

# REGIONAL MEETING OF SALW COMMISSIONS

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Weapons & Explosives

The image shows a close-up, low-angle view of a building facade. The word "EUROPOL" is written in large, white, stylized capital letters on a dark blue background. The letters are slightly tilted upwards. To the left of the text is the Europol logo, which consists of a stylized orange and yellow graphic element. The building has a modern architectural style with large windows and a brick-like texture. The sky is a clear, light blue.



*“The use of violence by criminals involved in serious and organised crime in the EU appears to have been increasing in terms of the frequency of use and its severity. Criminals use violence indiscriminately and target victims without regard for their involvement or standing, often accepting harm to innocent bystanders. The threat from violent incidents has been augmented by the frequent use of firearms or explosives in public.”*

Source: Europol’s EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2021

# AP Weapons & Explosives: Threats



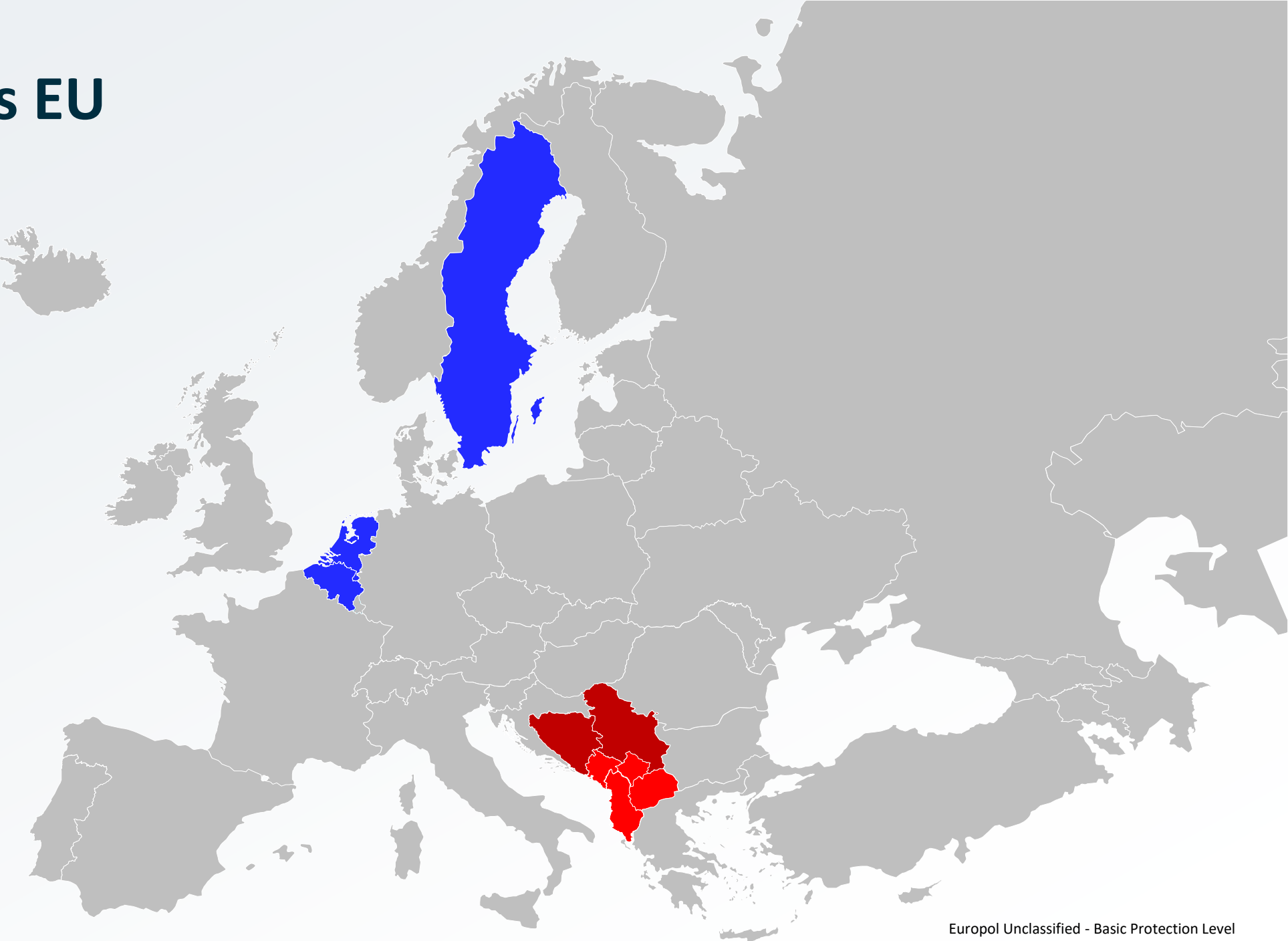
# Hand grenades EU



Main sources



Main destination





# SWEDEN



- 65% of explosives seized in SE are hand grenades
- Stockholm 2017-2021:
  - 71 hand grenades seized in 34 cases
  - 51 hand grenades detonated in 50 cases
  - 5 hand grenades detonations per 1.000.000 inhabitants per year
