

Contribution by EuroCOP for the EU Firearms Trafficking Directive

EuroCOP is the umbrella organisation for police unions and staff organisations in Europe. We represent 30 police unions and staff organisations across Europe as well as over 230,000 police officers in 25 European countries. EuroCOP is tackling issues from police cooperation across borders to a safer working environment for police officers on the street. We are determined to contribute to European policy debates and provide added value by giving a practitioners' perspective.

European police forces keep our society safe and secure. We want Europe to be the place, where police officers are operating together in an environment of **safety** and support, provided with the rights, resources, and training to keep Europe's citizens safe and secure. In this respect, firearms offenses are one of the biggest criminal threats. Member States should get incentives to equip their national legal systems with proportionate and stronger punishments against illicit firearms activities that should actually act as preventative measures.

In more concrete terms, EuroCOP supports:

- the creation of an **EU-wide registry for 3D printers, following the policy options outlined under Option 2;**
- Option 3: adding complementary optional and voluntary offences mobilizing first responders and other public services such as
 - illicit reactivation of deactivated weapons,
 - illicit brokering,
 - arms embargo violations,
 - illicit possession and carrying,
 - misconduct in the context of record-keeping and licensing.
- **Levelling up sanctions** against firearms offenses.
- **Extending the scope of the Directive** to include non-lethal gas weapons, pneumatic weapons and other weapons in order to limit access to them for non-minors. A separate category should be established for these weapons, defining clear safety requirements, including age ratings and the responsibilities of the owners.
- Creating a **common EU database** containing comprehensive information on all firearms seized in the EU. This database would help law enforcement agencies identify criminal networks, track weapons flows.
- Putting in place an **EU-level search tool** that allows law enforcement officers to quickly check whether a particular firearm is legally registered in an EU Member State.

EuroCOP therefore supports Option 3 which offers the highest level of safety for police officers: A Directive harmonising the definitions and classifications of a wider set of firearms-related offences, and of sanctions/penalties related to these.

The Roadmap of the European Commission for the mandate 2024-2029 includes the strengthening of **Europol** in budget, staff and competences. This agency should get the means to ease the above measures, in particular the registry for 3D printers, the EU database on seized firearms and the exchange of information.