticorruption.bg/eng/coalition/car2003.htm>>



related equipment on a regular basis. It is also represented on the Interdepartmental Commission by a Deputy Minister. The Global Security and Disarmament Department within the MFA examines ADGT permit applications and offers advice to the Minister. In this work, the department is in turn increasingly coming to rely on Bulgaria's foreign embassies abroad for up-to-date information about particular transfer destinations.²⁸⁸

In accordance with international agreements such as the UN Programme of Action (PoA) and Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan on SALW, Bulgaria has appointed a National Focal Point (NFP) to co-ordinate information exchange on SALW issues. Like many countries, Bulgaria has chosen an appointee from the MFA, in this case the Head of the Directorate for NATO and International Security. The NFP is responsible for ensuring that government ministries and agencies are compliant with the UN PoA, the Regional Implementation Plan and the OSCE Document on SALW. The NFP is also tasked with ensuring that Bulgaria is represented at international meetings on the subject of SALW, including the routine meetings of the OSCE, UN and Wassenaar Arrangement.²⁸⁹

By appointing a senior figure from a relevant department and ministry as the country's NFP, the Bulgarian Government has signalled its commitment to the SALW issue. However, the department within which the NFP is based has limited staff, whose time is also taken up with non-SALW-related issues such as Euro-Atlantic integration and general non-proliferation. While an interviewee from this department stated that the resources and staffing of the department are largely adequate,²⁹⁰ the department's workload is heavy enough to prevent the designated NFP personally attending most meetings of the Regional Steering Group, a body created to take forward the Regional Implementation Plan on SALW.²⁹¹ The NFP was also unable to meet with the research team during a three-week period of interviews with officials from other government departments because of other commitments.

4.2.9 Judiciary

A professionally functioning judiciary and administrative system is a vital part of a nation's SALW control system, since without it, regulatory frameworks remain unenforced. The problems facing the Bulgarian judiciary are manifold, varying from under-capacity and lack of training to corruption. The past shortcomings of the system have included low budgets; a lack of qualified judges; a large backlog of work; the complexity of the legal system; constantly-changing legislation and under-trained magistrates.²⁹²

The importance of eliminating corruption and ensuring the effectiveness of the Bulgarian judicial and legislative process is recognised both within the country and internationally. Although the judicial system continues to perform in some areas, a series of reform initiatives are gradually building capacity and professionalism. In February 2004, the Supreme Judicial Council adopted a strategy to tackle corruption in the judiciary, followed in March 2004 by a professional code of ethics for judges which is in keeping with the European Charter on the Status of Judges.²⁹³ Another national initiative is the influential *Coalition 2000* which brings a number of Bulgarian NGOs together to push for anti-corruption reforms.²⁹⁴ International specialists are also active in training and reviewing judicial systems. The American Bar Association has helped to develop legal education programmes for lawyers, and has given advice and training in drafting legislation.²⁹⁵ The EU's PHARE programme has identified

²⁸⁸ Interview, Stoeva, 23 September 2004; also, 'Report by the Bulgarian MFA to COARM, 19 March 2003, DS 8/2003'.

²⁸⁹ Bulgaria has recently been represented at meetings such as the 'Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the OSCE Document on SALW and the UN PoA' (Bucharest, 24–26 February 2003); the 'Conference on the Illicit Trade in SALW in All Its Aspects in South Eastern Europe' (Brdo pro Kranju, Slovenia, 11 – 12 March 2003); and the conference on 'International Co-operation in Preventing, Combating and Eradicating Illicit Brokering in SALW', (Oslo, 22 – 24 April 2003).

²⁹⁰ Interview, Stoeva, 23 September 2004.

²⁹¹ Bulgaria has tended instead to be represented by Embassy staff. Correspondence with SEESAC Team Leader Adrian Wilkinson, 22 October and 24 November 2004.

²⁹² CSD Judicial Reform Initiative for Bulgaria. See <www.csd.org.bg>

²⁹³ European Union Commission, 2004.

²⁹⁴ 'Coalition 2000' publishes annual *Corruption Assessment Reports* and produces the *Corruption Monitoring System* which is updated using empirical data every quarter. For further information see <www.anticorruption.bg>

²⁹⁵ The American Bar Association runs the Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (CEELI) with a number of programmes in Bulgaria. See <www.abanet.org/ceeli/countries/bulgaria/program.html>

²⁹⁶ See UNDP, 2002 – 2003.



Penal Code provisions that are most in need of reform and advised on new legislation. Elsewhere, the UNDP has been involved in two programmes to review the administrative and commercial justice systems.²⁹⁶

4.2.9.1 Illegal firearms and the judicial process

Current regulations state that gun crimes should receive ‘special attention’ and be subject to ‘special reporting’.²⁹⁷ From the data which is available regarding prosecution rates, it is difficult to judge whether this has translated into a fair amount of convictions (see Table 33 below). The current success rate for gun crime prosecutions does not seem to differ from that of other types of crimes, and the police for their part continue to call for stricter penalties and more efficient judicial process related to gun crime.²⁹⁸

PENAL CODE ARTICLES 337–339.	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
No. of reported crimes	1,511	1,283	1,207	1,083	743	829	628
Number of individuals apprehended by police	N/A	N/A	N/A	1091	752	870	898
Number of individuals taken to court by police	N/A	N/A	N/A	619	415	523	966
Number of crimes that resulted in a verdict	363	532	639	505	501	567	614
Number of individuals given a verdict	363	513	623	481	471	530	565

Table 33: Cases of illegal production, possession and use of firearms, ammunition, explosives, that resulted in a verdict (1996 – 2002).²⁹⁹

Table 33 highlights one of the main problems Bulgaria faces in combating domestic gun crime, namely an overburdened legal system in which cases of all kinds are subject to long delays. A large number of the 614 successful court cases listed in the above table for the year 2002 (271) actually dealt with crimes committed before 2000. Only 165 were for crimes committed in 2001 and 141 cases for crimes committed in 2002. The Table also shows the wide gap between the number of individuals apprehended and the number brought to trial for the illegal possession, production, or trade in weapons, ammunition and explosives.

A third problem is the lax punishment that those convicted under Articles 337 – 339 of the Penal Code actually receive. For example, Article 337, which covers illegal manufacturing and trading in SALW (both domestic and international), mandates judges to give prison sentences of between one and six years.³⁰⁰ Yet, as Table 34 below shows, of the seven individuals sentenced under Article 337 in 2002, three were sentenced to less than six months imprisonment and one to between one and three years. The three others were simply fined. Article 339 (illegal possession) is also punishable by up to six years in prison, but again, most of the sentences handed down are light. Of the 532 individuals sentenced in 2002, 309 were simply fined, while most of the rest received short-term sentences. Even for Article 339.2, which concerns illegal possession of ‘large quantities’ of firearms and where in 2002 the sentence was amended to three to eight years’ imprisonment, one can see that the maximum sentence has not been applied. This greatly diminishes the deterrent effect of the law.

²⁹⁷ Instruction No. 1, 22 March 2004 for the work and Co-operation of the Agencies Involved in Pre-trial Investigation, *State Gazette*, No. 30 from 13 April 2004.

²⁹⁸ New Television, 13 June 2004.

²⁹⁹ Sources: NSI, ‘Crime and Convicted Individuals’, Sofia 2003, and Ministry of Interior: National Police Service.

³⁰⁰ Both Articles 337 and 339 refer not only to firearms, but also to firearms ammunition, explosives, and all weapons of mass destruction. The majority of cases though, deal with firearms and ammunition.



PENAL CODE ARTICLES	INDIVIDUALS SENTENCED	IMPRISONMENT (YEARS)									OTHER			
		UP TO 1/2	1/2-1	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15- 20	20-30	LIFE	FORCED LABOUR	RESETTLEMENT	FINE	OTHER
All Crimes	27,771	7,264	5,808	4,461	435	175	64	81	2	14	88	702	7,164	1,513
Hazardous Crimes	3,321	692	417	496	47	13	2	1	-	-	14	-	1,562	77
Article 337	7	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Article 339.1	532	144	51	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	309	4
Article 339.2	6	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Article 339.3 ³⁰²	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Article 339.4 & 5	14	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-

Table 34: Length and type of sentence for those convicted of crimes involving illegal SALW.³⁰¹

One explanation for the sentences that Article 337–339 offenders receive was offered by a member of the Prosecutor’s Office who noted that most judges regard mere possession of an illegal weapon as a slight offence. This is in part because the charge is often used by the police as the ‘indictment of last resort’ – whenever a known criminal cannot be charged with anything else due to lack of evidence, he can often be charged with illegal possession of a firearm.³⁰³

4.2.9.2 Enforcing transfer controls

As previously noted, recent changes to the arms transfer control system include the introduction of harsher penalties for individuals or companies found to be violating the LCFTADGT. The penalties involved are sufficiently harsh to deter those who would otherwise conduct illegal transfers, provided they are imposed consistently by the judiciary. While progress has been made since 1999, when government officials interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) were unable to point to any successful prosecutions in relation to numerous violations of the arms transfer control system at that time,³⁰⁴ there remain concerns that the government is not sufficiently thorough in pursuing investigations against those involved in the illegal arms trade. The ongoing trial of a number of individuals accused of complicity in the illicit TEREM deals may prove a test case in this regard. In the light of the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) Iraq Survey Group report, the resolve of the Mol may be further tested when the CIA presents the evidence requested by the Chief Secretary of the Mol regarding illegal dual-use exports by the Bulgarian firm JEFF.³⁰⁵

4.2.10 Inter-agency co-operation

The foremost institution in Bulgaria’s arms transfer control system, the Interdepartmental Commission, is obviously an inter-agency body, in so far as it brings a number of different governmental departments together to oversee ADGT transfer policy. Although both independent analysts and government sources have recommended changes to the body, its operation demonstrates its members’ commitment to information sharing and co-operation on SALW control. Despite its function in controlling Bulgaria’s international trade in ADGT, the Commission’s members also include ministries and agencies whose remit is domestic (such as those under the Mol). These agencies participate in the Commission only to inform decisions about the trade in ADGT, rather than to combat any SALW proliferation within the country, but they do have established patterns of co-operation on SALW and at two levels. On the one hand among the various agencies of the Mol (NSS, NSCOC, NBPS), there is

³⁰¹ Source: NSI, ‘Crime and Convicted Individuals’, Sofia 2003.

³⁰² Articles 339.3 and 339.4 refer to giving a firearm, explosives or other firearms (including WMD) to someone who does not have a possession or carrying permit.

³⁰³ Interview, Georgieva, 14 September 2004.

³⁰⁴ HRW, April 1999.

³⁰⁵ *Novinite*, 08 October 2004.



an informal consultation group that meets periodically to consider SALW control questions. Its members are said to be in regular contact as part of their efforts to co-ordinate Mol activities to prevent weapons proliferation and smuggling more generally, though the research team was unable to obtain any detailed information about the group's composition, workings or strategy.³⁰⁶

The Mol and Customs Agency also have established procedures for information exchange between the two institutions. Nevertheless, the procedures are said to be cumbersome and slow and their effectiveness is therefore likely to be limited. A long-running lack of trust between the two institutions is believed to have prevented them from developing their coordination efforts.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, as noted in Section 1.2.3.2 the Customs Agency and the MPMCS now have a standing agreement to exchange information on cases of stolen or missing weapons.³⁰⁸

One alternative to what might be described as the 'piecemeal' approach to SALW control, would be the creation of a national strategy for SALW control, and perhaps a co-ordinating agency tasked with implementing it (as recommended by the 2004 Weapons Under Scrutiny 'expert group' report).³⁰⁹ Speaking on behalf of Bulgaria at the opening session of the UN 'Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects', in July 2001, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Takev called for "...an integrated and holistic spectrum of measures designed to address manufacturing and implementation of an effective regime of export control, marking and tracing, security and safe management of stockpiles, destruction of excess arms, enforcement of arms embargoes, organised crime, border control, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration".³¹⁰ This statement arguably gestures towards the establishment of overarching co-ordination mechanisms with competency over all, or most, thematic areas of SALW control. While Bulgaria is coming to grips with most of the issues cited in this statement, the call for integration appears still not to have been answered. That said, the resources available for such an agency are few since most government departments experience shortages either of funding, skilled personnel or equipment. The agencies tasked with controlling the SALW trade and combating internal proliferation are not exceptional in this regard and the existing head of the Interdepartmental Commission is of the view that it would not prove wise to add to the Interdepartmental Commission's current duties by adding the co-ordination of internal SALW control activities to its remit, given that it already experiences operational difficulties.³¹¹ The task of fully implementing what is a fairly comprehensive system of internal and external SALW controls with Bulgaria's current resources is certainly considerable, and in the absence of extra funding, diverting existing resources from existing agencies towards the creation of a new agency would strain them further.

4.3 Civil society

4.3.1 Non-governmental organisations

Bulgarian NGOs have so far been involved in a number of different activities relating to SALW, most notably research, awareness raising and advocacy. An early and hard-hitting research report was produced by the BHC in co-operation with US-based HRW, *Money Talks: Arms Dealing with Human Rights Abusers* (1999). Until the 2002 legislative changes that strengthened the regulation of the arms trade significantly, the two organisations advocated stricter arms export controls by means of a series of briefing papers and open letters targeting institutions such as NATO, the EU and the national parliament.³¹²

This type of work has been complemented by awareness raising seminars on the subject of SALW control such

³⁰⁶ Interviews, Gaidarski, and Parlev, June – July 2004. Information on the group's membership and activities is classified.