  - 1 killed and 3 injured innocent victims
- Use of hand grenades sows similar pattern as shootings
- Same area as shootings
- Seldom against persons
- Rather part of extortion
- Decrease during the last year (COVID?, Police investigations?.....)

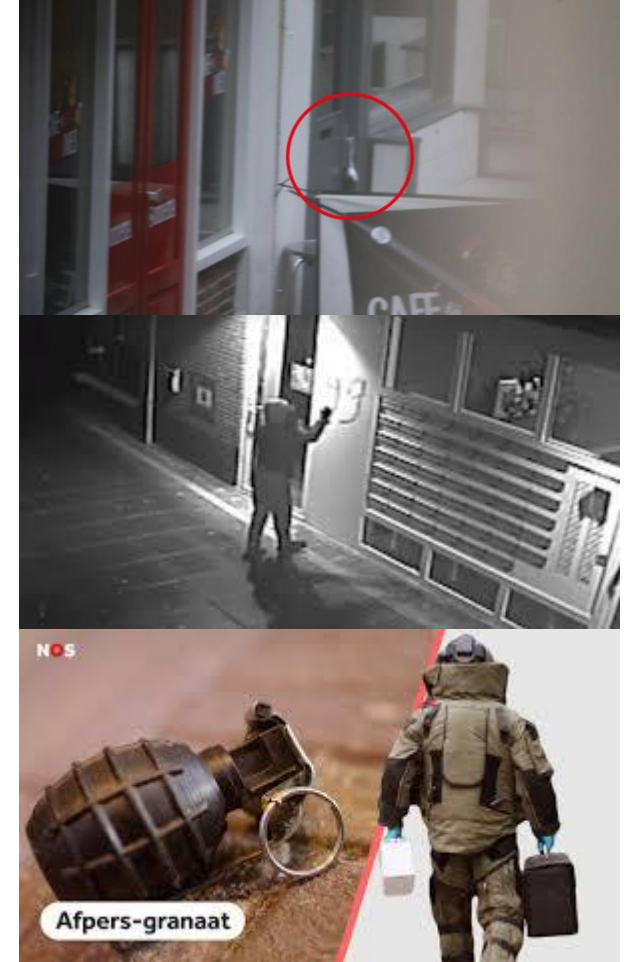




# NETHERLANDS



- Strong increase 2017-2018 (quadrupled)
- Decrease since 2020
- Direct human target is rare
- 76% an Object is target
- Extortion and threats main motives
- Mostly not detonated
- Decreasing percentage of solved cases
- Suspects exclusively men
- 81% occurred in urban areas
- M50, M52 and M75 most common
- Half of the grenades found don't work





# BELGIUM



- Increase since 2016, major peak in 2019
- 56 cases between 2010-2021 (OSINT)
- Most cases in Antwerp
- Mostly at night
- 80% an object is target
- 2% human target
- 70% of grenades are detonated
- Not much cases of threats (taped or put in front of an object)
- Decrease in detonations in 2021
- Nobody killed or wounded in BE





# Firearms in Western Balkans

- Most common destination countries DE, FR, BE and NL
- Further distribution to UK and Scandinavia
- Live firing Firearms, rocket launchers, grenades and explosives
- Multi-national OCG's and criminals
- Conversion of blank firing weapons coming from Turkey
- Overland transportation
- Often smuggled as part of multi-commodity shipments
- Relatively small numbers
- Generally hidden in vehicles

