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### **FSU: Directives must focus on rooting out the illegal firearms**

**The Finnish Sportshooting Union (FSU, Suomen Ampumaurheiluliitto SAL) gave yesterday 12th Nov 2015 their statement to the Governing Council of the Finnish Parliament(Hallintovaliokunta) regarding the possible changes of the European Union(EU) Firearm Directive. The statement is based on the information in the Finnish Ministry of the Interior's memo regarding the issue. In its statement the FSU strongly opposes any possible restrictions planned by the European Union(EU). Semi-automatic firearms are used in sportshooting, especially in the Olympic pistol sports and in all practical-sports, in which semi-automatic rifles, shotguns and pistols are used. A gun ban of this sort would lead into and end for doing all of these sports. Any changes in Directives and in national-level legislation should primarily focus on battle against illegal arms trade and illegal gun possession.**

The Finnish Sportshooting Union sees the memo by the Finish Ministry of the Interior being on the right tracks and this memo shows that the officials have both an understanding towards the people doing these sports and will for co-operation with them. The Finnish Sportshooting Union is pleased with the memo by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior used as a reference document and agrees with the Ministry's view that serious harm would be caused to the Finnish national interests by both moving semi-automatic firearms into the A-category within the firearm Directive and by banning the possession of such firearms from private persons.

According to an estimate, if these items would need to be waived upon it would mean losses of approximately 20-25 million Euros on private persons within shooting sports alone. In addition, the substitution of semi-automatic firearms, on those parts where even applicable, by single-fire firearms means unbearable costs to people doing these sports. The changes envisioned by the Comission would thus lead into large-scale cancellations on already granted firearm-permits and into forcible seizure of firearms and accessories related to them. Additional costs will also be caused by compensations towards firearms businesses due to harm affected on them. The cost to the state of Finland from the change of the Directive is most likely in a scale of as much as several hundreds of millions of Euros in total. If it would come into this kind of tedious forcible seizure, the firearms should be reimbursed in their full value.

The Finnish Sportshooting Union is of an opinion that Finland should also strive to conserve the possibility of trustworthy gun collectors to collect full-auto firearms also in the future. The deactivation of firearms and the possession of deactivated firearms should not be banned. Instead, unambiguous requirements on technical implementation of the deactivation, the approving of the deactivation and supervision together with safety marking criteria on deactivated firearms should be defined. All of these should be defined in a manner that takes into consideration the estetical and historical values within gun collecting hobby.

The Finnish Sportshooting Union is of an opinion that binding the granting of a firearm permit into some specified list of sports defined legal or to a hobby or competitive sports activity within these listed sports will turn out to be problematic when these sports evolve. For example, consider the wishes of the International Olympic Committee(Kansainvälinen olympiakomitea KOK) and the rule changes of ISSF, IPSC and other organizations. Nor would these changes necessarily improve firearm safety. Firearm safety does not consist of classifying guns on technical grounds. Instead the lawmakers and law enforcers should focus their attention on requirements put on firearm users and on reasons for firearm use. Nor is the categorical restriction on the magazine capacity of the firearm a solution for firearm safety. The need for capabilities of the firearm should be assessed based on the sports one will do, not based on theoretical firepower(rate of fire, firing capability, range of fire, accuracy of fire, effect on target).

The Finnish Sportshooting Union is of an opinion that the changes in directives and in national-level legislation should focus primarily on the battle against illegal arms trade and illegal possession of firearms.

In addition the Finnish Sportshooting Union proposes that Finland should create a longlasting and clear policy according to which it will act to. This policy should be built in a co-operation with people doing these sports as a hobby. Hasty changes should not be made into the laws.

The statement in its full can be viewed in the enclosed attachment.

**Attachments:**

-SAL-lausunto HAV EU-direktiivi (FSU-statement Governing Council EU-directive)