

Council agrees negotiating position to strengthen control of firearms

On 10 June 2016, the Council agreed its negotiating position on the proposal for a directive on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons

which reviews and completes existing directive 91/477/EEC. On the basis of this mandate, the presidency will start negotiations with the European Parliament as soon as the latter has adopted its position.

Ard van Der Steur, Minister for Security and Justice of the Netherlands and President of the Council said: "After the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers asked for a swift adoption of the directive. With this new directive the Netherlands Presidency has achieved a just and fair balance between an internal market for allowed firearms on the one hand and enhancing the security of EU citizens on the other."

The revised directive aims at addressing certain weaknesses in the existing legislation that have been identified especially in the aftermath of the series of terrorists attacks that took place in Europe. The amendments which address risks for public safety and security focus on:

- improved control of the traffic in firearms;
- enhanced traceability of firearms;
- measures on deactivation and reactivation or conversion of firearms;
- stricter rules for the acquisition and possession of the most dangerous firearms;
- banning civilian use of the most dangerous firearms;
- improving the exchange of relevant information between member states.

The directive sets out minimum rules and does not prevent member states from adopting and applying stricter rules.

Background

Council directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons was originally designed as a measure to balance internal market objectives and security imperatives regarding "civil" firearms.

The amending proposal was submitted by the European Commission on 18 November 2015 against the backdrop of a series of terrorist acts that took place in Europe and which brought to light gaps in the implementation of the directive. The current review is a continuation of the 2008 revision and also aligns EU legislation with the provisions on the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms.

[Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons - General approach](#)