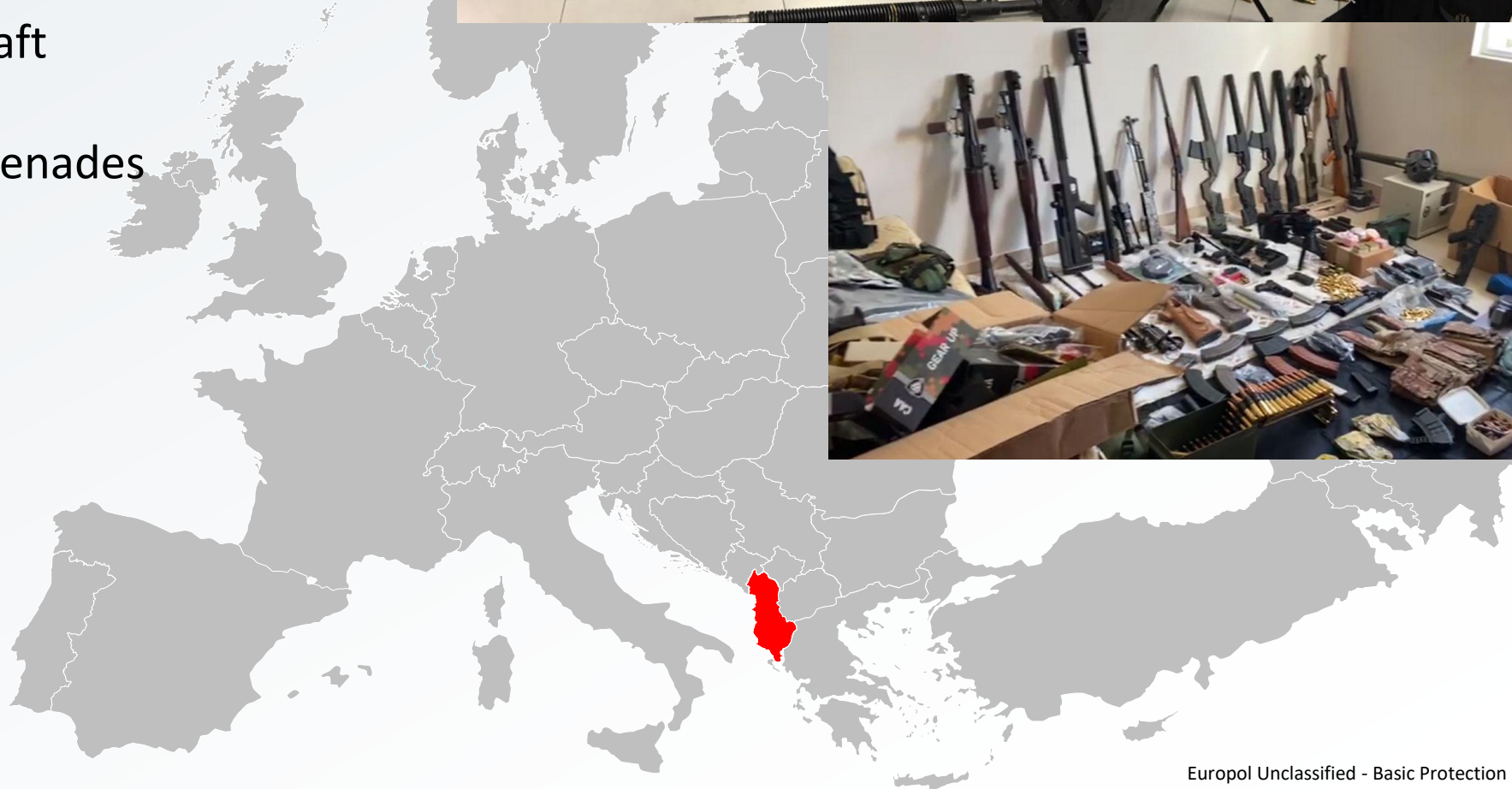
## Poly-criminality

**40 %** Of the OCGs reported for the SOCTA 2021 are involved in more than one criminal activity

**60 %** Of the OCGs reported for the SOCTA 2021 employ violence as part of their criminal businesses

# Seizure Albania – April 2021

- Operation “Kompleks”
- Multiple searches
- Over 50 automatic assault rifles
- Sniper rifles
- Anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons
- Around 100 different grenades
- Military explosives
- Military equipment
- Armoured vehicles