³⁰⁷ Interviews, Customs Agency officers, February – March 2004 at Sofia, Varna, and Kapitan Andreevo customs posts.

³⁰⁸ Customs Agency, October 2004.

³⁰⁹ See Gounev et al, Executive Summary.

³¹⁰ Takev, July 2001.

³¹¹ Interview, Atanasov, 24 September 2004.

³¹² See for example, 'Open Letter to Members of the Bulgarian Parliament Re: Pending Arms Trade Reform', 03 July 2002 <<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/07/bulg.htm>>, also 'Open Letter to NATO Heads of State and Government on Weak Arms Trade Controls in Central and Eastern Europe, 15 November 2002, <<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/11/nato1115-ltr.htm>>, and 'EU: Keep Up Pressure for Arms Trade Reforms in Candidate Countries, 8 October 2002, <<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/10/eu-1008.htm>>.



as those held regularly by the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) from 2000 onwards. The first such event was a regional one, organised on 01 – 02 October 2000 with the support of the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT), the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government. The meeting brought together Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies from South Eastern Europe to consider the role of the Red Cross Movement in highlighting the humanitarian impact of SALW proliferation.³¹³

In May 2002 the BRC and UK-based Saferworld held an international seminar in Sofia, *Controlling Small Arms Proliferation: the View from Bulgaria* (the event was co-sponsored by the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian MFA). On 14 May 2003, Saferworld, the Atlantic Club in Bulgaria and CSD organised a workshop on developing a Bulgarian National Programme to Implement Arms Export Controls and Combat Small Arms Proliferation. It assessed the feasibility of developing a Bulgarian National Action Programme and any additional steps required for the effective implementation of arms export controls and measures to combat small arms proliferation.³¹⁴ In addition, in September 2003, the Atlantic Club, the NATO Information Centre and the Bulgarian MFA organised a conference on the topic, *Modern Control of Arms Export in the Process of Bulgaria's Accession to NATO*. This type of work has continued and in November 2004 the BRC held a further meeting to consider the question of *Non-proliferation of SALW*, a matter that continues to concern the organisation because of the grave threat that SALW proliferation poses to respect for International Humanitarian Law. The BRC is also the only organisation known to the researchers to have conducted any community-based work on SALW, which is covered by some regional chapters in the course of their work either with young people during anti-violence campaigns, or in a less direct way with military and police personnel, students, public authorities and BRC staff during tutorials on international humanitarian law.

Primarily a think tank, CSD has concentrated its efforts on researching SALW questions. On 28 March 2003, CSD held a round-table discussion entitled *Export Control on SALW in Bulgaria*, which brought government and civil society experts together to discuss the topic. Following that event, CSD convened an 'expert group' of specialists from the MoD, MFA, MoI, MoE and the University of National and World Economy to analyse the Bulgarian arms export control system and make recommendations for its improvement. The resulting report, *Weapons Under Scrutiny – Implementing Arms Export Controls and Combating Small Arms Proliferation in Bulgaria*, was launched on 05 April 2004.³¹⁵

In many respects the above activities by local and international NGOs compare well with those in neighbouring Western Balkan countries, where SALW control work has been less consistent and analytical. NGO staff interviewed in the course of this research expressed a desire to continue this line of work and in one case, to become newly involved in the SALW issue.³¹⁶ So far, however, there has been very little collaborative work among NGOs, an approach THAT would allow different strengths to be pooled for greater impact.



Photo 10: April 2004, a panel of governmental and non-governmental specialists discuss the findings of the 'Weapons Under Scrutiny' report. From left: Agron Sojati, Head of SALW Task Force, SECI Center; Gen. Roumen Milanov, NSCOC, Director; Tihomir Bezlov, CSD Senior Analyst; and Boyko Todorov, CSD Program Director.

4.3.2 Defence industry associations

There are a number of associations that bring defence industry companies or gun owners together. In October 2004, ten companies founded the 'Association of Arms Producers: Bulgarian Defence Industry'. The group involves all SALW producers, such as Arsenal and VMZ and brokering firms such as Kintex. Its stated goal is to

³¹³ <<http://www.redcross.bg/news.html>>.

³¹⁴ This was followed on 05 April 2004, by the launch of CSD and Saferworld's report *Weapons Under Scrutiny* in Sofia, an event that provided further opportunities for awareness raising and public debate.

³¹⁵ See <http://www.saferworld.co.uk/publications/weapons_under_scrutiny.pdf>

³¹⁶ Interview, Kashumov, 21 September 2004.

³¹⁷ Darik Radio, 11 October 2004.



promote the Bulgarian defence industry by means of joint participation in arms-trade shows.³¹⁷

The Bulgarian Industrial Association's 'Branch Chamber of Manufacturers and Traders from the Military Industry' was founded in 1992 as a non-profit voluntary association. The Chamber unites 35 state and private defence industry entities including manufacturing enterprises, scientific organisations, marketing and trading companies. Its activities to date appear to have been quite limited and the fact that defence companies are now considering new forms of association, such as the 'Association of Arms Producers: Bulgarian Defence Industry', would seem to indicate that the Chamber is not satisfactory for some.

Another non-profit organisation is the Plovdiv-based 'Hemus Foundation' whose goal is to support the development of the defence industry in Bulgaria. Its main activities include the organisation of an annual arms trade fair (see www.hemusbg.org), as well as supporting Bulgarian defence companies' participation in arms trade shows.

A fourth association is the 'Association of Arms Producers and Traders in Bulgaria', headed by former policeman Hristo Stoikov. Its activities are various but have included frequent public appeals by the Chairman for the relaxation of gun controls in order that more Bulgarian citizens can own and use firearms.

4.3.3 Gun rights organisations

Although the firearm producers promote the rights of individual gun owners to some extent, there are in addition several citizens' associations that bring together individuals who are supportive of more liberal firearms regulations. In general their influence is limited, but with the increase of the number of firearm owners it is likely to grow. These organisations include the 'Bulgarian National Association of Firearm Owners', and the internet-based 'Bulgarian Gun Club' (<http://guns-bg.com/>), and its discussion forum at <http://www.dir.bg>, one of the largest Bulgarian internet portals. There are also a number of hunters' unions of various sizes. The largest of these, the 'Bulgarian Union of Hunters and Fisherman' grew out of the pre-1989 hunters' union. The organisation co-ordinates and represents over a hundred regional hunters' associations, defending the rights and interests of hunters and promoting hunting activities. Finally, the 'Bulgarian Sports Shooting Federation' is the organisation that co-ordinates the work of dozens of sport-shooting clubs around the country and promotes the sport.

4.3.4 Trade unions

A number of trade unions have an influence on and interest in, SALW issues. The 'Defence Trade Union' is involved with the defence companies owned by the MoD, above all the TEREM company. It is associated with Podkrepa, one of the two largest trade unions in the country, has a presence in most defence industry companies, including Arsenal and VMZ. There is also a 'Federation of the Independent Defence Industry Trade Unions', which combines several grassroots trade unions. Given the dire economic situation of most defence companies, the influence of the trade unions in the industry factories is weak. According to the leader of Podkrepa, Dr Konstantin Trenchev, the high levels of unemployment around defence companies make the employees protest-averse, despite the irregular salary payments, lay-offs and industrial accidents they face in their work.³¹⁸ Although in the past the above-mentioned trade unions have generally been able to organise protests against irregular salary payments, or lobby for alternative employment opportunities for sacked workers, they have not been able to prevent lay-offs or bargain effectively for salary increases.

4.3.5 Mass media

Bulgaria has a wide range of predominantly privately-owned media outlets. The SALW-related topics that the Bulgarian mass media most commonly report on are gun crimes, exports, and defence industry stories. Coverage in each area is important since it shapes public perceptions and occasionally precipitates government intervention. On many occasions, the media's treatment of SALW issues is sensationalist and superficial. As a report from 2003 by the Stability Pact's Media Task Force noted, 'quality niche reporting and programming in the

³¹⁸ *Trud*, 08 February, 2004.

³¹⁹ Stability Pact Media Task Force, November 2003, p18.

³²⁰ A worthy exception is referenced elsewhere in this report, op cit, Dimitrova.



Bulgarian media is seen to be in very short supply.³¹⁹ Although a few of the better publications have developed investigative reporting capacity, good investigative reporting is still rare and tends to depend on donor funds.³²⁰

There are a number of factors at work inhibiting reporting of SALW issues, among them a lack of understanding among journalists, which leaves them unable to offer any in-depth analysis.³²¹ Other factors include editorial and financial pressure and low skill levels across the industry. As the study cited above noted, 'Reporting is often unprofessional, biased and intolerant. Quality beat reporting in important areas like the judiciary system, the economy, local government, or ethnic relations is a rarity. Professional investigative reporting on exposing corruption and organised crime is limited to a few editions'.³²² It should be borne in mind that similar conditions prevail across the Balkans. In the following sections, coverage of the three issues identified above is examined in more detail.

4.3.5.1 Reporting on gun crime

Since almost all firearm crimes that include a fatality are reported in the media, stories appear on most weeks, with a consequent negative effect on public perceptions of security. However, media reports of gun crimes are usually a mere repetition of information released in police bulletins or announcements. Much more extensive analyses are given to high-profile assassinations of crime bosses, politicians or judges, over seventy of which have occurred in the last two years.³²³ In these articles, special attention is often paid to the weapons used. Following a recent assassination in the centre of Sofia, a newspaper article, '7.62 the Preferred Calibre', examined recent high-profile assassinations in Bulgaria and Serbia. It concluded that 7.62 mm rifles, such as Kalashnikov, Dragunov, Simonov, or Steyr are the preferred weapons in such homicides.³²⁴ Another article following the same assassination focused on the ammunition – 'The 'Russian' Killed with Unique Bullets', focusing on the special type of bullets used in this murder.³²⁵

4.3.5.2 Reporting on arms transfers

Any coverage relating to arms transfers tends to focus on the more dramatic illegal transactions that sometimes occur. Since 2001 three stories in particular have captured the media's attention. The first two were the illegal arms exports by the state-owned companies TEREM and Beta, to Syria and Sudan respectively. In both cases most journalists demonstrated a poor understanding of Bulgaria's export control system and the international issues that were at stake. A more recent discussion, involving some of the brokers in the TEREM case, included an analysis of the Iraq Survey Group Report. The article reported extensively on several Bulgarian companies involved in the illegal exports of ADGT to Iraq (see Section 4.2.4). Yet it is clear to any informed reader or viewer that only a handful of journalists actually read the sections in the report concerning Bulgaria, most relying on interviews and recounted stories from their colleagues.

The media coverage that followed the launch of the 2003 CSD/Saferworld report *Weapons Under Scrutiny*, a report which examined Bulgaria's SALW production and export system, serve to underline the generally poor journalistic standards in the field. One major national daily's front page headline stated 'Our Country is Placed in UN's Register for Illegal Trade for the Export of Mortars to Uganda and Cote D'Ivoire for 2002',³²⁶ demonstrating no understanding of the UN Register's purpose, which is to record transfers of conventional weapons as declared by governments. Another major daily reported that 'Companies have earned US\$ 1 bn dollars from the illegal export of arms from Bulgaria',³²⁷ in this case confusing global and domestic economic statistics.

³²¹ So far as is known to the authors, Bulgarian journalists have only had access to one training event on SALW reporting. The SEESAC/Saferworld seminar, held in Bucharest in June 2004, brought journalists together from Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria. Only 5 places were available for journalists from each country.

³²² Stability Pact Media Task Force, November 2003, p 16.

³²³ *Banker-Paragraph* 22, 13 December 2003.

³²⁴ *Standard*, 26 November 2004.

³²⁵ *Noshten Trud*, 25 October 2004.

³²⁶ *Monitor*, 05 April 2004.

³²⁷ *Novinar*, 06 April, 2004.



