

BULGARIA

In principle Bulgaria supports the EC proposal for amendments of the Council Directive 91/477 on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons.

In our national legislation we have introduced criteria stricter than these foreseen in Directive 91/477, namely: Category A — Prohibited firearms, and all other categories are made equal to Category B, i.e. subject to authorisation, including weapons possessed by collectors. According to the national legislation weapons other than firearms are subject of registration.

We support the idea for harmonization of the standards and rules for deactivating of firearms and we think that stress should be put on the irreversibility of the process of deactivation rather than on the following tracing and observation.

We consider that the sale of weapons on the internet should be absolutely prohibited.

We have the following concrete notes regarding the proposed amendments of the directive:

1. We have reservations regarding the recategorization of the semi-automatic firearms. The most of the hunting and short barrel weapons are of this category of firearms and adding the semi-automatic firearms to the Category A — “Prohibited firearms” would have significant economic effect, which of its side would lead to increasing of the illegal weapons. We consider that when an effective control over this type of weapons is exercised by the competent authorities (regarding the weapon itself – marking, as well as regarding the brokers and persons who acquire and possess semi-automatic firearms) its prohibition it’s not necessary.

In Bulgaria there is an electronic register (EAR KOS) established, since 01.11.2013, on the base of the Dutch system VERONA, and the data-base is established on the base of ORACLE. EAR KOS is an web-based application, by using which control is exercised on the production, trade, storage, carrying, use and transportation of weapons, ammunition, explosives and pyrotechnic articles of persons and legal entities.

Through it, in real time, could be done check for the ownership of any weapon, registered in the data-base, as well as to trace the change of its ownership. It is possible to make all kind of checks regarding the activities with weapons, ammunition, explosives and pyrotechnic articles, including the history of the whole life cycle of the particular piece of weapon.

2. We think that the 3-month period for the transposition of the directive could be insufficient because of the internal legal procedures needed for the implementation of the requirements of the directive into the national legislation. We propose to consider the possibility of prolonging the term, for example for 6 months.
3. We agree that the interconnection and the integration of the national systems for exchange of information will lead to better tracing of the firearms but when discussing the idea it should be taken into account that this will lead to significant financial implications.

In conclusion we would like to note that the focus should be on illegal weapons because most crimes are committed with illegal weapons, not with legally owned.