



# NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

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## Letter to Members of the European Parliament

### EU Commission Proposals on Weapons Control

We understand the recent EU Draft Directive will be introduced to MEPs in December and voted on by the European Parliament in January. If enacted, some of the proposed measures would have severe consequences for the law abiding shooting sports, trade and collecting communities. Terrorists do not obtain firearms through normal licensed channels and the proposed EU restrictions will do almost nothing to reduce the quantity of firearms available to those with criminal intent.

Shooting is a major sport worth £2 billion to the UK economy, funds 74,000 full time jobs and is enjoyed by over a million active participants. Furthermore the UK is recognised as already having some of the toughest firearms laws in the world.

Of particular concern to the NRA is the **proposed ban on military style semi-automatic firearms**. In the UK we are limited to semi-automatic small bore .22" rimfire rifles; these fire relatively low energy ammunition (approximately the same as a cricket ball delivered by a competent bowler) and are very popular in target shooting, particularly with young shooters. The appearance of a firearm does not make it any more lethal. As is the case with all rifles, semi-automatic shotguns and .22" rimfire rifles are very rarely used for criminal purpose and we see no good case for prohibiting them on the grounds that they could be considered to resemble something they are not.

The proposals also include **greater restrictions on Firearms Collectors** – collecting firearms is a passion enjoyed by many and there is no published evidence that demonstrates the need for greater restrictions - it is iniquitous to legislate merely on the possibility that collecting might cause a problem; and **ban on possession of deactivated fully automatic firearms by other than authorised museums** – it is estimated that 230,000 firearms have been deactivated in the UK since 1988; they are non-functional and non-lethal and thus unlicensed - to confiscate them would demand substantial police resources and lead to substantial compensation claims payable by the British Government.

There are additional unnecessary proposals for Firearms Certificates to be limited to a maximum five years duration (rather than a more sensible ten); sound moderators to be controlled as an 'essential component' (moderators are widely used in stalking and vermin control and restrictions on them should be relaxed, not increased); registration of deactivated firearms (harmless items, the numbers and locations of which are unknown); and ban / restriction of disguised firearms (mainly Victorian walking stick shotguns, for which there is no record of criminal misuse).

The proposed measures, if unchanged, will have significant adverse consequences on the shooting sports, trade and collecting communities.

Along with all decent people the shooting community was horrified at the attacks in Paris; however the EU proposals will have minimal effect on improving the protection of the public, will misdirect scarce police resources and risk being viewed as no more than gesture politics. The EU should focus resources on reducing the pool of stockpiled but inadequately secured small arms from which we understand many terrorist arms are sourced.

Millions of decent EU citizens choose shooting as their leisure activity and sport; these attempts to restrict their enjoyment of certain firearms are akin to denying chefs their carving knives in an attempt to reduce knife crime.

The NRA urges you to scrutinise these proposals with great care; please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further details.

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