

EU FIREARMS DIRECTIVE: FEARING DEFEAT, THE COMMISSION MOVES TO FORCE ITS AGENDA

The compromises reached between Council and Parliament have not impressed the legal gun lobby. However they have driven the Commission into a corner from which it desperately seeks to escape in order to avoid loss of face and a bruising defeat over its misguided proposal that was not supported by impact assessment studies. The Commission also produced incorrect gun crime data that has just been contradicted by a TRANSCRIME report funded by the EU: the use of legal firearms in crime throughout the EU is a far cry from the Commission's claims.

The Juncker cabinet's strategy is now aimed at the Council, which it expects to call a unanimous vote from all 28 members to approve some compromises that were reached during the trilogues with Parliament. Its objective is to scrap the agreed text that stands in the way of its proposal for an outright ban on all automatic firearms, including priceless historical pieces owned by recognised collectors, and on civilian semi-automatic AR and AK rifles that are widely used in sport shooting disciplines. The Commission's strategy is accompanied by media rhetoric indicating that cabinet is positioning itself to accuse the Parliament and Council that they are irresponsibly risking the security of their citizens by listening to the gun lobby.

The Commission's obsession with this file risks endangering historical heritage, private property, sporting disciplines and hundreds of thousands of jobs. Moreover it puts the EU's future on the line as millions of EU citizens who are law-abiding firearms owners are now at the crossroads of choice to support Eurosceptic parties in upcoming national elections.