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Presentation title: The guns of public mass shootings in Europe

Public mass shootings (PMS) are shooting incidents where one or more perpetrator uses one or more firearms to kill at least four individuals (excluding the possible death of the perpetrator) in a public place, a relatively short span of time and a relatively confined locale. PMS have been studied in-depth in the context of the United States, but research focused on Europe is comparatively scarce. Based on a media-analysis, our research located 41 PMS that have occurred since 2000 in the 34 countries under investigation (27 EU member states, the UK, and six countries of the West-Balkans). We have divided these according to their dominant contexts, namely domestic violence, crime, terrorism, school shootings, intoxication and/or mental illness, and other PMS. In this paper, we focus the discussion of PMS on the firearms that are used. Based on the context, we discuss whether the firearm is acquired legally or illegally, how it is acquired and what type of firearm is used. We connect these elements to the number and kinds of victims. We note certain nomological patterns emerging with respect to the context and firearm acquisition and use. This highlights the fact that firearms are used very differently in different contexts, which was one of the main findings of Project TARGET. We finish this paper with a number of reflections on information-gathering when it comes to gun violence.