4.3.5.3 Reporting on the defence industry

Reporting on defence industry issues, particularly SALW production, is often of a higher standard since a pool of specialists (former military or defence ministry analysts, or economists) who are able to write sound analyses on the issue are available to journalists. Additional analytical capacity is provided by specialists from the military academies, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the University of World and National Economy's Defence and Security Economics department. Most journalists who write on this topic though tend to go for formulaic storylines about the 'good old days' when Bulgaria exported large numbers of weapons. Headlines such as 'The Military Industry Closed Down' or 'How the Arms Trade was Smashed from US\$ 1.5 bn to US\$ 80 m' are still typical.³²⁸

4.4 SALW collection

4.4.1 Previous collections

The earliest voluntary weapons collection in Bulgaria appears to have been a two-month amnesty held in 1968, during which individuals were allowed to surrender unregistered arms to the police. This programme was primarily focused on air-guns and its effects were not widespread.³²⁹ In 1990 another amnesty law was passed. It suspended Article 339 of the Penal Code and allowed anyone possessing unregistered firearms, ammunition, or explosives to hand them in without being prosecuted.³³⁰ During this amnesty only a few dozen firearms were handed in.³³¹

Since that time Bulgaria has taken the unusual step of running temporary weapons collections during periods of tension. The first such programme was implemented in June 1992, when the Council of Ministers instructed all regional police departments to collect all legal and illegal firearms, including all hunting and sports arms, as well as all weapons given to individuals by the state as gifts. The order called for a complete re-registration and accounting of all MoI weapons, and for MoD, the MoI, the Forest Commission, the Bulgarian Fishing and Hunting Union and the Committee on the Closure of the ODC to account for all registered SALW and increase the security measures at storage sites.³³² Since many of the weapons in the country at that time were held by former Communist party members, this was widely seen as a politically motivated act by the ruling party of the time, the Union of Democratic Forces. However, the government's stated goal, both in 1990 and 1992, was to minimise the impact of any violent outbursts during political elections that were highly polarised.³³³

Although the weapons were subsequently returned to their owners, they were collected again ahead of the December 1994 parliamentary elections.³³⁴ At that time the political divisions in the country were acute and the government was attempting to minimise the incidence of armed violence by taking weapons out of circulation. Following the elections, the legal firearms were once again returned to their owners once more.³³⁵ According to an interviewee from the MoI, the 1992 and 1994 collections were both very successful, with the bulk of known weapons handed in.³³⁶ In reality, though, most of the weapons collected were so-called 'award weapons' belonging to former communist party members. Attempts to collect hunting weapons largely failed, while the number of illegal weapons that were handed in did not exceed that collected in previous years.³³⁷

³²⁸ 168 Chassa, 30 April 2003, and 24 Chassa, 04 April 2004.

³²⁹ Amnesty Draft Law from 26 June 2002, Parliament Legislation Database, <<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=bg&aid=4>>

³³⁰ Amnesty Law, from 28 March 1990, State Gazette No. 30 from 13 April 1990.

³³¹ Email correspondence with Mr N Krachmarov, former employee of the Co-ordination, Information and Analysis Division of the NPS, MoI.

³³² Decision 167 of the Council of Ministers on the re-registration of firearms used by legal entities and private individuals, 04 May 1992.

³³³ Interview, Chervenkov, 21 July, 2004.

³³⁴ Decision 473 of the Council of Ministers of 27 October 1994 for the accounting, re-registration, confiscation and storage of firearms, owned or used by legal entities and private individuals.

³³⁵ Interview, Chervenkov, 21 July 2004.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Interview, Stoyanov, 2004.



In June 2002, Nonka Matova, a Member of Parliament, submitted a draft law that proposed an amnesty for everyone who owned unregistered weapons in violation of the Penal Code's Article 339, provided they surrender the weapon to the Mol within a three month period. In addition, the proposed law allowed the surrendered arms to be legally registered and their owners to resume ownership.³³⁸ This initiative, though, did not capture the imagination of the public or politicians and was never voted on. Ms Matova renewed her attempt to introduce an amnesty law in late 2004, but as government agencies argued that an amnesty would need to be accompanied by a large, and possibly costly collection and awareness campaign, the law stalled again and was not submitted for voting.

4.4.2 Capacity to conduct future SALW collection

The fact that a weapons amnesty law has been under consideration raises the question of Bulgaria's readiness to conduct a safe and effective SALW collection. The minimum conditions that would need to be met would include the following. Firstly, the existence of a nationwide infrastructure suited for use as temporary collection and storage centres. On this count there are no foreseeable problems because of the NPSs country-wide network of district police stations and warehouses. Secondly, procedures, facilities and training would have to be provided to deal with any risks arising from unsafe explosive ordnance surrendered during the amnesty. Since, unlike neighbouring countries such as Macedonia and Serbia, Bulgaria has not historically suffered the proliferation of military-style weaponry on its territory, few challenges would probably arise in this area. Some preparations would nevertheless need to be taken. A further challenge would be presented by the requirement to store and transport surrendered SALW in a secure manner, particularly since the country is engaged in an ongoing battle against hardened and audacious organised criminal gangs. Although the research team were unable to gather information on the storage standards at Mol facilities, the Bulgarian police have successfully collected legal weapons on previous occasions and will therefore have relevant experience to draw upon during any future initiatives.

A final consideration is whether the general public would have sufficient trust and confidence in institutions tasked with collecting weapons and delivering any incentives. HHS and FGD results showed that public trust in state institutions, including the police, is lacking (see Section 3.2). Attitudes towards the idea of SALW collection were also generally negative, indicating that public scepticism would be a major hurdle for any SALW collection in Bulgaria to overcome. Experience elsewhere has shown that a well-conceived SALW awareness campaign can significantly improve public participation in disarmament programmes. However, in order to succeed, such a campaign would in turn require a large degree of transparency from the government over the nature and size of the problem being tackled, the criteria for success and the fairness of the disarmament process, including the delivery of incentives.

4.5 SALW destruction

4.5.1 Destruction of surplus weaponry

As noted above, Bulgaria has sizeable stocks of surplus weapons, primarily those held by the army (approximately 200,000, see Section 1.1.2). Although weapons seized from the population during police work come under the jurisdiction of the Mol, the police are not known to have carried out destruction on a significant scale. In January 2003, however, the Mol auctioned off 1,350 confiscated SALW³³⁹ a decision that is not in keeping with the UN PoA which calls for the destruction of all surplus SALW.³⁴⁰

That said, the Bulgarian Government has shown increased willingness to discuss and implement the disposal of its SALW stockpiles in recent years, and has attracted some donor assistance in return. The first destructions

³³⁸ Amnesty Draft Law from June 26, 2002, Parliament Legislation Database, <<http://www.parliament.bg/?page=app&lng=bg&aid=4>>

³³⁹ 68 *Chasa*, 31 January 2003.

³⁴⁰ UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (UN Document A/CONF.192/15), Section II-16.

³⁴¹ Gounev et al, p 46.

³⁴² Georgiev, 03 – 04 November 2004.



SEESAC, 2003.

Photo 11: 24 October 2003: Bulgaria proudly unveils its 'Bird of Peace' monument outside the Defence Ministry's Information Centre. The sculpture was made from weapons and ammunition destroyed in summer 2003.

of SALW started in 2001 when Bulgaria signed an agreement with the US Government for the destruction of up to 150,000 SALW.³⁴¹ So far, Bulgaria has destroyed around 96,000 SALW (and ammunition – see below) under this agreement.³⁴² In July 2003, under a project funded by the UNDP, the MoD destroyed 4,500 AK-74 rifles and additional ammunition (see below). On 27 October 2003, a sculpture created by students from the Bulgarian National Academy of Fine Art using a portion of the weapons and ammunition earmarked for destruction was unveiled in central Sofia.³⁴³

Following the UNDP-supported destruction, an independent report commissioned by SEESAC concluded that Bulgaria is a good candidate for future destruction SALW projects, provided the MoD is motivated to support the process. It noted that remaining stocks of surplus small arms ammunition and AK-74s would be good candidates for future destruction since many

of the existing stocks are relatively new and have significant value on the world's black and grey markets (the RPG family of weapons was also noted as another potential candidate). The report also made a number of recommendations for improvement of technical and environmental procedures before any future destruction.³⁴⁴

Although no national programme for SALW destruction currently exists, the Government of Bulgaria has been seeking funding for further destruction from foreign donors on a one-to-one basis.³⁴⁵ In particular both the US and UK governments have expressed a willingness to assist Bulgaria with further SALW destruction and discussions were underway during mid-2004.³⁴⁶ In December 2004 a joint delegation from the UK's Joint Arms Control Implementation Group (JACIG), and SEESAC, made an assessment visit to MoD storage sites.³⁴⁷

4.5.2 Destruction of surplus ammunition

At the end of 2004, the Bulgarian Armed Forces had close to 80,000 tons of surplus ammunition, out of which about 21,000 tons was SALW ammunition (see Figure 37 and Annex C). As noted above, Bulgaria has co-operated with the US Government and UNDP on the destruction of surplus ammunition (nearly 6,700,000 rounds in the case of the US-supported project and 750,000 rounds of 5.45 mm small arms ammunition and 2,475 rounds of high explosive anti-tank ammunition in the case of UNDP).³⁴⁸

On 04 March 2004, Bulgaria's Council of Ministers approved a document entitled *The National Programme for Recycling and Destruction of Surplus Ammunition on the Territory of Republic of Bulgaria*.³⁴⁹ As the title suggests, this document sets out a national plan for the destruction of ammunition surpluses. Drafted by MoD specialists, the document gives several explanations for the existence of current surpluses (said to be equal to about 50 percent of all available ammunition stock). The first reason offered is the ongoing reduction of the

³⁴³ 'From Small Arms to Peace in Bulgaria', UNDP, <http://www.undp.bg/en/homepage_files/salw/monument_of_peace.pdf>.

³⁴⁴ Munro, 2003.

³⁴⁵ Reference on the Main Projects for the Modernisation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, <http://www.mod.government.bg/_bg_/docs/spravka_prj_15_07.htm>, accessed 21 July 2004>.

³⁴⁶ Interviews, Lowder, 23 September 2004; Broid, 21 September 2004.

³⁴⁷ Interview, Wilkinson, 06 December 2004.

³⁴⁸ Georgiev, 03 – 04 November 2004; and Munro, 2003.

³⁴⁹ The programme was submitted on 09 March 2004 to the National Parliament. Since it was first considered on 18 March 2004 by the Foreign Relations, Defence and Security Committee the programme has been retained for further consideration by the Committee.

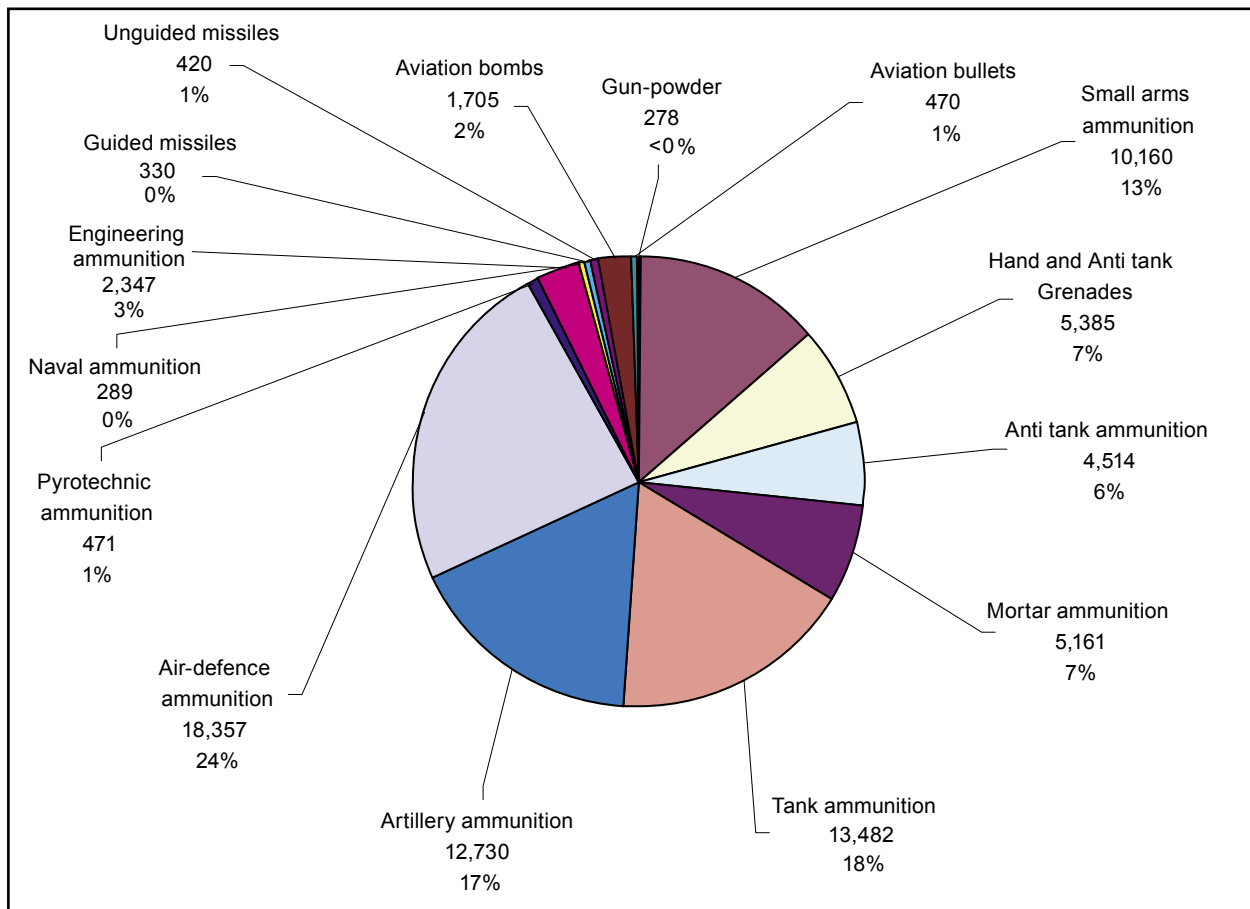


Figure 37: Surplus ammunition of all kinds by type (tons).³⁵⁰

Bulgarian Armed Forces. The second justification given is that during the period of restructuring, ammunition was moved to new locations, leading to the deterioration of some stocks. Technical assessments are said to have shown that the chemical stability of propellant and the ballistic qualities of some ammunition have indeed been reduced. As a result, all ammunition produced prior to 1970 is earmarked for destruction under the proposed programme. Without the full results of these ammunition tests it is not possible to assess whether any of this ammunition constitutes an immediate threat to human life.

