



## OPEN LETTER FROM LEX - CZECH GUN RIGHTS PROTECTION ASSOCIATION TO GUN RIGHTS SUPPORTERS ACROSS EUROPE

Dear colleagues,

Since I am writing to you from The Czech Republic, allow me to introduce our country first. In our republic, the ownership and carrying of firearms is truly legitimate, guaranteed by law to any adult, legally competent and law-abiding person. Firearms license is shall-issue (anyone who fulfills the given requirements of the law has legal right to get it). Permit to own B - category firearm is shall-issue, as well as permit for concealed carry. We own handguns, we use them for sport shooting and carry them for personal protection. We own semiautomatic rifles of military patterns, we shoot them in various sport competitions, and we practice with them in case that our beloved country needs its citizens to be prepared for its defense. Our hunting tradition reaches well over a millenium into our history, and our sport shooters rarely return from the Olympic Games without any medals.

Our country is also the 10th most safe country in the world (according to Global Peace Index), our violent crime rate is low (160/100 000) and our gun crime is negligible (5.8 / 100 000). Along with Switzerland, whose tradition of liberty, democracy and independence we hold in high regard, our republic stands as example that everything that is needed for a country to be armed, peaceful and free, is the strong determination of its people to not to let anyone to take these values away.

I'm sure that you're aware of the current situation. In reaction to the Paris terror attacks, committed with already banned automatic rifles (and definitely illegal explosives), the European Commission wants to pretend its ability to protect the citizens of the European states by restricting legally owned firearms.

Among the proposed restrictions are:

- **ban on self-loading firearms which resemble automatic weapons** - ban on firearms which were not used at all in the Paris attack, but are important for national defense of many states
- **automatic firearms and semiautomatic firearms which resemble automatic weapons would be banned even after deactivation** - all collections would be outlawed, the only exception would be museums, but they would be further required to irreversibly deactivate their exhibits, thereby permanently damaging their historic and cultural value
- **all other deactivated firearms, along with gas guns, alarm guns, paintball and airsoft replicas etc. shall be moved into category C - firearms subject to registration**
- the Commission expects member states to actually enforce its order - e.g., seize, confiscate and destroy all newly prohibited firearms - yet expects no impact on the EU budget, which means that either **Member states would be forced to pay all compensation for the seized property**, or there will be **confiscation without any compensation**.

I would like to have a word with hunters and Olympic discipline shooters here. In the words of the European Commission itself, *"we are proposing to ban the acquisition of the most dangerous semi-automatic weapons by private persons. The remaining semi-automatic firearms used for hunting or sport shooting can still be owned by private persons subject to authorisation."* In other words, the Commission wants you to say *"Phew, what luck - they're not coming for OUR guns!"*

Remember that this is exactly how the current draconian gun laws in England started in 1987: ban on possession of semiautomatic military-style rifles, because *"it's not a sporting gun, it's not a hunting gun, no one needs it"*. I believe that this example (and many others follow) illustrates precisely how those politically incorrect black rifles actually create a buffer zone before a ban on your hunting or sporting rifle and pistol - once the black rifles are gone, YOU are next. But first and foremost, I believe that hunters and sportsmen are honorable and fair people, who respect and are willing to stand for the rights of others – not just some quislings who are willing to throw others to the wolves, as the Commission wants them to be.

None of above mentioned restrictions would have prevented the Paris massacres. However, there actually **is** one loophole in the European Firearms Directive, a loophole that allowed the terrorist to acquire firearms which are already banned for private citizens. The European Commission claims that the firearms used during the Paris massacres were not bought as legal automatic, or even semiautomatic firearms, nor were they smuggled from outside of the EU. According to the Commission, they were bought as deactivated firearms, and due to poor deactivation standards, the terrorists easily re-activated them back to their original condition. This is, however, contrary to the European Firearms Directive: it states clearly that deactivated firearm must be **irreversibly** processed into inoperative condition. Member states were supposed to implement methods for fulfilling this directive; and to prevent exactly this situation, where a certain state decides that driving two pins through the barrel is enough - which obviously is not – the Firearms Directive ordered that common minimal guidelines for the deactivating process shall be issued in order to ensure that deactivated firearm will be rendered irreversibly inoperable. And the body whose responsibility was to issue these common guidelines and to oversee their implementation was ... the **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**.

Yes, you're reading right. Look for yourself - DIRECTIVE 2008/51/EC, Article 1/13, states: *"The Commission shall, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 13a (2) of the Directive, issue common guidelines on deactivation standards and techniques to ensure that deactivated firearms are rendered irreversibly inoperable."* Next paragraph states: *"Member States shall, by 28 July 2010, bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive. They shall forthwith communicate to the Commission the text of those measures."* That means that the Commission has been aware of the problem at least for **five years**, and **did nothing**. It was last week when the Commission hastily issued these guidelines, bragging that it will prevent another massacre – and hoping that people will overlook the fact that **even the Paris massacres could be prevented if the Commission hadn't knowingly neglected its legally binding duty for more than five years**.

As far as we know, the Commission is determined to proceed with all of its plans at all costs, in shortest possible time. If we want to stop these plans, we need every voice. What you can do?

- **Contact your Minister of Interior and Minister of Justice**, and ask them to file reservation about the Directive, which would be based on the fact that only harmonization of deactivation standards will have some positive security impact, while the rest is just infringing on law-abiding citizens' rights.
- **Contact your Members of the European Parliament** and ask them to oppose this Directive for aforementioned reasons.
- **Join your national gun rights association**. Remember that to support this important civil right, you don't have to actually be gun owner.
- **Should the Directive proposal be passed anyway, be prepared to disobey it**. Yes. If the Commission wants to punish law-abiding citizens not only for the terrorist attacks and crimes, but also for its own negligence, incompetence and failure to follow its legal duties, we have every right to stop being law-abiding and say calmly, but firmly "NO". We are neither criminals nor terrorists. We are honest folks who keep weapons for protection of our lives, lives of our loved ones, and for defense of our countries. We have moral right to disobey and resist such acts of injustice. I believe that if we stand united against this bureaucratic pressure, we shall prevail in the end.

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