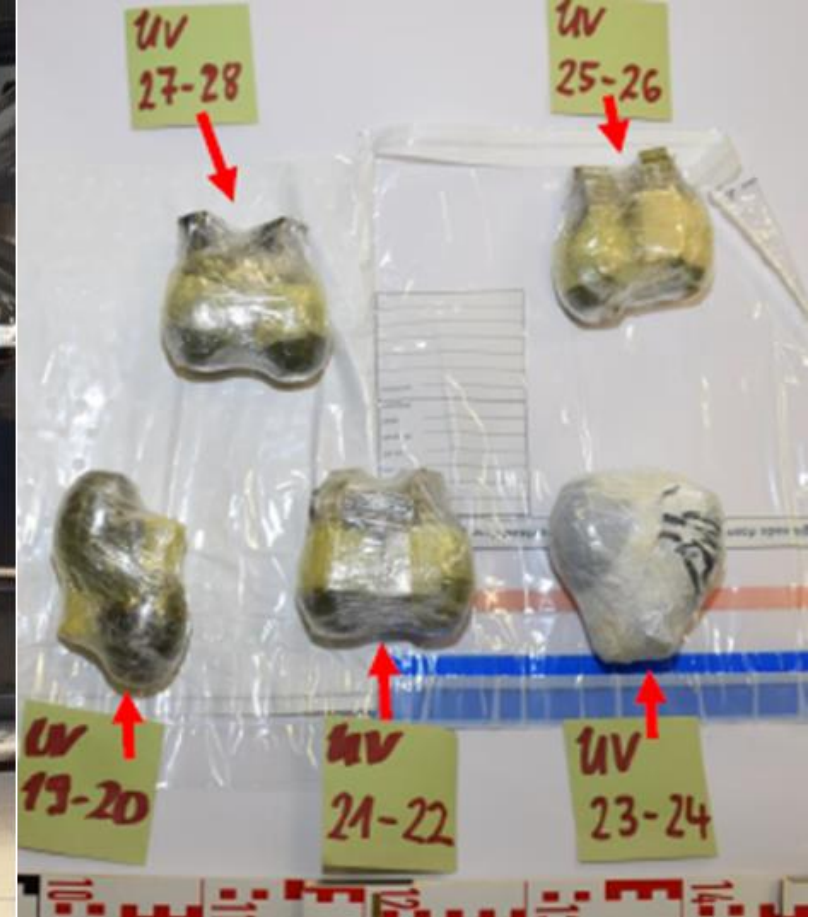




# Key points

- WB region is a key hub for weapon trafficking into the EU
- Expertise and human resources are widely available for WB weapon traffickers to safely handle, convert or build weapons
- They rely on close networks within which they inter alia collaborate with expert weapon brokers, gunsmiths, drivers or border crossers
- Weapons trade is closely connected to trafficking of drugs, specifically cocaine and in some cases serves as payment in exchange for drugs
- Weapons are a prerequisite for the criminal networks' objective of gaining or maintaining control over the lucrative drugs markets
- Weapon traffickers closely connected to the WB offer high quantities and a wide range of different firearms, including old and new military grade weapons
- Weapon prices in WB seem to increase although they are still very low compared to the prices in Western Europe
- Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the most prevalent countries of origin
- Countries of destination are important for the trafficking of drugs (BE, NL, ES)

# Concealment





# Why Hand Grenades

- Retaliation, extortion or other criminal disputes are most often used to cause damage to buildings like residences, shops, café's and shisha-lounges (SE, BE)
- Used to scare, to threat or to provoke. (NL)
- Effective tool to cause financial loss to rivals
- The grenades are placed or thrown mostly during night time

# Most common grenades

## M75

- Former Yugoslavia
- Body, explosive charge and fuse
- 36-38 grams plastic explosives
- 3000 metal balls
- Killing radius 12-18 m
- Casualty radius 30-54 m
- 3-4.4 sec delay time
- Produced in NMK as M93