In addition to detailing existing surpluses, over one third of the programme document gives general explanations of different destruction and recycling methods and their environmental implications (the environmental impact is admitted to be very serious but the document concludes that a separate study would be needed to estimate its precise nature and extent). Unfortunately, no linkage is made between these textbook-like sections of the document that discuss destruction processes and the task of destroying the particular stores in question. Nor does the text explore the financial implications of these different methods.

The document also gives some information on the capacities of different defence industry companies to destroy or recycle ammunition (see Box 14), although the exact quantities that particular facilities can deal with is generally not stated. The document does not present an overall assessment of the actual combined capacities of the facilities it mentions, but concludes that altogether the companies have sufficient storage space, technological capacity and expertise to deal with a part of the destruction and recycling task specified. Although the companies are assessed as meeting safety requirements for these processes, their methods and equipment are said to be below current environmental standards.

³⁵⁰ Source: MoD, 2003. A detailed description of the SALW ammunition surpluses is provided in Annex C.



Box 14: Ammunition destruction capacities of defence facilities³⁵¹

VMZ (Sopot): VMZ has a number of 'galvanic facilities' for various chemical technology operations related to the destruction and recycling of ammunition. Although the company needs some additional equipment to recycle some of the ammunition, it already has sufficient equipment to handle ammunition destruction, though it is not made clear on what scale. The equipment is said to include: hydraulic presses up to 250 tons, equipment for steaming the main explosive filling out of shells and a machine for fracturing explosives.

Trema (Triavna): Like VMZ it has its own water-treatment facility and equipment for steaming explosives out of shell casings. The company does not have the capacity to dispose of or destroy the explosive substances, particularly TNT, so the preferred option is to extract, dry and re-sell the high explosive to other defence companies. Trema also has equipment for cutting empty shell casings to make steel scrap and furnace facilities to burn any additional material left over from the disposal of shells. The company has storage capacity for up to 30,000 artillery ammunition rounds. With some extra equipment and product-line adjustments, the company could destroy or dismantle up to 10,000 85–125 mm ammunition rounds at 11 rounds per euro (after the sale of scrap metal and TNT).

Arcus (Lyaskovetz): The company has the capacity to destroy and recycle all types of ammunition up to 40 mm. The company has also developed its own project for a 'Centre for Recycling and Destruction of Ammunition'. It remains unclear whether this centre would compete with the regional centre envisaged by the national programme document.

Videks (Sofia): Has the capacity to process between 350–400 tons of explosive materials per month. It could recycle and destroy between 80,000–100,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, depending on its calibre (57 mm, 85 mm, 100 mm, 122 mm). The company is currently involved in the destruction of anti-tank mines, cumulative, longitudinal, and centred fuses.

Dunarit (Ruse): Involved in the production of aviation and artillery (57–122 mm) ammunition. No information is given on the quantities of ammunition the company can handle, or the rate at which it can process them.

Mechanics and Installation (Sevlievo): Could destroy and recycle a wide range of mine, artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft ammunition fuses, as well as some hand grenades. No information is given on the quantities of ammunition the company can handle, or the rate at which it can process them.

Elovitza (Gabrovo): Could extract and recycle TNT and produce a number of civilian use products from it. It could also destroy anti-tank mines (BA-III and TM-46). No information is given on the quantities of ammunition the company can handle, or the rate at which it can process them.

Arsenal (Kazanlak): Capable of recycling a wide range of SALW ammunition, including 5.45–14.5 mm rounds; 23–57 mm anti-aircraft rounds; 60–120 mm mortar rounds; 76–152 mm artillery rounds; RPG rounds, as well as a range of artillery ammunition. No information is given on the quantities of ammunition the company can handle, or the rate at which it can process them.

TEREM (Kostenetz): The MoD owned plant participated in the 2003 UNDP-sponsored SALW destruction project and the company is capable of destroying a wide range of SALW artillery, and anti-tank and air-defence ammunition. No information is given on the quantities of ammunition the company can handle, or the rate at which it can process them.

Having detailed the destruction capacities of the different national defence facilities, the programme document identifies several gaps:

- The defence facilities are not fully capable of meeting current environmental regulations.
- The technology in use is old and investment in its improvement would be more costly than acquiring new ones.
- There is limited capacity to recycle.
- An absence of proper equipment for the disposal of explosive or sensitive components (eg detonators and fuses).
- No equipment for the reprocessing and secondary use of hull elements and cartridge cases.

In light of these problems the document recommends that Bulgaria establishes a new 'centre, where the most modern destruction and recycling technologies will be implemented.'³⁵² The centre is envisaged as being able to dismantle, recycle and destroy all ammunition, from 'bullet to rocket.'³⁵³ The proposed location is the existing TEREM-Kostenetz plant, which is assessed as being 'far away from a large town and in a region with high unemployment, but with good infrastructure.' (It is not made clear how the ongoing privatisation of TEREM facilities affects the plan (preliminary bids for the Kostenetz plant were due in December 2004, raising the

³⁵¹ Source: MoD, 2003.

³⁵² MoD, 2003, p 58.

³⁵³ Ibid, p 65.



possibility of additional capital costs if land or facilities necessary for the programme are sold off).³⁵⁴ Although the planned centre would use existing sites, it would operate as a separate company. The document predicts that such a centre would be able to destroy all surplus ammunition in eight years. Crucially though, the programme plan is for a centre that accepts surplus ammunition from across the region, 'It should be able to destroy the ammunitions of countries in the Balkans, which will transform it into a regional centre'.³⁵⁵ (see Box 15 for a discussion of the considerations that apply to establishing regional ammunition destruction centres.)

Box 15: Regional demilitarisation facilities³⁵⁶

A solution that is often proposed at international conferences is the development of a regional demilitarisation facility. Whilst this is an attractive concept for donors and the recipient country, the political and technical realities are very different for the remainder:

- The very large stockpiles present in many countries of the region mean that national economies of scale can usually justify a national demilitarisation capacity anyway.
- The ammunition would have to be 'safe to move' in accordance with international legislation, agreements or recommendations. This would be difficult to achieve until effective ammunition surveillance systems had been developed in some countries.
- Many states within the region will support a regional facility since it is a major economic investment. The difficulty for donors would be in choosing between them.
- Large-scale movements of ammunition to a regional demilitarisation facility would require intense political negotiation and planning to ensure that the 'balance of military capability' between the states of the region was impacted equally. Stockpile downsizing would have to be done in an equitable manner, which may not be efficient in terms of demilitarisation operations.
- The international donor community is unlikely to have the resources to pay for the total surplus stockpile destruction, therefore it would also become an economic issue between countries.

The section of the document that aims at a financial justification of the proposed programme considers only one scenario – the construction of a destruction centre. The centre would take two years to build at a cost of EU 9.85m (plus an extra EU 6.8m in storage costs). The cost of destroying all the ammunition earmarked for destruction by the programme is estimated at EU 47.3m, with the destruction of surplus SALW ammunition costing just over EU 6.3m. This total also includes a EU 4.73m projected profit, estimated on the basis of the recent destruction programme subsidised by the US Government. The discounted storage costs for all surplus ammunition for a ten-year period would be EU 29m (it is not clear whether the EU 47.3m includes the storage expense). Expected profits from the sale of 62,510 tons of recycled materials would be EU 16.52m.

The programme document does not compare the financial implications of alternative solutions to the regional destruction centre, such as the use of current capacities or transportation to facilities abroad. There are also no estimates for future destruction orders from neighbouring countries in the document.

4.6 Public transparency and accountability

The exchange of information at the international level is now a routine practice for Bulgaria. Domestic improvements have also occurred and information on topics such as the legal framework and the operation of control mechanisms are now publicly available.³⁵⁷ Probably the best single test for levels of transparency in Bulgaria on SALW issues, however, was the writing of this report. While the co-operation obtained by the researchers in their dealings with government officials was in many cases excellent (in some cases officials even took time to review the text), the team's enquiries were sometimes frustrated by a lack of transparency, meaning the following information was unobtainable:

- Arms export and import data (MoE and Customs).
- Active SALW holdings of various government agencies (MoD, MoI, Customs Agency, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Agriculture and Forests).

³⁵⁴ BTA, 11 November 2004.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Source: Correspondence with Adrian Wilkinson, SEESAC Team Leader, September 2004.

³⁵⁷ See the MoE website, <<http://www.mi.government.bg/ind/lic/arms.html>>.



- SALW surpluses (MoD, Mol).
- Firearm-related crime within the military (Military Police).
- Brands of registered and seized firearms (Mol, NBPS).
- Breakdown of seized firearms by border-crossing location (NBPS).
- Number of thefts from military depots (MoD).
- Number of registered hunters (Union of Hunters and Fishermen in Bulgaria, National Forest Management Service).

Responses on the occasions when the above information was sought varied from formal denials to a lack of response to repeated requests.³⁵⁸ As a well-known Bulgarian defence economist who previously collaborated on the *Weapons Under Scrutiny* report put it, 'The spirit of secrecy regarding military and security affairs inherited from the Communist era is still strong'.³⁵⁹

In fact, with few exceptions, most officials contacted by the researchers were willing to co-operate but felt constrained by law. It seems then that Bulgarian citizens' rights to obtain public information relating to SALW are severely curtailed. The major problem appears to lie with the scope and application, of the recent *Law on Protection of Classified Information (2002)*, which stipulates that the following information shall be classified: 'summarised information regarding special production³⁶⁰ of the defence industry, as well as forecasts about development, plans, production capacities, scientific and research units involved in fulfilling production orders for armaments, combat equipment, ammunition and military equipment.'³⁶¹ In addition, the law classifies, 'summarised information about the export and import of armament, combat equipment and ammunition for the needs of the Bulgarian Armed Forces.'³⁶²

As the above list of denials demonstrates, information is restricted by a number of agencies with quite different responsibilities. In transparency terms, the 2002 law actually represents a step backwards. Under the previous *Law for Access to the Documents of the Former State Security and Former Intelligence Agency of the General Staff*, repealed in 2002, information on arms trading could be declassified with the approval of a special committee. Since a good part of the requested information denied to the research team during this research has already entered the public domain by a number of different routes, the current wording and application of the law seems unduly restrictive. For example, Mol and MoD spokespersons give estimates of army and police personnel with some regularity in the media; the number of surplus SALW is presumably known to Western governments (eg the UK and USA) and international agencies (eg SEESAC) who finance and oversee their destruction, yet not to the Bulgarian public; and import and export figures are available for all weapon types in a number of different registers and publications including the UN Register of Conventional Arms, the UN COMTRADE and NISAT databases, the arms export reports of other countries, and media reports (see Annexes E and F for a list of known exports and imports.)

4.6.1 Annual arms export reporting

Transparency in the arms trade is an important means of monitoring whether states follow international agreements and guidelines. The publication of arms export reports by countries involved in the arms trade is an essential element of transparent practice, provided those reports are comprehensive and detailed. Bulgaria's first arms export report was originally due in April 2003, having been under preparation by the Interdepartmental Commission for almost two years. The report is said to detail the Interdepartmental Commission's activities for the previous year and it is hoped that it will provide information on the type, destination and value of arms

³⁵⁸ Another highly relevant refusal is detailed in a report by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in their annual report for 2003. On 28 March 2002, the Yambol Regional Court found the Sliven Regional Military Prosecutor's Office guilty of a violation of the Access to Public Information Act, because it refused on 12 February 2001, to provide the BHC with information regarding the number of complaints of illegal use of force and firearms by police and military officers and the number of these cases that resulted in investigative cases in 2000–2001. The court's decision was appealed, but at the beginning of 2003 the Supreme Court of Appeals confirmed the Regional Court's decision.

³⁵⁹ BICC/BASIC/Saferworld/SAS, p 98.

³⁶⁰ "Special production" is a term used in Bulgarian to denote any type of arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

³⁶¹ Law on Protection of Classified Information, SG 45/2002, last amended SG 31/2003, Article 25, Addendum 1, §1.18.

³⁶² Ibid, Article 25, Addendum 1, §1.22.



transfers for 2002 and 2003. The report has now been accepted by the Council of Ministers (without alteration) and is under consideration by the national parliament, whose members will determine what part of the text will be made public.³⁶³

Though the ultimate publication of the report will be a welcome boost to transparency, it should be noted that the LCFTADGT does not make provisions for a public report on arms transfers. Although the law tasks the Interdepartmental Commission with reporting to the Council of Ministers on the law's implementation and the Council of Ministers in turn with submitting the report to parliament (Article 18), there is no legal requirement for the report to be made public. This low degree of transparency is reflected in the lack of accountability mechanisms at the parliamentary level. To date no provision has been made for parliamentary scrutiny of arms transfer licensing decisions, either before or after licences are granted.³⁶⁴

4.7 International co-operation and information exchange

For a country whose arms trade was veiled in complete secrecy a decade ago, Bulgaria has made speedy progress towards routine co-operation with European organisations and processes and the exchange of information that entails. From 1993 onwards, successive Bulgarian Governments have provided information on arms exports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms. Since then the country has become party to an increasing number of international arms control instruments, some of which pertain to SALW and involve the exchange of information (see Section 4.1.2).

