



## **FEDERATION OF ARMS COLLECTORS AND TARGET SHOOTERS**

*Registered with SportsMalta, Reference F007, by the Founding Members*  
Association of Arms Collectors & Target Shooters - Association of Maltese Arms Collectors & Shooters

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### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES IN THE MEP ELECTIONS, MAY 2019**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Our Federation is composed of two associations and twelve clubs, which collectively represent the interests of collectors of historic firearms and target shooters. FACTS is duly registered with Sportmalta (reference F007) in compliance with the Sports Act, as are the organisation which form part of it. FACTS speaks in defence of a community which is composed of over six thousand members who come from all walks of life but are bound together by a common passion. This community has over the past thirty-four years successfully promoted responsible firearm ownership and use and steered in sensible legislation which regulates the sector. The combination of our expertise and government recognition produced the Arms Act 2005 and subsidiary legislation which offer law-abiding enthusiasts the possibility to enjoy their passion within a very secure legal framework.

#### **INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Back in the early nineties, our legislative team had based its submissions for new national legislation on the EU Firearms Directive 477/91 and our Arms Act is a faithful transposition of that Directive. Consequently, we take a deep interest in whatever happens within the EU institutions. Not only are we represented through organisations which we are affiliated with, but one of our officials plays a leading role in representing our interests at EU level.

Unfortunately, time and again, we have seen authorities attack our community in the wake of terrorist and criminal activity for which we are not even remotely responsible. This antithesis of democratic governance is best described in the words of legislative expert Jeffrey R. Snyder: "But to ban guns because criminals use them is to tell the innocent and law-abiding that their rights and liberties depend not on their own conduct, but on the conduct of the guilty and the lawless, and that the law will permit them to have only such rights and liberties as the lawless will allow. For society does not control crime, ever, by forcing the law-abiding to accommodate themselves to the expected behaviour of criminals. Society controls crime by forcing the criminals to accommodate themselves to the expected behaviour of the law-abiding."

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## **EU FIREARMS REGULATION**

There have been several attempts by the EU institutions to overturn the original scope of the EU Directive, which was to harmonise national legislation and facilitate the movement of legal firearms and their owners for sport and cultural purposes, with the intention of using it as a tool to restrict, even ban, legal firearm ownership by European citizens. In the last of these attempts, a draconian rewrite of the Directive devised by the Juncker commission, was launched as a proposal at the opportune moment afforded to it by the Paris terrorist attacks of November 2015. The proposal was deceitfully packaged as a measure meant to protect EU citizens from terrorism and criminality. The Commission believed that the wave of public emotion and fear resulting from the attacks was powerful enough to help propel an incredibly authoritarian agenda into a new Directive. Had it succeeded, it would have wiped out the most popular sport shooting disciplines, confiscated and destroyed important historic firearms in private collections and museums and laid to waste an industry and trade with the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The worst of these measures were defeated following a public outcry the likes of which have rarely been seen in the EU institutions. This was the result of close cooperation between our sector representatives and sensible MEPs from most of the political groups. These included some Maltese MEPs whose contribution received wide acclamation by our community. Nevertheless, the watered-down changes to the Directive are ineffectual against criminal misuse of firearms while being a burden on legal firearm owners. In recent months, we worked closely with Government to achieve a soft implementation which does not compromise the common-sense approach of our law.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

FACTS is closely following what candidates for the forthcoming MEP elections have to say about our interests and where they stand on matters which are so important to our community. The Federation wants to establish which position they would adopt in defence of our interests if elected to the EU Parliament.

The Federation is inviting you to answer the following questionnaire by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April so that your replies shall be communicated to every member of our community so that they may be guided accordingly when casting their vote in the elections.

## FEDERATION OF ARMS COLLECTORS AND TARGET SHOOTERS

MEP Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Political Party / Group \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you in favour of legal firearm ownership and use by licensed citizens as currently permitted under Maltese law?

YES / NO

2. Have you ever owned firearms or practised sport shooting?

YES / NO

3. If your answer to question number 2 is 'no', would you be willing to meet us at our offices and at the range to familiarise yourself with our passion?

YES / NO

4. Did you play any role in supporting legal firearm ownership and use during the EU Parliamentary debate on the Firearms Directive?

YES / NO

5. Do you commit yourself to support our European community of legal firearm owners against any future attempts by the EU institutions to limit or ban our sport and passion?

YES / NO

6. Would you be willing to support initiatives aimed at improving EU firearms regulation sensibly in favour of legal firearm owners?

YES / NO

7. Do you commit yourself to consult our community on all matters affecting the regulation of firearms at EU and national level?

YES / NO

Please feel free to add your own comments overleaf.

We accept that you are at liberty to choose to ignore this questionnaire. However, we shall inform our community members accordingly.