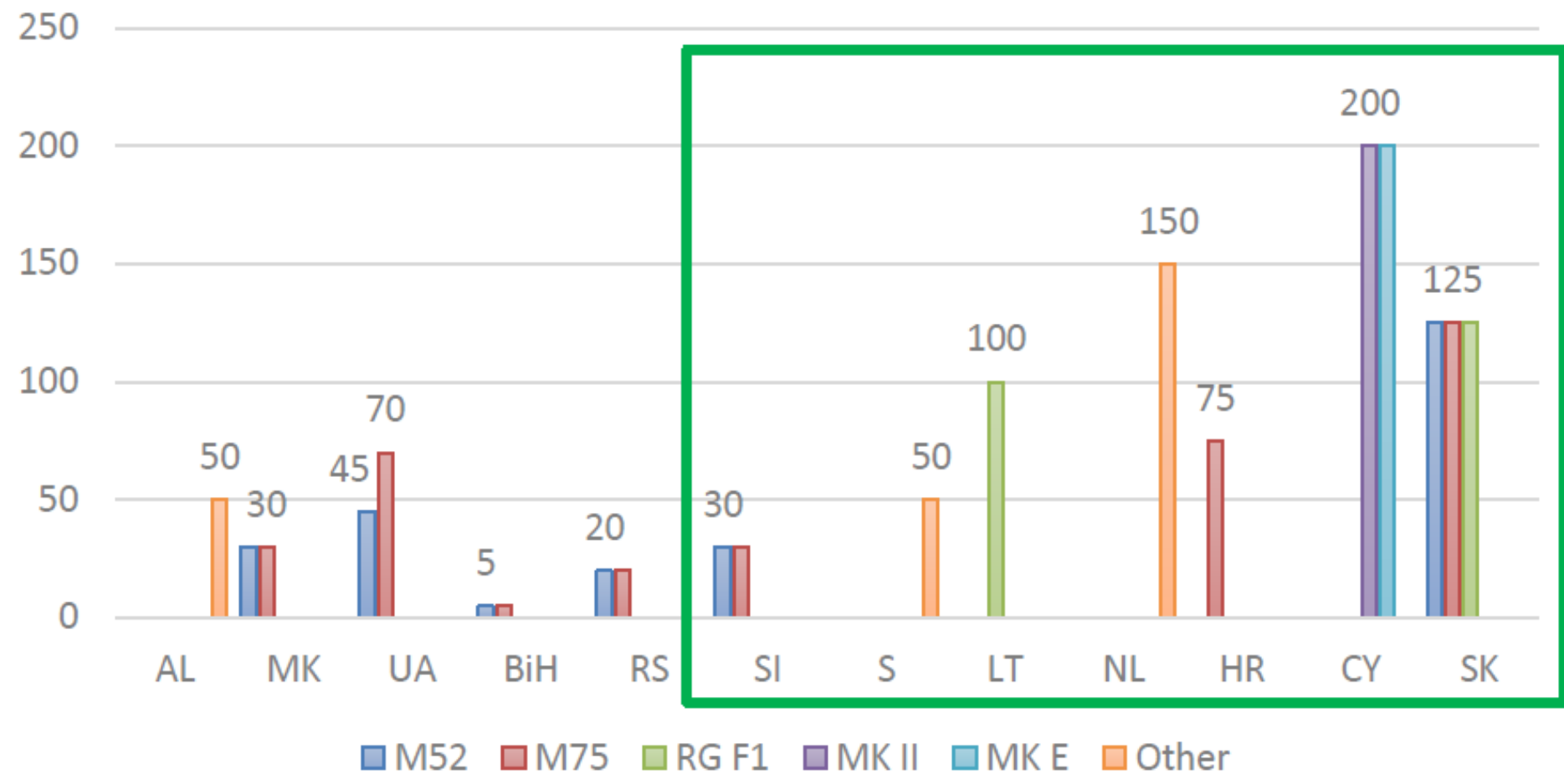


## M52

- Fragmentation
- Steel body
- TNT filler
- Effective radius of 15 m
- 3.5-4.5 sec delay time

# HAND GRENADES. PRICES (AVERAGE) ON CRIMINAL MARKETS BY COUNTRY

## Hand grenades, EUR



The use of hand grenades is on rise in several EU countries. Their prices (Annex V) are particularly low in Western Balkans (€5 in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and neighbouring EU MS (€30 in Slovenia), while the price achieve €125-150 in Western Europe and €200 in Cyprus.