In 1994, Bulgaria became one of the first countries to join NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), programme, beginning a series of co-operative defence reforms.³⁶⁵ Bulgaria was also an early member of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) that has brought member countries together to promote the control of exports of weapons and sensitive technology to countries of concern since 1996. Government representatives participate at the WA's regular meetings and reports on arms exports are submitted on a regular basis. In the past, Bulgaria has also expressed its support in for adding SALW reporting requirements to Wassenaar's requirements.

In August 1998 Bulgaria formally aligned itself to the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and committed itself to abide by all guidelines, decisions and positions related to arms transfers taken by the EU. In the absence of a report on the country's arms exports, it is extremely difficult to judge how closely the Code is being adhered to, particularly in regard to exports, but also in other areas. While the MFA is known to have fulfilled one information exchange requirement contained in the Code by submitting a report to the EU's Working Party on Conventional Arms Exports (COARM), on its efforts to implement the Code,³⁶⁶ it seems certain that the restrictions contained in the *Law on Protection of Classified Information* (see above) will have prevented the MFA fulfilling a second requirement of the Code, namely that, 'Each Member State will circulate to other Member States in confidence an annual report on its defence exports...'.³⁶⁷ Despite this, an interviewee from the US Embassy welcomed the increased use that members of the Interdepartmental Commission are making of foreign embassies as an information source when assessing applications for export permits.³⁶⁸

In December 1998 the government made a further political commitment to the EU Joint Action on SALW.³⁶⁹ In November 2000 it signed the OSCE Document on SALW³⁷⁰ and since then has made timely submissions to the OSCE on SALW transfers within the OSCE area, as required by the document.³⁷¹ Bulgaria is also a signatory to the UN PoA of 2001. On 07 March 2002, the Council of Ministers also adopted a *Decision for the Approval of the UN PoA*, which tasked different government institutions with appointing a point of contact to facilitate the

³⁶³ Interview, Vladimirov, 04 November, 2004. During a previous interview, the acting secretary of the commission stated that he hoped and expected the published report to include information on values of exports and their destinations – interview, Atanasov, 24 September 2004.

³⁶⁴ Article 66, § 2 of the regulation on implementation of the LCFTADGT (SG 102/95) tasks the Interdepartmental Commission with overseeing implementation of the law.

³⁶⁵ <http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/e-publications/SL_FRY/Ivanov.pdf>, accessed 01 November 2004.

³⁶⁶ 'Report by the Bulgarian MFA to COARM, 19 March 2003, DS 8/2003'.

³⁶⁷ European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, Operative Provision no. 8, 8675/2/98 CR/mas EN, DG E - PESC IV 9.

³⁶⁸ Interview, Lowder, 23 September 2004.

³⁶⁹ EU Joint Action of 17 December 1998 on the EU's contribution to combating the destabilising accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons (1999/34/CFSP).

³⁷⁰ FSC.DOC/1/00, 24 November 2000.

³⁷¹ Bulgaria has made three submissions to the OSCE secretariat since the document's adoption. Correspondence with Anton Martynyuk of the OSCE Secretariat, 23 September 2004.



implementation of the Programme. The decision is said to have formalised the existing practice of an 'expert group' meeting from January 2001 onwards.³⁷² Since the Programme was adopted, Bulgaria has submitted two annual progress reports to the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, but has yet to file one for 2004.³⁷³ A Bulgarian representative has also participated in the UN Group of Governmental Experts which meets to consider the feasibility of an international instrument governing the marking and tracing of SALW.³⁷⁴

A number of different regional initiatives currently operate in South East Europe with the declared aim of combating organised crime and cross-border trafficking. They include the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol),³⁷⁵ the European Police Office (Europol),³⁷⁶ the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (via the SEESAC), the Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation (BSEC), the Central European Initiative (CEI), and the Southeast Europe Co-operative Initiative (SECI), Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime. The Bulgarian police, customs and intelligence agencies co-operate with several of these initiatives on the basis of bilateral agreements.³⁷⁷ The most influential and important of these are probably the SECI Centre and SEESAC.

The SECI Center for Combating Transborder Crime, based in Bucharest, is comprised of police and border officials, seconded from twelve regional countries. It seeks to, 'prevent, detect, trace, investigate and suppress illicit trafficking in SALW by establishing direct, sustainable and rapid channels of information exchange.' Bulgaria has supplied two liaison officers, one from the Mol and one from the National Customs Agency as points of contact with the Center's Bucharest office.³⁷⁸ These officers actively exchanged information on illicit arms trafficking with fellow SECI members during 'Operation Ploughshares', the SECI Center's initiative to tackle SALW trafficking in South Eastern Europe, which ran between November 2002 and May 2003.³⁷⁹ Unfortunately inadequate resources hamper the effectiveness of the SECI Center, in particular the lack of analytical capacity to process the data collected (the Center does not have in-house analysts to examine the intelligence on trafficked SALW that it receives). Improvements to the operational capacity of the SECI Center would assist all participating countries, including Bulgaria, in combating the movement of illegal SALW across its borders.

SEESAC, a joint UNDP/Stability Pact initiative, was created as part of the November 2001 'Regional Implementation Plan on Combating the Proliferation of SALW' (RIP). It acts as a focal point for SALW control and reduction projects in the region, offering technical assistance to governments and other actors on SALW control issues. The Bulgarian Government's principal involvement with the Clearinghouse so far has been in connection with the UNDP-sponsored weapons destruction project of 2002, in which SEESAC gave technical support and assistance with fundraising.

³⁷² According to the Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to Operative Paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V, the designated institutions are as follows: Interdepartmental Council on Issues of the Defence Industry and the Country's Mobilisation Readiness at the Council of Ministers; Commission for Control and Permission of Foreign Trade Deals in Arms and Dual-use Goods and Technologies at the Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Interior; The Customs Agency at the Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Justice.

³⁷³ <<http://disarmament2.un.org/cab/salw-nationalreports.html>>, accessed 23 November 2004.

³⁷⁴ Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V.

³⁷⁵ According to public statements by government officials, the Bulgarian Customs Agency periodically receives information on stolen firearms from the Interpol National Bureau, thereby enhancing its capacity to prevent illicit arms trafficking. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', p 8.

³⁷⁶ On 17 June 2003, Bulgaria signed a co-operation agreement with Europol in connection with the fight against international organised crime. The agreement allows Bulgaria to appoint a liaison officer to work at Europol headquarters in The Hague. Europol press release, 17 June 2003.

³⁷⁷ Co-operation between customs authorities takes place on the basis of: Protocol No 6 on Mutual assistance in Customs activity, in accordance with Article 93 (3) of the Europe Agreement establishing association between the European Commission and the Member States on the one part and the Republic of Bulgaria on the other part (SG No 33/1993, in effect since 01 February 1995); Bi-lateral agreements on international co-operation and mutual assistance in customs activities between Bulgaria and the governments of Austria, Turkey, Greece, Romania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Macedonia, Mongolia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and a MoU with the UK Government. Reply of the Republic of Bulgaria to operative paragraph 12 of UNGA resolution 56/24 V 'Illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects', pp 7-8.

³⁷⁸ See <<http://www.secicenter.org/html/index.htm>>, accessed 23 November 2004.

³⁷⁹ According to an end of project report, the information made available within the centre by Bulgaria covered seizures of a wide variety of weapon types, including 46 hand guns, 2 Makarov pistols, 86 unspecified combat rifles, 10 handmade weapons, 3 RPGs, 16 handmade explosive devices, 426 detonators and 15.9 kg of unspecified explosive devices. Data provided by the SECI Regional Center, June 2003.

Annex A - Focus group Sample

Number of group discussions:	Six
Cities:	Sofia, Varna, Kazanlak, Kyrdzhali, Gotse Delchev
Number of participants:	Eleven per group
Sex (F:M):	Six:eight/ three:four
Duration of discussion:	120 minutes
Schedule:	5–12 July 2004

	CITY	SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	AGE	EDUCATION
1.	Sofia - First group	None	30–60	Secondary/university
2.	Sofia - Second group	Roma	18–29	Primary/secondary
3.	Varna	Young people	15–25	Secondary
4.	Kazanlak	Former military personnel	30–60	Secondary/university
5.	Kyrdzhali	Ethnic Turks	18–35	Primary/secondary
6.	Gotse Delchev	None	18–60	Primary/secondary

Table 35: Quota for focus group recruitment.

List of participants:

Focus group I, Sofia – 05 July 2004

1. Female, 50+, married, working in the Bulgarian Academy of Science in the field of biomedicine.
2. Male, 30–35 years, unmarried, with an eight year old child, construction worker.
3. Male, 30–35 years, car-painter.
4. Male, 30–35 years, divorced with two children, military, chief of special communication in the military air force, military academy graduate.
5. Male, 30–35 years, working with international organisations.
6. Male, 30–35 years, married, six-year-old child, used to work for Arsenal in Kazanlak.
7. Male, 40–45 years, divorced, three children, working for BDZ-EAD.
8. Male, 40–45 years, married, grown-up child, working in import-export business.
9. Male, 30 years, married with a four-year-old, working for BDZ-railway infrastructure.
10. Female, 40–45 years, designer in advertising and interiors.
11. Female, 40–45 years, with two grown up children, working in industry.

Focus group II, Gotse Delchev – 6 July 2004

1. Female, 50+, son, daughter, grandson.
2. Male, 50+, unemployed
3. Female, 30–35, working in education.



4. Female, 35–40, married, two children.
5. Male, 50+ ex-military, weapons specialist.
6. Female, 30–35, married, two children, working in a school.
7. Male, 45–50, married, two children, used to work for OCD, chief of a shooting club, now with a privately-owned company.
8. Male, 50+, unemployed, family, two children.
9. Male, 50+, family, two children and grandchildren, unemployed.
10. Female, 50–60 years, retired, two sons, grand-daughters, runs a family business.
11. Female, married, two children, cashier in a water company, brother is a police officer, father a gamekeeper.
12. Male, 25–30 years, unmarried, unemployed.

Focus group III, Kyrdzhali – 7 July 2004

Ethnic-Turkish participants from the town with either primary or secondary education, working and unemployed.

1. Male, 23 years, unmarried.
2. Female, 21 years, unmarried.
3. Female, 26 years, unmarried.
4. Female, 27 years, married.
5. Female, 35 years, married with three children.
6. Male, 36 years, married.
7. Male, 24 years, unmarried.
8. Female, 28 years, unmarried.
9. Male, 20 years, unmarried, waiter.
10. Male, 35 years, married, two children.
11. Male, 33 years, working as a security guard.

Focus group IV, Kazanlak – 8 July 2004

All the participants were ex-military officers and former employees of the Arsenal artillery plant, mostly responsible for quality assurance for the military. All held degrees in military engineering subjects. All were retired, some recently.

1. Male, 60 years, retired officer, working pensioner, one son.
2. Male, 50+, retired due to ill health, former Arsenal employee of many years.
3. Male, 60+, retired.
4. Male, 50+, former Arsenal employee, laid-off during downsizing, working elsewhere to accrue pension credits, two sons.
5. Male, 60+, retired, former head of the military presence in the factory, left the plant in July 2004. Graduated from the air force school.
6. Male, 75 years, 3 children, grandchildren, one son in the military, a former Arsenal employee of twenty two years. Hunter and environmentalist.



7. Male, 60+, worked for twenty years in the Arsenal gunpowder factory.
8. Male, retired, former deputy head of the military presence in the factory.
9. Male, 60+, family, two children, mechanical and artillery engineering graduate, previous military service in the tank brigade.
10. Male, 50+, married, three children, retired military representative.
11. Male, family, one son, retired military representative.

Focus group V, Varna – 9 July 2004

Young males and females, all with secondary school education, some graduates, most living in Varna, three temporary residents.

1. Female, 18 years, student.
2. Male, 19 years, secondary education.
3. Male, 23 years, from Vratsa. Studying administration in Blagoevgrad. Staying temporarily in Varna.
4. Female, 24 years, completed high school, specialised in economics and management.
5. Male, 18 years, from the town of Pleven, temporarily in Varna.
6. Male, 19 years, educated in woodworking at a technical school.
7. Male, 25 years, completed technical high school, studied economics.
8. Female, 24 years, student.
9. Female, 24 years, studying business as an external student.
10. Female, 24 years, employed.
11. Male, 22 years, employed.
12. Male, from Vidin, temporarily in Varna, graduate of a military school.

Focus group VI, Sofia – 12 July 2004

Ethnic Roma, males and females, 18–24 years old, resident in a Roma area in Sofia.

