

Question for written answer E-015364/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: The impact on national security of amendments to Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons

On 18 November 2015, the Commission proposed amendments to Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons with a view to protecting member of the public in the Member States from organised crime and terrorist attacks, and to increase the security of their citizens.

One proposal, which seeks to ban semi-automatic firearms, will have a direct impact on Lithuania's ability to defend itself and on the security of its citizens.

The proposed EU ban would negatively affect not only the Lithuanian Practical Shooting Sport Federation, but also the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union – a public paramilitary organisation which has been incorporated into the national defence system. The ban would limit the ability of the riflemen and reserve forces to train effectively to defend the country.

With a view to improving the country's defence capacities, Lithuania's Seimas is currently debating legal amendments that would allow the riflemen and active reserve soldiers to acquire and possess long semi-automatic weapons. The EU ban would therefore place restrictions on the country's ability to defend itself.

Other Member States have also expressed their doubts concerning the ban on semi-automatic weapons.

What is the Commission's evaluation of, and opinion on, the impact of the aforementioned ban on Member States' ability to defend themselves? How does the Commission intend to ensure that the proposed amendments do not have a negative impact on the security of those countries whose national defence systems depend not only on a professional army, but also on civil defence forces?