



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.07.2016  
C(2016) 4664 final

Mr Jan HAMÁČEK  
President of the  
Poslanecká sněmovna  
Sněmovní 4, CZ – 118 26  
PRAGUE 1

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Poslanecká sněmovna for its Opinion on the proposal for a Directive amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons {COM(2015) 750 final}.

The objective for revising the Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons ('Firearms Directive')<sup>1</sup> is to update the existing legislation on the possession and acquisition of legal firearms in order to improve security for EU citizens. This includes measures such as banning certain dangerous assault weapons, including highly powerful automatic and semi-automatic ones.

The Commission notes that tragic events such as massacres, not limited to terrorist acts, have been committed with firearms in several Member States, including with legally owned firearms. The risk created by certain semi-automatic firearms was also highlighted by all Member States in the context of the European Council of 18 December 2015.

A study conducted in 2014 to contribute to the evaluation of the existing Firearms Directive<sup>2</sup> highlighted that in 2013 in certain Member States, including the Czech Republic, a significant number of homicides were committed with legally owned firearms. The Czech Republic also reported 132 cases of homicides where the firearm was never identified.

Against this background, the Commission notes that it does not propose the prohibition of all semi-automatic firearms but only a limited number of the most dangerous firearms. The Commission is currently working with the Council and the European Parliament to refine the specific criteria for the identification of particularly dangerous firearms. All the other categories of semi-automatic firearms are not modified and could, therefore, still be acquired by private persons subject to national authorisation.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 256, 13.9.1991, pp. 51-58.

<sup>2</sup> Study on the Evaluation of the Firearms Directive, Technopolis:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/8385?locale=en>

*The proposal aims to find a balance between the legitimate expectations of hunters, sports shooters and collectors and the necessity to safeguard the security of citizens, notably by addressing the existing loopholes in the current Firearms Directive. The Commission is confident that the ongoing discussions with the Member States, including the Czech Republic, and the European Parliament will help to further improve the proposal while maintaining this balance.*

*The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Poslanecká sněmovna and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bienkowska  
Member of the Commission*