1. Male, 23 years, unmarried, unemployed, former military conscript.
2. Female, 21 years, unmarried.
3. Male, 24 years, former military conscript.
4. Female, 20 years, student of economics at the New Bulgarian University. Works in the legal programme of the Romini Bach Foundation, previously a teaching assistant.
5. Female, 18 years, unemployed.
6. Female, 21 years, married, one child, on maternity leave, unemployed.
7. Male, 20 years, newly married, florist.
8. Male, 20 years, brick layer.
9. Male, 20 years, unmarried, unemployed.



Annex B - Army and security service weapon holdings by type

TYPE	ROLE	QUANTITY	IN SERVICE
Mortar			
82 mm M43	Mortar	200	200
Anti-Tank Systems			
BRDM-2/'Sagger' (AT-3A)	Anti-tank missile (mounted)	10	10
9K11/9M14 (AT-3 'Sagger')	Anti-tank missile	200	200
9M111 (AT-4 'Spigot')	Anti-tank missile	200	200
RPG-7	Rocket-propelled grenade	2,500	2,500
SPG-9	Anti-tank rocket	1,000	1,000
Air -Defence Systems			
Strela-1 (SA-9)	Surface-to-air missile (SAM)	50	50
Strela-2M (SA-7)	Man-portable SAM	500	450
Strela-3 (SA-14)	Man-portable SAM	n/a	n/a
Igla-1E (SA-16)	Man-portable SAM	50	50
23 mm ZU-23-2 Twin	Light anti-aircraft gun	300	300
14.5 mm ZPU-2 Twin	Light anti-aircraft gun	100	Stored
14.5 mm ZPU-4 Quad	Light anti-aircraft gun	130	Stored
Infantry Weapons			
9 mm Makarov	Pistol	-	-
7.62 mm TT	Pistol	X	-
7.62 mm Simonov SKS	Rifle	-	-
7.62 mm AK-47M1(1)	Assault rifle	-	-
7.62 mm AKM	Assault rifle	-	-
5.45 mm AK-74	Assault rifle	-	-
7.62 mm Dragunov	Sniper rifle	-	X
9 mm Shipka	Submachine-gun	X	-
5.45 mm AKSU	Submachine-gun	X	-
7.62 mm RP-46	Light machine-gun	-	-
7.62 mm, RPK, PK	Light machine-gun	-	-
14.5 mm KPV	Heavy machine-gun (mounted)	1,473 ³⁸⁰	1,473
12.7 mm DShK	Heavy machine-gun=tank	-	-
Total Light Weaponry		6,713	6,433
Police			
9 mm Makarov	Pistol	-	-
9 mm AP	Pistol	-	-
5.45 mm	Pistol	-	-
5.45 mm AK-SU	Submachine-gun	-	-
7.62 mm AKM	Assault rifle	-	-

³⁸⁰ CSD estimate – based on the reported number of tanks recorded in the UN Register of Conventional Arms.



TYPE	ROLE	QUANTITY	IN SERVICE
7.62 mm Dragunov	Sniper rifle	-	-
Glock	Pistol	-	-
Border Guards			
9 mm Makarov	Pistol	-	-
7.62 mm AKM	Assault rifle	-	-
7.62 mm AK-47	Assault rifle	-	-
Gendarmerie			
9 mm Makarov	Pistol	-	-
5.45 mm AK-SU	Submachine-gun	-	-
7.62 mm AKM	Assault rifle	-	-
5.45 mm AK-47	Assault rifle	-	-

Table 37: Army and security services' weapons holdings by type.

Source: Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, April 2004. Note: Separate interviews with MoD officials indicate that the figures cited in the table are broadly accurate. Corrections have been made to Jane's figures wherever weapons are known to have been sold off or destroyed. 'X' = weapons no longer in service. (- = unknown).

Annex C - Ammunition surpluses

NO. BY ROW	NAME AND CALIBRE OF AMMUNITION	AS OF 01/01/2003			PROJECTED AS OF 01/01/2005		
		Units/quantity	Tonnes	%	Units/quantity	Tonnes	%
SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION							
1	9 mm Makarov cartridges	13,102,129	174		19,562,129	260	
2	5.45 AK-47 cartridges	89,176,500	1,195		90,614,400	1,214	
3	7.62 mm rounds for regular and automatic guns	17,290,000	233		17,848,000	241	
4	7,62 mm cartridges, model '43 for AK-47	90,731,760	1,942		142,590,360	3,051	
5	7,62 mm cartridges, model 908/30	89,359,518	2,636		104,577,760	3,085	
6	7.92 mm cartridges	89,200	3		92,200	3	
7	8 mm S-cartridges	2,871,780	85		2,888,000	85	
8	12.7 mm cartridges	2,382,885	407		2,778,900	474	
9	14.5 mm cartridges	5,969,752	1,564		6,671,300	1,747	
Total:		310,973,524	8,239	11.8	387,623,049	10,160	13.4
HE GRENADES AND ANTI-TANK GRENADES							
1	PG-7V round	6,453	35		6,453	35	
2	PG-7VM round	318,061	1,696		409,714	2,185	
3	F-1 h grenade	1,792,000	1,792		1,876,900	1,877	
4	RG-42 h grenade	313,100	313		420,500	421	
5	RG0-78 h grenade	913,783	685		1,156,013	867	
Total:		3,343,397	4,521	11.8	3,869,580	5,385	13.4
ANTI-TANK AMMUNITION							
1	PG-9 round	316,052	2,528		343,512	2,748	
2	OG-9VM round	155,760	1,350		168,016	1,456	
3	TOW 9M14M	1,872	56		1,872	56	
4	100 mm fragmentation rounds for MT-12 anti-tank grenade launcher	3,789	161		5,973	254	
Total:		477,473	4,095	5.9	519,373	4,514	5.9
MORTARS							
1	82 mm mortar bombs	173,913	835		220,392	1,058	
2	120 mm HE mortar bombs	146,970	6,745		164,118	4,103	
Total:		320,883	4,509	6.5	384,510	5,161	6.8

Table 38: Ammunition surpluses.

Source: Ministry of Defence, 'National Programme for Recycling and Destruction of Surplus Ammunition on the Territory of Republic of Bulgaria, Appendix 1, Sofia 2003.

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Annex D - Companies licensed to trade in arms

List of licensed companies performing foreign trade or broker in ADGT and transportation of arms (as of 20 July 2004)³⁸¹ The enclosed list of licensed companies was provided by the Interministerial Council on the Issues of Military Industrial Complex and Mobilisation Preparedness of the Country. The various types of licence are given according to the provisions in the LCFTADGT. There are full and limited licences. The Licence range is based on the List of ADGT.³⁸² Companies with a full trading, brokerage, or transport licence can trade in all arms on the *List of Arms*. Some companies can only trade in certain categories of arms and they receive a limited licence. In the table below the right-hand column provides the codes of the categories of arms, as they appear on the *List of Arms*. The categories on *List of Arms* that include SALW are CO1, CO2 and CO3. In most general terms, CO1 is small arms up to 20 mm calibre, CO2 is light weapons and artillery systems above 20 mm calibre and CO3 is ammunition for the arms included in the first two categories.

No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION
1	Arcus SM JSC, Lyaskovetz
2	Arsenal Corp. General Technical Co-operation, LLC, Sofia
3	Arsenal JSC, Kazanlak
4	Bezkontaktni Multipleksorni Verigi (Contactless Multiplex Chains) SM LLC, Sofia
5	BIG Company LLC, Sofia
6	B & R Engineering SM LLC rp. Sofia
7	Bul-Er International SM LLC, Sofia
8	Bulgarian Industrial Engineering Company SM LLC, Sofia
9	VMZ SPJSC, Sopot
10	Geracommerce SM LLC, Sofia
11	Delta-G SM LLC, Sofia
12	Defence Industry Group, Sofia
13	Dunarit JSC, Ruse
14	Emko SM LLC, Sofia
15	Inusha LLC, Sofia
16	Kintex, SM JSC, Sofia
17	Lil Tech Balkan, Sofia
18	Metalica AB, SM LLC, Sofia
19	Metalchim Holding, JSC, Sofia
20	NVS-Commerce, SM LLC, Plovdiv
21	NITI, SM JSC, Kazanlak
22	Norwood Bulgaria, LLC, Sofia
23	Snabdiavane and Targovia MO (Procurement and Trade – MoD) SM LLC, Sofia
24	Teraton, SM JSC, Sofia
25	TEREM, SM JSC, Sofia
26	Transcap LLC, Sofia
27	Trem Engineering, LLC, Sofia
28	Union Trans Service Bulgaria 2000 SM LLC, Sofia

Table 39: Companies with a full arms trading licence.

³⁸¹ Source: Interdepartmental Council on the Issues of Military Industrial Complex and Mobilisation Preparedness of the Country.

³⁸² Last updated on 31 March .03.2004 and published in *State Gazette*, No.35 from 28 April 2004.



No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION	LICENCE RANGE
1	Aviostart, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C0 10, C013, C0 14, C0 15, C023
2	ISD Bulgaria, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C010, C01 1, C013, C014, C015
3	Eichhorn & Co. SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C011, C013, C023
4	Altair Bulgaria, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C09, C010, C01 1, C012, C013, C014.. C015, C016, C017, C0 18, C0 19, C021, C022, C023
5	Armiko, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C010, C013, C0 16, C023
6	Army Consult SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C09, C0 10, C01 1, C012, C013, C0M, C015, C016, C017, C0 18, C020, C021, C022, C023
7	Armimpex LLC	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C08, C09, C010, C01 1, C012, C013, C014, C015, C016, C0 1 7, C0 1 8, C0 1 9, C022, C023
8	Armstechno LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C08, C010 C01 1 C013,C016, C018, C022, C023
9	Beretta Trading, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C013, C015, C018, C021,C023
10	Bimex LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C0S, C09, C010 C01 1, C012, C013, C014, C015, C016, C017, C0 18, C0 19, C020, C021, C022, C023
11	Bimpex, LLC, Sopot	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C010, C013, C018
12	VIA 2000 LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C07, C0S, C01 1, C013, C016, C022
13	Videx, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C07, C0S, C09, C010, C01 1, C012, C013, C014, C015, C016, C0 17, C0 18, C0 19, C020, C021
14	VIP Trading International SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C08, C0 13, C0 15, C0 18, C021,C023
15	Discovery 2003 LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C06, C09, C010, C01 1, C0 16, C023
16	Diana LLC, Stara Zagora	C0 1, C03
17	Ekslm-M, SM LLC, Kazanlak	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C0S, C09, C010, C01 1, C012, C013, C014, C015, C016, C0 1 7, C0 1 8^C02A C02 1 , C022, C023
18	Electron Consortium JSC, Sofia	C05, C07f, C09e, C01 1, C013c,d, C014, C015, C021,C022, C023
19	Electron Progress, JSC, Sofia	C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C01 1, C012, C014, C015, C017, C021,C023
20	Elsan Bulgaria, LLC, Sofia	C01,C03,C08
21	Zavod za prujini (Springs Factory) JSC, Krun	C01,C02,C03,C05
22	Khan Asparuh Aircraft Repair Plant LLC, Dobric	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C010, C01 1, C013, C014, C016, C018, C021, C022, C023
23	Yotov and Son, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C03, C06, C0S, C09, C010,C011,C022,C023
24	Cimco-op Trading Ltd., LLC, Sofia	C0S, C011,C014, C015
25	Crypto, SM LLC, Sofia	C05, C06, C09, C010, C01 1, C014, C015, C021, C022, C023

No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION	LICENCE RANGE
26	Crypto-BG, LLC, Dragoman	C0S, C06, C09, C0 1 0, C0 1 1, C0 14, C0 15, C021, C022, C023
27	Mars (Module Systems), LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C0 10, C01 1, C012, C013, C015
28	Metalchim Commerce, JSC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C09, C010, C011, C012, C016, C023
29	Mill Trade, LLC, Sofia	C0 1, C03, C0 13, C023
30	Miltech, LLC, Sofia	C04, C0S, C06, C09, C0 H, C0 13, C0 14, C0 15, C017, C018, C021, C023
31	OMZ, LLC, Sofia	C02, C05
32	Optics Co., JSC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C05, C0 15, C023
33	Politechnica, LLC, Tryavna	C02, C03, C05, C06, C010, C01 1, C013, C016, C022, C023
34	Elta-R-Chekin & Co.Co, Sofia	C01 1, C015, C017, C021, C023
35	Samel-90, JSC, Samokov	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0 1 1, C0 15, C023
36	Security Group Alfa, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C0S, C09, C0 10, C01 1, C012, C013, C014, C015, C017, C018
37	Sema Group, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C08, C0 10, C01 1, C013, C014, C023
38	Sportinvest International, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C08, C0 10, C01 1, C013, C014, C015
39	Star Force, SM LLC, Sofia	C0 1, C03
40	Stroioproect, SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C08, C010, C01 1, C0 16, C0 18, C022
41	Stroioproect Trade, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C06, C0S, C014, C016, C0 17, C0 18, C021, C022, C023
42	TET SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C0S, C06, C0S, C010, C01 1, C015, C018, C023
43	Technometal SM LLC, Sofia	C01, C03, C010
44	Centromet JSC, Vratza	C06, C09a, C09bl, C09b3, C0 16

Table 40: Companies with a limited arms trading licence.



