



PRESS RELEASE

FACE: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR HUNTING & CONSERVATION

Semi-automatic firearms are not particularly dangerous, admits the Commission

Replying to a parliamentary question¹, Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska, recognised that the only semi-automatic firearms posing a threat to security are automatic firearms transformed into semi-automatic firearms due to the fact that they can be reconverted into automatic firearms by criminals.

July 4th, 2016, Brussels - In the discussion on the revision of the Firearms Directive, the European Commission clarified that the threat to security is posed by automatic firearms inappropriately converted into semi-automatic firearms.

In its reply to MEP Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL), the Commission explained that it had “carried out a thorough evaluation of the Firearms Directive in 2014. [...] The study highlighted the fact that certain semi-automatic firearms, notably automatic firearms transformed into semi-automatic firearms, are particularly dangerous since these are weapons that can be easily converted into military arms.”

FACE welcomes this clarification noting that semi-automatic rifles are commonly utilised by hunters and sport shooters and that their criminalisation would represent an unjustified measure with no effect in terms of security, as terrorists and criminals source their weapons from the illegal market. Against a backdrop of terrorist attacks and widespread concern for the safety of citizens, FACE notes that in spite of the studies mentioned by the Commission, no impact assessment has been presented by the European Commission justifying the proposed measures.

“The Commission itself has identified the risk of inappropriately converted automatic firearms”, commented Filippo Segato, Secretary General of FACE. “The loophole is represented by those military weapons that are converted in such a way that they can be modified by criminals and terrorists to full automatic function again. This problem can be solved by avoiding the introduction in the market of inappropriately converted firearms, not by stigmatising semi-automatic rifles originally manufactured for hunting and sport shooting”.

FACE therefore welcomes the amendments proposed by the Rapporteur of the Directive Mrs. Vicky Ford seeking to redress this anomaly and reinstating semi-automatic rifles in the category of authorised firearms. In addition Mrs. Ford wisely proposed to solve the problem of improperly converted fully automatic firearms by tabling an amendment that would make these conversions irreversible according to strict technical regulations.

FACE defends semi-automatic rifles arguing that the prohibition of certain subcategories of legally owned semi-automatic firearms, based on the argument that they would be “more dangerous” than others, is not backed by any statistic. With the proposed amendments in relation to the deactivation and conversion of firearms (which have been reactivated/reconverted to fully automatic firearms by criminals and used in terrorist attacks), the loopholes in the current legal framework have been adequately closed. Additional prohibitions do not serve any safety purpose but only unnecessarily restrict certain hunters and sport shooters.

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2016-002179&language=EN>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

FACE is the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation. Established in 1977, **FACE represents the interests of Europe's 7 million hunters** as an international non-profit-making nongovernmental organisation. FACE is made up of national hunters' associations from 35 European countries including the EU-28. FACE is supported by 7 associate members and is based in Brussels.

FACE is the largest democratically representative body for hunters in the world, with elections for its statutory bodies taking place every three years. Each country represented within FACE receives one vote.

FACE upholds the principle of sustainable use, has been a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1987, and more recently of Wetlands International. FACE works with its partners on a range of hunting-related issues, from international conservation agreements to local implementations with the aim of sustaining hunting across Europe.

More on www.face.eu.

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