



The revision of the European Union Firearms Directive 1991 which was already underway, the EU having stated its intention last year, has been brought forward, even rushed forward in response to the ongoing terrorism threat in France. The proposals put forward whilst stating that they are to curtail the activities of terrorism and illegality are most likely to have limited effect given the simple fact that at pan European or national level terrorism and criminality and those who pursue it have already considered their stance and ignoring the law is a minor consideration, which reduces any law to a loose deterrent at best, what it does do in most cases and certainly in this case is impact greatly on the privileges of the law abiding and sensible people who wish to remain a peaceful and productive member of normal society. This directive, whilst its aims are laudable is a case in point.

Firearms UK will always support initiatives from European Commission or National Governments against terrorism, the control of firearms, justifiable, proportionate restrictions for their acquisition, possession and use plus measured initiatives to enhance public safety but some measures contained with this proposal fall far short of any of those tests to legitimacy.

Authority must strike a very fine balance between the need to protect people and the more important need to protect individual rights and freedoms in some EU states and their corresponding privileges in others. Together the European wide and national shooting organisations have reacted to this announcement almost as one voice agreeing that the need to limit some and their intent is desirable but these proposals appear to be aimed not at terrorism, more couched in opportunism against the most tightly controlled and law abiding members of any EU country, Firearms owners and users.

Firearms UK accept that greater traceability of firearms is desirable, a condition long applied in the UK, common deactivation standards make life easier for dealers and collectors alike, the exchange of information between member states licensing authorities eases the movement of legally held firearms across Europe and aids freedom within sporting activities, all very sensible and reasonably proportioned measures but what is the proportion of deactivated firearms reactivated for terrorist or criminal use within the EU, does anyone know? It only remains to be said that many of the proposals are not measured and proportionate they are a thinly veiled attack on the law abiding shooting communities of Europe who have played no part in the ongoing terror threat.

Just as a law to manage firearms ownership does not apply to those operating outside that law similarly the proposals for medical checks is not going to apply, a terrorist applying for a medical check, like a firearms certificate, is a most unlikely scenario, if it were not so serious it would be funny to suggest so. It should remain the choice of member states to determine need or desirability.

Firearms UK reject completely the inclusion of semi-automatic firearms that "resemble" automatic firearms in the prohibited category. Ask yourself where that description ends and to whom it applies, that the cosmetic appearance of a firearm can determine the intent of the user, who is the next target for this restriction, wooden stocked semi-auto's, high capacity magazine fed bolt action rifles, it never ends, if shooters accept this restriction without loudly vocalising their objection nothing is safe and no



one's shooting choice is safe. It also raises once again the possibility of confiscation without compensation.

The restriction proposed in respect of internet trading and distance communication should perhaps be targeted toward the 'Dark Net' where the sale and exchange of illegal firearms is taking place, not attack the EU's own principles of open co-operation and free trading for no gain, it may be the case that internet sales between individual's is possible in some EU states but not in the UK without the intervention of licensing authority, we closed that avenue a long time ago, perhaps the Commission can take a lead from the UK in this area?

Some of these proposals have a legitimate place in the national need to control the acquisition and use of Firearms, measures to restrict such by terror or criminal elements but the proposal as presented go far beyond any notion of targeting illegality, they represent a deliberate attempt to limit firearms ownership by the introduction of ever more restrictive measures by salami tactics, one small slice at a time, thus hiding the overall intent, the disarmament of the law abiding peoples of Europe.

Firearms UK is completely opposed to any further proposals that make it even more difficult for law abiding citizens to own or use firearms, especially when such amendments appear based on subjective argument not fact. We believe the European Commission should focus on the use of illegal firearms by criminals and at introducing changes in the laws that would result in providing both a deterrent to criminals/terrorists as well as having a practical effect of making law abiding European citizens safer.

We will work with our partners and other likeminded organisations throughout Europe to fight these proposals. The UK Shooting Community has been on the receiving end of knee-jerk and totally disproportionate legislation before. Enough is enough, it is time to unite, standup and be proud of being a law abiding, safe and responsible gun owner and user.