No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION	LICENCE RANGE
1	Nuclear Power Plant Kozloduy SM JSC, Kozloduy	Cat. 0, 1,2, 3,4
2	UIG - Company, LLC, Sofia	Cat. 1 (except 1C012, 1C225, 1C233, 1C234, 1C235, 1C236, 1C237, from 1C350 to 1C354), 2 (except 2A225, 2B225, 2B350C.7, 2B350g.7), 3 (except 3A201C, 3A226, 3A227, 3A233), 4, 5, 6 (except 6A005, 6A102 and 6A205), 7, 8, 9
3	Bitova Elektronika JSCo, Veliko Turnovo	5A001.b.3; 5A001.b.7.b.2; 5A001.b.9.a; SA001.b.10
L	Brenntag Bulgaria, LLC, Sofia	1C350
c	Videx, SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 0 (except OC001 and OC002), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
6	Delta-G SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 1A004, 1A005, 1C002, 1C004, 1C011, 1C111, 1C116, 1C117, 1C202, 1C230, 1C232, 1C233, 1C234, 1C239, 2B001, 2B003, 2B004, 2B201, 1B204, 5A1, 5A101, 7A002, 7A003, 7A005, 7A006, 7A102JA103, 7A105,7A116,8
7	Crypto, SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 3 (except 3A201C, 3A226, 3A227 and 3A233), 4, 5, 6 (except 6A005, 6A102 and 6A205), 7
8	Crypto-BG, LLC, Dragoman	Cat. 3 (except 3A201C, 3A226, 3A227 and 3A233), 4, 5, 6 (except 6A005, 6A102 and 6A205), 7
9	Yotov and Son, LLC, Sofia	Cat. 1A004, 1A005, 1C002, 1C006, 1C116, 1C117, 1C2002, 2A001, 2B001, 3A001, 3A002, 3A232, 6A008, 7A005, 7A006, 7A1 16, 7B001, 9A001, 9A002
10	Zebra, JSC, Novi Iskar	Cat. 1A004A, 1A004B
11	Litasco Bulgaria Ltd., SM LLC, Sofia	1C350,t.46
12	Samel-90, JSC, Samokov	Cat. 5A1,5B1,5E1,6A
13	Snabdiavane and Targovia MO (Procurement and Trade – MoD) SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 0, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,
14	Sportinvest International, LLC, Sofia	Cat. 2A001, 2A226, 2B001, 2B003, 2B004, 2B005c,d, 2B006, 2B007, 2B008, 2B009, 2B104, 2B109, 2B1 16, 2B201, 2B204, 2B206, 2B207, 2B209, 2B225, 2B226, 2B227, 2B228, 2B230, 2B231, 2B232, 2B350,, 2E003,
15	TEREM, SM JSC, Sofia	Cat. 1A, FROM 1C001 to 1C01 1, from 1C013 to 1C233, from 1 C238 to 1 C249, 1 D, 1 E, 2A, from 2B00 1 to 2B349, 2B350.C, d, E, f, g, h, i, 2B351, 2C, 2D, 2E, 3,
16	Chimtex, LLC, Dimitrovgrad	1C350
17	Centromet, JSC, Vratza	Cat. 1C002A.2, a, b, d, E, 2B001, 2B350C1, C4, dl,d5, hi
18	Union Trans Service Bulgaria 2000 SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 1 - 1A, 1B,1C001 - 1C011, 1C101 - 1C233, 1C238 1C240, ID, IE, Cat. 2 - 2B001 - 2B232, 2B350.C, d, E, f, h, i, 2B351, 2D, 2E, Cat. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Table 41: Companies with a dual-use and technologies export licence.



No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION
1	Aviostart, LLC
2	Bright Aviation Services LLC, Sofia
3	Vega Airlines, LLC, Sofia
4	Videx, SM LLC, Sofia

Table 42: Companies with a transportation of arms licence.

No.	COMPANY NAME AND LOCATION
1	Euro Steal Holdings SA, British Virgin Islands
2	Dignia Co. Ltd., Cyprus
3	Lill Tech AS, Norway
4	Liconex Ltd, Republic of South Africa
5	Long Range Avionics Technologies, Ltd., Israel
6	Lyubomir Dimitrov Dimitrov, Sofia
7	M.D.D. Maldimex Overseas Ltd., Cyprus
8	Norwood Trading Ltd., Cyprus
9	Profus Management, Poli
10	Technical and Finance Services Ltd., Nevis

Table 43: Companies with a full arms brokerage licence.

No.	COMPANY AND LOCATION	LICENCE RANGE
1	Aheloy OMP, LLC, Sofia	C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C08, C010, C01 1, C0 12, C0 13, C0 14, C0 18, C0 19, C022, C023
2	State Enterprise Foreign Trade Company TASKO-Export, Ukraine	C02, C03, C04, C08, C016, C018, C023
3	OZOS-Praha, Czech Republic	C01a, C02A, C03, C04, C06, C07, C08A,B,C, C01, C014, C016, C017b, C023

Table 44: Companies with a limited arms brokerage licence.

No.	COMPANY	LICENCE RANGE
1	Independent Petroleum Distribution SPRL, Belgium	1C350.46
2	Intelpack SM LLC, Sofia	Cat. 7, 9

Table 45: Companies with a limited dual-use and technologies brokerage licence.





Annex E - SALW exports

Note: the data contained in Annex E and F was obtained from various sources, including a database maintained by NISAT,³⁸³ governmental arms export-import reports, the UN COMTRADE database,³⁸⁴ as well as research and media reports. The data provided is not exhaustive and cannot be so in the absence of a published comprehensive arms export-import, compiled and published by the Bulgarian Government. A small number of transfers reported in the above-named sources have not been listed because of probable inaccuracy.

Note: 'nes' = not elsewhere specified.

³⁸³ See <<http://82.199.16.4/nisat1/publicquery.aspx>>, accessed 15 October 2004.

³⁸⁴ See <<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/comtrade/default.aspx>>, accessed 15 October 2004.

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (KG)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2001	Austria	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	487,394	76,199	76,199	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Canada	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	106,586	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	18,982	70	70	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Estonia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	267,218	22,359	22,359	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	France	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	113,750	597	597	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,200,400	341,937	341,937	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	7,878	74	74	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Assault rifles	Unknown	Unknown	14,200	Delivery	Govt of FYROM ³⁸⁵	Yes
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Light machine-guns	Unknown	Unknown	130	Delivery	Govt of FYROM ³⁸⁶	Yes
2001	FYR of Macedonia	Man-portable anti-tank missiles and rockets	Unknown	Unknown	400	Delivery	Govt of FYROM ³⁸⁷	Yes
2001	Georgia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,189	433	433	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Georgia	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	5,031	62	62	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	18,805	18,398	18,398	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	8,059	199	199	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	49,252	2,000	2,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Guatemala	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	16,518	8	8	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Hungary	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	79,000	3,375	3,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Hungary	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	1,000	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	430,802	139,910	139,910	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Lithuania	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	16,940	601	601	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Poland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	634,000	8,187	8,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Saudi Arabia	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	12,356,438	65,488	65,488	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Slovakia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	38,731	2,312	2,312	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Slovakia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	2,532	2,875	2,875	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Switzerland	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	789	101	101	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Switzerland	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	274,477	3,187	3,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

³⁸⁵ MoD, 'Template for Annual Information on SALW Import', Annex C, Report for Calendar year 2001. Cited in 'A Fragile Peace, Guns and Security in Macedonia', (UNDP/SEESAC, 2004).

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (KG)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2001	Turkey	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	2,378	261	261	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United Kingdom	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,501	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	96,201	Unknown	1,934,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	7,156	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	15,258	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	93,595	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	342,736	Unknown	6,142	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	USA	Parts & accessories of Military Weapons (930590)	1,216,416	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2001	USA	Military Weapons (9301)	158,235	Unknown	187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2001	USA	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	51,294	Unknown	905	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Canada	Small arms and ammunition	71,676	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital ³⁸⁸	Yes
2002	Colombia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	2,191,896	16,500	16,500	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Croatia	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	764	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,104	7	7	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Finland	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	996	14	14	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	45,493	3,875	3,875	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	426,725	7,125	7,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	3,639	97	97	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Greece	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	10,012	7,687	7,687	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Hungary	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	537,000	39,699	39,699	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Indonesia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,260,586	13,250	13,250	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Israel	Small arms and ammunition	43,583	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2002	Italy	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	632,010	203,234	203,234	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Lithuania	Shotgun cartridges (930621)	1,510	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Lithuania	Sporting and hunting rifles (930330)	13,899	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Macedonia	Small arms and ammunition	1,683	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2002	Moldova	Small arms and ammunition	2,817	Not known	Not known	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2002	Norway	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	133,474	6,312	6,312	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

³⁸⁸ NSI/Bulgarian Customs Data, quoted in, Capital, 16–22 October 2004.

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (KG)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2002	Norway	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	2,664	24	24	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Poland	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	628,000	9,875	9,875	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Poland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	884,000	174,574	174,574	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Rep. of Korea	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	54,276	2,062	2,062	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Russian Federation	Small arms and ammunition	12,264	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2002	Slovakia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	12,507	468	468	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Slovakia	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	8,026	140	140	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Sri Lanka	Artillery weapons (eg guns, howitzers and mortars), other than self-propelled (930119)	19,260	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	19,748	1,062	1,062	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	41,701	433	433	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	95,758	4,125	4,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	8,350	31	31	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Parts and accessories of military weapons (930591)	978	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2002	Switzerland	Grenade launchers, flame throwers and other (930120)	18 826	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2002	United Kingdom	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,721	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	USA	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	53,539	Unknown	47,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	USA	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	504,342	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	USA	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	12,626	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	USA	Parts and accessories for small arms and light weapons (930599)	42 220	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2002	USA	Parts and accessories of military weapons (930591)	618 209	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2002	USA	Grenade launchers, flame throwers and other (930120)	54 938	Unknown	50	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2002	USA	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	323,643	Unknown	5,400	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	Small arms and ammunition	Unknown	Unknown	120,000	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	RPG launchers	Unknown	Unknown	27	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	Mortars (unspecified calibre)	Unknown	Unknown	8	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	Mortar Rounds	Unknown	Unknown	300	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	Machine-guns	Unknown	Unknown	8	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Afghanistan	Kalashnikovs (all models)	Unknown	Unknown	400	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (KG)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2003	Afghanistan	Grenades		Unknown	900	Delivery	AP, 21 August 2004.	Yes
2003	Algeria	Small arms and ammunition	4,642	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Austria	Small arms and ammunition	357	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Canada	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	986	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Canada	Small arms and ammunition	45,187	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Colombia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,641,039	14,375	14,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Colombia	Artillery weapons (e guns, howitzers & mortars), self-propelled (930114)	2,280	78	78	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	12,927	121	121	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Estonia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	16,805	1,500	1,500	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Estonia	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	613	1	1	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Estonia	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	675	4	4	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Estonia	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	2,676	10	10	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Finland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	36,007	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Finland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	5,466	167	167	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	FYR of Macedonia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	166,289	29,101	29,101	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	24,748	1,187	1,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	1,885	156	156	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	1,144,383	138,757	138,757	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	4,060	7	7	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	159,417	914	914	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	12,918	66	66	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Georgia	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	3,339	8	8	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	37,000	398	398	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	1,081,000	17,101	17,101	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	88,000	1,125	1,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Shotgun barrels (930521) (930521)	7,000	93	93	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Greece	Small arms and ammunition	3,484	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Hungary	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	563,000	10,812	10,812	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	355,680	80,609	80,609	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (KG)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2003	Macedonia	Small arms and ammunition	1,463	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Poland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	3,194,000	38,886	38,886	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Romania	Small arms and ammunition	1,179	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Russian Federation	Small arms and ammunition	49,501	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Serbia & Montenegro	Small arms and ammunition	811	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Slovakia	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	8,508	285	285	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Slovakia	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	16,235	171	171	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	24,628	531	531	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	5,990	66	66	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Small arms and ammunition	3,560	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Tonga	Small arms and ammunition	520	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Ukraine	Small arms and ammunition	52,882	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	3,741	304	304	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	USA	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	639,430	Unknown	2,415,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	USA	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	5,062	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	USA	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	212,199	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	USA	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	158,833	Unknown	2,400	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	USA	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	356,927	Unknown	2,500	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

Table 46: Known exports of SALW from Bulgaria (2001–2003).



Annex F - SALW imports

Note: It is unknown what proportion of the imports listed below were subsequently re-exported.

