



## **Intensification of Firearms Directive harms shooting sport in Europe**

The Royal Netherlands Shooting sport Association (KNSA) is the Dutch sports federation for the shooting sport within the Netherlands. 700 sports shooting clubs and nearly 40,000 sports shooters are affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Shooting sport Association. In the Netherlands the shooting sport is a relatively small sport; in Europe though this sport is being practised by an estimated 10 million of persons. Worldwide the shooting sport is one of the largest sports; an Olympic sport already since the very start of the Modern Olympic Games with no fewer than 15 Olympic disciplines.

For some time now the European Committee is engaged on new measures regarding the possession of firearms within Europe. For that purpose a modification of the Firearms Directive number 91/477/EEG will be necessary. Naturally the Royal Netherlands Shooting sport Association cordially applauds the battle against illegal firearms possession and illegal trade in firearms. Organized crime, terrorism and cybercrime have to be banished. However, through some of the proposals of the European Committee these objectives will not be achieved.

The Royal Netherlands Shooting sport Association also thinks that the measures in connection with the attacks that took place in Paris should not be rolled down on the sportsmen of a mature and precious sport in Europe. It goes without saying that the KNSA, as well as the entire European Shooting sport, condemns those horrific assaults. These attacks, however, would not have been averted by stricter measures regarding the legal firearms possession by sports shooters.

The European Committee proposes to put a ban on all semi-automatic firearms for civilian use. The KNSA is against that proposal. Note: this ban does not apply to automatic firearms; it applies to semi-automatic firearms which have been specially manufactured for the civilian market and therefore also for the shooting sport. It is true that some of these firearms highly resemble the full-automatic firearms which are used by the Military and the Police, and which are also being used in the criminal world. It would be incorrect though to compare these two types of weapons with each other and to put a ban on those weapons that are specially made and used for the shooting sport.

The KNSA is furthermore also against the proposal of the European Committee for an obligatory Certificate by a doctor of physician, to be handed in by sports shooters upon request of a firearms licence. This will not give any guarantees, most of these advisers are not willing to make such a statement because this would put a far too heavy responsibility on them. It would, moreover, only create an apparent safety. Together with her European sister-organizations the KNSA tries to convince the European Committee and the European Council to reconsider these proposals for modification of the Firearms Directive.