



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.04.2016  
C(2016) 2204 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Riksdag for its reasoned opinion on the Commission 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 {COM(2015) 750 final}.*

*The primary objective of the proposed Directive is to improve internal security in Europe, most notably in light of recent terrorist attacks, but the question of security is not limited to terrorism. Over the last decade, it is estimated that 10 000 homicides have been committed in Europe with firearms. In certain Member States, a majority of homicides have been committed with legal firearms. Moreover, there are nearly half a million firearms inside the EU which have been registered as lost or stolen from the mid-1990s to 2014, and which may be used by criminal organisations.*

*The risk created by certain semi-automatic firearms has also been highlighted by all Member States in the context of the European Council of 18 December 2015.*

*At the same time, the Commission recognises that many EU citizens own and use firearms for hunting, sport shooting or collection without this necessarily creating any security problems. The Commission proposal therefore seeks to strike the appropriate balance between the legitimate interests of hunters or sports shooters and the security of the EU citizens whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union.*

*Although the Riksdag has expressed concerns regarding certain elements of the proposal, which are addressed below, the Commission also notes the Riksdag's acknowledgment that the security issues covered by the current firearms Directive are cross-border in nature and cannot be resolved by individual Member States acting alone.*

*Mr Urban Ahlin  
Speaker of the Riksdag  
SE – 100 12 Stockholm  
Sweden*

*As far as firearms held by museums are concerned, the Commission proposal would give Member States the possibility to authorise bodies dealing with the cultural and historical aspects of weapons to keep firearms in their possession, including those classified in category A (prohibited ones) acquired before the entry into force of the proposed Directive, provided they are deactivated according to the EU relevant legislation. The Commission considers that this measure is proportionate and justified for reasons of public security. It should also be stressed that the proposed Directive would not apply to the possession or acquisition of weapons by public authorities and is not intended to interfere in any way with matters of national defence.*

*The Commission has noted the Riksdag's doubts as to how the proposal to limit the duration of a firearms licence to five years and the requirement for a mandatory medical test before such a license can be issued or renewed will contribute to increasing the security of EU citizens. In this regard, the Commission would like to note that the objective of such medical tests, which are already a precondition in 23 Member States, is to ascertain that those using firearms do not pose a danger either to themselves or to members of the public. Moreover, the Commission would like to underline that the proposal simply provides for such standard medical checks whilst leaving it to the Member States to further define what these tests should include.*

*As regards semi-automatic firearms which resemble fully automatic weapons, the Commission takes note of the Riksdag's concerns regarding this proposed amendment. The Commission will strive to help identify more precise criteria in the framework of discussions with the European Parliament and the Council.*

*The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council in which your government is represented*

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

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Elżbieta Bieńkowska  
Member of the Commission*