

Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside”

Strasbourg, 15 March 2017

Press release

Safe and fair gun law

European Parliament votes on firearms directive

Yesterday, the European Parliament has approved the revision of the EU directive on the Control of the Acquisition and Possession of Weapons. Karl-Heinz Florenz, President of the parliamentary Intergroup *Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside* explains: “The main goal we wanted to achieve during the negotiations between the Commission, the Parliament and the Council was to ensure safe and fair provisions on firearms that would not adversely affect hunters and sport shooters. The Parliament was able to change some excessive demands of the initial Commission proposal such as standardised obligatory medical tests, while still closing some dangerous loopholes in the existing legislation. Therefore I highly welcome the outcome of yesterday's final vote on this matter.”

In detail:

- Semi-automatic firearms remain in category B unless the magazine capacity exceeds 20 rounds for short firearms or 10 rounds for long firearms. Firearms with magazines exceeding these limits now fall into category A7 and are no longer allowed. However sport shooters, collectors, re-enactors and other groups can receive an authorisation to purchase category A weapons if they can demonstrate a legitimate need for such equipment (e.g. practicing for or participating in shooting competitions).
- Automatic firearms that have been converted into semi-automatic firearms (category A6) are no longer allowed. The conditions for category A authorisations apply.
- In the future, the purchase of high capacity magazines will only be possible with a category A authorisation. However the possession of high capacity magazines is not prohibited as long as they are not inserted into a firearm.
- The technical requirements for the deactivation of firearms will be standardised in the EU. Deactivated firearms will be categorised in category C (Firearms subject to declaration).
- Salute and acoustic firearms will remain in their original category if they have been converted from any working firearm into blank firing.
- The trade with firearms via distance contracts remains possible for private persons, as long as the identity of the buyer and his authorization to purchase is verified beyond doubt.
- The EU Member States will be given 15 months for the transposition of this directive into national law. The new legislation will not come into force retroactively. Legitimate owners of firearms of any category will not be dispossessed or criminalised for any purchase made before the entry into force of this directive. Legitimate owners will continue to be able to legally own and use their firearms, including the sale to other people with a corresponding authorisation.

Overview of firearms categories

- Category A - Prohibited firearms
- Category B - Firearms subject to authorisation
- Category C - Firearms subject to declaration
- Category D - Other firearms

Next steps:

After the approval in plenary by the European Parliament on 14 March 2017, the Council still needs to formally adopt the directive.

For any questions or interviews, please contact

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