



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

Dear colleagues,

Since I write to you from Czech Republic, allow me to introduce our country first. In our republic, ownership and carrying of firearms is truly right, guaranteed by law for any adult, legally competent and law-abiding person. Firearms license is shall-issue (anyone who fulfills 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 for the case that our beloved country would need 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 Olympic Games without any medals.

Our country is also 10th most safe country in the world (according to Global Peace Index), our violent crime is low (160/100 000) and our gun crime is negligent (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 strong determination of its people to not let anyone to take these values away.

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

Among proposed restrictions are:

- **ban on self-loading firearms which resemble automatic weapons** - ban on firearms which were not used at all in 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, only exception would be museums which would be required to irreversibly deactivate their exhibits, thereby permanently damaging its 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 declaration**
- 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 seized property**, or there will be **confiscation without any compensation**.

I would like to have a word to 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 a luck - they're not coming for OUR guns!"*

Remember that this is exactly how current draconian gun laws in England started in 1987: ban on possession of semiautomatic rifles with military outlook, 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) illustrates precisely how those politically incorrect black rifles actually create a buffer zone before a ban of your hunting or sporting rifle and pistol - once they're 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 rights of others – not quislings willing to throw others to the wolves, as the Commission wants them to be.

None of above mentioned restrictions would have prevented Paris massacres. However, there actually **is** one loophole in the European Firearms Directive, a loophole that allowed terrorist to acquire firearms which are already banned for citizens. European Commission claims that firearms used in Paris massacres were not bought as legal automatic, or even semiautomatic firearms, nor were they smuggled from outside of the. According to Commission, they were bought as deactivated firearms, and due to poor deactivation standards, terrorists easily re-activated them back to 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 condition; 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 deactivating process shall be issued, that 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 knew about the problem at least for **five years**, and **did nothing**. It was last week when the Commission in hurry issued these guidelines, bragging that it will prevent another massacre – and hoping that people will overlook the fact that **even Paris massacres could be prevented if the Commission didn't knowingly neglect 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 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 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 terrorists' 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 civil but firm **NO**. We are not 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 this injustice. I believe that if we stand united against this bureaucratic pressure, we shall prevail in the end.

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