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2001	Austria	Sporting and hunting rifles (930330)	68 859	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Austria	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	178,957	1,812	1,812	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Austria	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	3,304	34	34	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Austria	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	50,523	2,437	2,437	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Austria	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	30,325	3,312	3,312	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Austria	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	28,747	3,125	3,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	China	Parts and accessories of military weapons (930590)	6 950	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2001	Croatia	Shotgun cartridges (930621)	88 617	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Cyprus	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	86,048	37,531	37,531	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep	Military weapons (9301)	2 943	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	352,771	1,812	1,812	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	30,736	257	257	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	13,638	214	214	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	6,960	29	29	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	2,794	35	35	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	78,536	39,714	39,714	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Czech Rep.	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	286,138	45,417	45,417	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Finland	Sniper rifles and accessories	2,062	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual Report	Yes
2001	Finland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	5,064	28	28	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Finland	Ammunition and blanks (all calibres)	Unknown	Unknown	400	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2001	Finland	Ammunition blanks (all calibres)	Unknown	Unknown	10 000	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2001	Finland	Arms and automatic weapons <12,7 mm + accessories	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	France	Sporting and hunting rifles (930330)	895	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	France	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	895	10	10	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	326,794	1,375	1,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	58,196	339	339	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	38,499	97	97	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	8,953	43	43	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	58,196	1,187	1,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2001	Germany	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	6,267	1,375	1,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	59,091	2,375	2,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	4,476	97	97	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Germany	Revolver and pistols, rifles for sport and hunting (0001)	1,123,392	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	Germany	Revolver and pistols, rifles for sport and hunting (0001)	1,123,392	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	Greece	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	22,720	492	492	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	134,813	378	378	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	194,630	1,250	1,250	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	4,396	85	85	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	703	6	6	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Shotgun barrels (930521)	579	4	4	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Italy	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	43,755	23,085	23,085	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Russian Fed.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	10,330	242	242	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Russian Fed.	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,600	507	507	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Russian Fed.	Sporting/hunting shotguns (930320)	2 600	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Serbia & Montenegro	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	914	1,250	1,250	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Spain	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	46,532	593	593	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Spain	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	10,143	5,062	5,062	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Spain	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	98,295	59,359	59,359	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Spain	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	11,893	5,750	5,750	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Sweden	Ammunition and parts (KS3)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual Report	No
2001	Sweden	Ammunition and parts (KS3)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2001	Sweden	Non-military ammunition (OK23)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual Report	No
2001	Sweden	Non-military ammunition (OK23)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2001	Switzerland	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	1,779	3	3	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Switzerland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	1,519	9	9	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Switzerland	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	49,819	1,250	1,250	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	Turkey	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	6,919	210	210	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United Kingdom	Sporting ammunition	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2001	United Kingdom	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	2,920	105	105	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United States	Cartridges 22 to 50 calibre	109,545	Unknown	1,062,600	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	United States	Non-military rifles	61,174	Unknown	67	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	United States	Pistols and revolver parts		Unknown	1,997	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	United States	Pistols and revolvers	660,194	Unknown	Not known	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2001	United States	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	78,748	Unknown	309	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United States	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	32,007	Unknown	142	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United States	Parts and accessories of military weapons (930590)	2,854	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2001	United States	Sporting and hunting shotguns (930320)	4,281	Unknown	35	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001	United States	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	124,757	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2001-02	United States	Cartridges 22 to 50 calibre	134,255	Unknown	2,248,000	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2001-02	United States	Pistols and revolvers	288,334	Unknown	863	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2001-02	United States	Non-military rifles	186,006	Unknown	747	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002	Austria	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	80,167	1,000	1,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Austria	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	79,554	597	597	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Austria	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	6,743	199	199	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Austria	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	228,887	10,437	10,437	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Austria	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	4,480	898	898	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Austria	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	283,770	17,699	17,699	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Croatia	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	21,367	140	140	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Cyprus	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	2,457	Unknown	1	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Cyprus	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	88,617	37,226	37,226	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	129,753	738	738	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	22,473	253	253	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	1,949	14	14	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	282,985	145,761	145,761	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	195,250	28,046	28,046	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Czech Rep.	Sporting and hunting shotguns (930320)	10,989	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2002	Finland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (9303330)	23,874	187	187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Finland	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	28,504	1,125	1,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Finland	Rifle cartridges	6924	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual Report	Yes
2002	Finland	Ammunition and blanks (all calibres)		Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2002	Finland	Ammunition and blanks (all calibres)		Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2002	Germany	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	415,891	1,812	1,812	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (9303320)	31,851	97	97	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	10,920	66	66	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	11,830	45	45	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	179,279	7,875	7,875	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	54,602	12,812	12,812	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	57,332	2,312	2,312	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	2,730	43	43	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Greece	Sporting and hunting shotguns	1,000	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Hungary	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	4,000	398	398	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Germany	Revolver and pistols, rifles for sport and hunting (0001)	203 881	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002	Germany	Ammunition (0003)	Not known	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	No
2002	Germany	Military explosives and fuel (0008)	Not known	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	No
2002	Germany	Hand arms and automatic weapons (0001)	Not known	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002	Italy	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	11,010	34	34	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	479,667	3,312	3,312	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	1,248	6	6	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Shotgun barrels (930521)	2,364	13	13	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	7,520	50	50	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	310,787	140,917	140,917	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Italy	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	88,536	19,558	19,558	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Lithuania	Small arms ammunition (930630)	6 550	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Russian Fed.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	22,376	304	304	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Russian Fed.	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,604	34	34	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2002	Russian Fed.	Sporting/hunting shotguns (930320)	66,451	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Serbia and Montenegro	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	2,274	50	50	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Serbia and Montenegro	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	980	34	34	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Serbia and Montenegro	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	38,699	5,187	5,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Spain	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	35,789	378	378	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Spain	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	100,407	52,429	52,429	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Sweden	Non-Military Ammunition (OK23)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual Report	No
2002	Switzerland	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	729	3	3	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	12,352	82	82	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Switzerland	Small arms	731	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual report	Yes
2002	Turkey	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	27,363	1,187	1,187	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	Turkey	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	3,810	17	17	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United Kingdom	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	13,887	386	386	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United Kingdom	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	53,650	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United Kingdom	SALW ammunition	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002	United States	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	93,013	Unknown	319	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United States	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	3,480	Unknown	30	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United States	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	14,271	Unknown	87,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United States	Sporting and hunting shotguns	24,774	Unknown	195	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002	United States	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	79,647	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2002 - 03	United States	Pistols and revolvers	391,862	Unknown	1,292	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002 - 03	United States	Cartridges 22 to 50 calibre	11,584	Unknown	17,000	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2002 - 03	United States	Non-military rifles	392,570	Unknown	680	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2003	Austria	Small arms and ammunition	22,954	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Austria	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	170,086	1,125	1,125	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Austria	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	10,921	199	199	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Austria	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	235,641	23,328	23,328	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Austria	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	5,876	1,000	1,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2003	Austria	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	71,806	8,500	8,500	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Belgium	Small arms and ammunition	44,523	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Bosnia Herzegovina	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	2,270,089	155,398	155,398	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Brazil	Small arms and ammunition	377	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Canada	Small arms and ammunition	312	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	China	Small arms and ammunition	23,912	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Cyprus	Small arms and ammunition	160	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Cyprus	Small arms and ammunition	53,272	Unknown	295	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	206,018	761	761	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	49,636	484	484	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	1,271	2	2	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	33,018	9,687	9,687	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Czech Rep.	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	30,485	3,062	3,062	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Finland	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	53,306	238	238	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Finland	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	9,442	50	50	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	France	Small arms and ammunition	2,794	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Germany	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	100,000	597	597	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	40,000	199	199	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	96,000	97	97	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)	3,000	9	9	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	416,000	17,300	17,300	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	60,000	13,687	13,687	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Germany	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	55,000	2,875	2,875	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	19,173	335	335	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	62,935	277	277	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Shotgun barrels (930521)	5,233	22	22	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	328,480	124,789	124,789	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	6,964	1,375	1,375	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Italy	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	747	60	60	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

YEAR	COUNTRY	COMMODITY	TRANSFER VALUE (US\$)	NET WEIGHT (kg)	QUANTITY TRANSFERRED	AUTHORISATION OR DELIVERY	SOURCE	SALW ONLY
2003	Russian Fed.	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	348,200	9,437	9,437	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Russian Fed.	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	28,391	835	835	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Slovakia	Small arms and ammunition	332	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Slovakia	Artillery weapons (eg guns, howitzers & mortars), other than self-propelled (930119)	96,393	476	476	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	No
2003	Spain	Small arms and ammunition	127,149	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	Sweden	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	620	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	4,238	6	6	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Munitions of war, ammunition/projectiles and parts (930690)	8,254	85	85	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	Switzerland	Small arms	2,903	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	Annual report	Yes
2003	Turkey	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	181,497	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	NSI/Capital	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Assault rifles and/or carbines*	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Combat shotguns	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Machine-guns*	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Mortar (unspecified calibre)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual Report	No
2003	United Kingdom	Shotguns, shotgun-rifles for sport, hunting or target (930320)	19,033	472	472	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles, nes (930529)	4,849	796	796	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Mortar (unspecified calibre)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	No
2003	United Kingdom	Submachine-guns Temporarily exported under OIELS	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2003	United Kingdom	Pistols and/or revolvers	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Authorisation	Annual report	Yes
2003	United States	Revolvers and pistols (930200)	282,199	Unknown	922	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	United States	Rifles, sporting, hunting or target-shooting, nes (930330)	37,524	Unknown	220	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	United States	Cartridges, shotgun (930621)	17,804	Unknown	37,000	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes
2003	United States	Cartridges nes, parts thereof (930630)	8,143	Unknown	Unknown	Delivery	UN COMTRADE	Yes

Table 47: Known imports of SALW into Bulgaria (2001–2003).

Annex G - Key interviewees

During the course of this research, the following individuals were interviewed on account of their professional knowledge of SALW in Bulgaria.

1. Hristo Atanasov, Head, Military Economic Co-operation and Internationally Controlled Trade Directorate, Ministry of Economy.
2. Nikolai Bachvarov, Head of Customs Intelligence, Regional Customs Directorate (Varna), Ministry of Finance.
3. Krassimi Benevski, Programme Director, United Nations Development Programme, Bulgaria.
4. Yordan Bozhilov, International Organisations & Arms Control, Ministry of Defence.
5. Lawrence Broid, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the United Kingdom.
6. Chavdar Chervenkov, former Minister of Interior.
7. Margarita Evtimova, Customs Intelligence and Investigation, Bulgarian Customs Agency, Ministry of Finance
8. Vladimir Gaidarski, Smuggling in Weapons, Hazardous Materials & Proliferation, National Service for Combating Organised Crime, Ministry of Interior.
9. Galin Genov, [former] Recorder of the Interministerial Commission for Export Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.
10. Mila Georgiva-Grozdeva, Prosecutor, Supreme Prosecutor's Office.
11. Nikolai Ibushev, General Manager, Arsenal JSc.
12. Gergana Jouleva, Executive Director, Access to Information Programme.
13. Krassimi Kanev, Chairman Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.
14. Vassil Karparchev, Bulgarian Red Cross, Kazanlak Municipal Level.
15. Alexander Kashumov, Projects, Access to Information Programme.
16. Dr Nikola Kolev, Mutliprofile University hospital for Active Treatment, Saint Marina, Varna.
17. Leon Lowder III, Second Secretary, Embassy of the United States of America.
18. Gen Nonka Matova, Member of Parliament, National Movement 'Simeon the Second'.
19. Ilia Nalbantov, State Expert, Defence Planning and Programming Directorate, Ministry of Defence.
20. Boyko Noev, former Minister of Defence (1994–1995 and 1999–2001).
21. Ana Ollson, Deputy Head of Mission, Swedish Embassy.
22. Filip Parlev, Expert, National Border Police Service, Ministry of Interior.
23. Bojidar Penchev, Military Economic Co-operation and Internationally Controlled Trade Directorate, Ministry of Economy.



24. Danail Petleshkov, Head of Division, 'Coordination, Information and Analysis', National Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior.
25. Valentin Prodanov, Bulgarian Red Cross, Varna District Level.
26. Colonel John Saville, Defence Attache, Embassy of the United Kingdom.
27. Lachezara Stoeva, Expert, Global Security and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
28. Roumen Stoyanov, National Border Police Service, Ministry of Interior.
29. Lt Col Vassil Stoykov, Liaison Officer of the Ministry of Interior to the SECI Center.
30. Jake Stratton, Head of Research, Control Risks Group.
31. Ilia Tchalev, Vice Executive Director, LILL Tech Balkan JSc.
32. Col Yonko Totevski, State Expert, International Co-operation Directorate, Ministry of Defence.
33. Nicolay Tzanev, Head, International Department, Bulgarian Red Cross.
34. Vladimir Vladimirov, Head of Department for Control over Arms Export, Military Economic Co-operation and Internationally Controlled Trade Directorate, Ministry of Economy.
35. Adrian Wilkinson, Team Leader, South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW.
36. Atsushi Yasutomi, Attaché, Embassy of Japan in Bulgaria.

Additional informal interviews were conducted with trade show representatives of the following companies:

37. NVS-Komers, representative of Izhmash JSc.
38. Zarimex Ltd.
39. Arsenal JSc.

Statisticians, on-duty police personnel, or doctors from the following hospitals were also interviewed from 24 – 29 October, 2004:

40. Regional Hospital Burgas.
41. Regional Hospital Varna.
42. Regional Hospital Stara Zagora.
43. Regional Hospital Plovdiv.
44. Regional Hospital Veliko Tarnovo.
45. Sofia Military Hospital.
46. Multi-profile Hospital for Active Treatment and Emergency Medicine, N I Pirogov, Sofia.
47. Mutli-profile University hospital for Active Treatment Saint Marina, Varna.

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**CENTER FOR
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