



PRESS RELEASE

FACE: EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS FOR HUNTING & CONSERVATION

MEPs defend the rights of hunters in the debate over the revision of the EU Firearms Directive

As the political debate around the revision of the Firearms Directive is about to enter its most heated phase, 110 Members of the parliamentary Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” position themselves in favour of hunters and the legitimate and responsible use of firearms.

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels 21.4.2016 – One hundred and ten Members of the European Parliament from across the political spectrum belonging to the parliamentary Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside” have adopted a resolution which seeks to redress a number of unjustified amendments proposed by the European Commission limiting the legal acquisition and ownership of firearms by hunters and sport shooters. MEPs highlight areas that need particular attention such as the ban of certain semi-automatic rifles, medical tests, minimum age, time limited validity of licences, and online sales.

The Intergroup also applauds the European Commission for proposing measures increasing the traceability of firearms and improving cross-border exchange of information amongst law enforcement agencies.

Commenting the resolution MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz, President of the Intergroup Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside said: “The registered firearms owned by hunters and sport shooters were never the problem. The real danger is due to illegal weapons possession, which must be urgently tackled”.

Most MEPs shared Mr Florenz’ view during yesterday’s meeting of the IMCO Committee (Internal Market and Consumer Protection) where they welcomed Mrs Ford’s amendments to the proposal of the European Commission, considering her draft report an excellent basis for the committee’s work on revising the EU firearms directive.

Filippo Segato, Secretary General of FACE stated: “Mrs Ford’s work deserves to be commended for its balanced approach and technical insight. In times troubled by terrorism and radicalisation, firearms become a politically exploitable topic. Unjustified limitations to the acquisition and ownership of firearms equals to a first victory of terror over the lifestyle and rights of 12 million of European hunters and sport shooters who are one of the most controlled and law abiding social group in the EU. The resolution adopted by the members of the intergroup clearly points at the flaws of the proposal of the European Commission and is a call on all MEP to avoid imposing restrictions where no justification exists”.

The 110 members of the Intergroup are also very critical of some of the amendments, rejecting the proposal to ban certain semi-automatic rifles based on their appearance rather than on functionality characteristics. This view was shared during yesterday’s IMCO Committee meeting by the rapporteur and most of the shadows.

In the resolution MEPs urge the European Commission to uphold the subsidiarity principle in matters concerning minimum age, periodicity and medical tests, and only adopt minimum rules and specifications for the storage of firearms and ammunition leaving it up to Member States to decide.

Online sales of firearms is another hotly debated issue. On this the Intergroup urges the European Commission to avoid discriminations of specific user groups, such as hunters and sport shooters, when considering the legitimate use of the Internet and distance sales, clarifying that they shall be subject to the strict control of the Member States.

As a measure to prevent criminals from tampering with an inappropriately converted firearm, the Intergroup recommends the adoption of common conversion standards to ensure that automatic firearms are converted irreversibly. This solution would tackle the problem of improperly converted fully automatic firearms entering the EU market and eliminate at the source all problems related to the illegal conversion of blank firing weapons.

The resolution can be downloaded [here](#)

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

The objectives of the European Parliament Intergroup "Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside", known as the "Hunting Intergroup", are to promote the role of hunting and other forms of sustainable use of natural resources. It tackles topics related to biodiversity, wildlife management, rural development and forestry and discusses current subjects whilst building the bridge between civil society and decision makers.

FACE has provided the Secretariat for this intergroup since 1985 while the European Landowners Organisation serves as Co-secretariat.

With 110 actively supporting MEPs the Intergroup is one of the largest in the European Parliament. Its activities are run by a Bureau who are responsible for setting the themes and providing overall guidance.

For the 2014-2019 parliamentary term, the Intergroup will be reconstituted under the name "Biodiversity, Hunting & Countryside", which reflects better its conservation goals and the fact that most of its Members are not hunters.

MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz is the President of the Intergroup. He is economist and agricultural master. He is Member of the European Parliament since 1989 and was re-elected in 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

He is Member of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and was Chairman of this Committee between 2004 and 2007. He is also a substitute member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and was rapporteur and member of the former Temporary Committee on Climate Change.

The Bureau is also constituted of three Vice Presidents, Renata Briano, Bendt Bendtsen and James Nicholson and a Secretary General, Annie Schreijer-Pierik.

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