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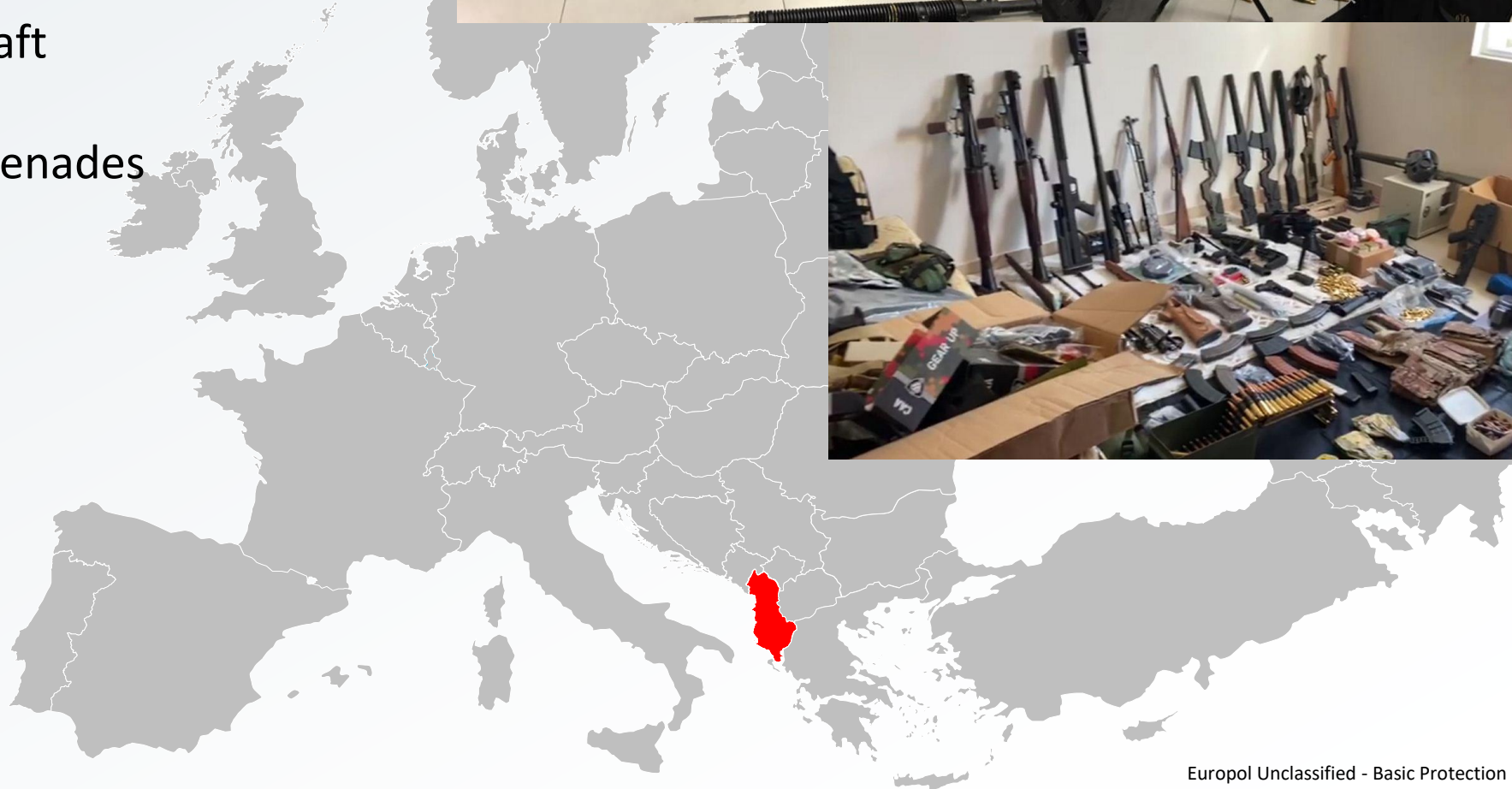
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# CONCLUSION

- WB remains one of the main sources of hand grenades seized in EU
- Huge increase around 2018
- Decrease in 2020/2021
- Mostly linked to organised crime, drugs scene
- Mostly targeting objects
- Used to give a warning, threat, retaliation, extortion
- M52 and M75 most common grenades
- NL, SE and BE seem to have the biggest problems in the EU
  - Possibly linked to the drug trafficking organisations established in those countries

# Opportunities and way Forward

- Collection of info about Hand grenades
  - Type, lot-numbers, seizure background, DNA/fingerprints
- Identification of sources – WB / Other potential sources
- Identification of individuals smuggling Hand grenades
  - DNA examination and tracing to identify the perpetrators involved
  - Coordinated Police investigation in different MS
- Identification of individuals/OCG purchasing hand grenades
- Mapping seizures for further analysis
- Disruption of the supply of hand grenades
- OTF, Joint Action Days, JIT etc

Thank you for your  
attention

Any  
questions?

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