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**NOTE**

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From:	Presidency
To:	Law Enforcement Working Party
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Subject:	Results of the European Firearms Experts (EFE) meeting held on 11-12 November 2014 in Rome (Italy)

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On 11-12 November 2014 the bi-annual meeting of European Firearms Experts (EFE) and its thematic subgroups took place at the Central Directorate for Criminal Office in Rome (Italy), aimed at bringing together firearms experts from the Member States (MS) as well as other competent stakeholders for a discussion on how to promote cooperation in the area of combating firearms-related crimes.

The meeting was attended by delegates from 21 MS, Switzerland and the US, as well as participants from the Commission and Europol.

The LEWP is invited to take note of the report of this meeting set out below, as prepared by the Presidency.

**Results of the European Firearms Experts (EFE) meeting held on**  
**11-12 November 2014 in Rome (Italy)**

The EFE plenary meeting was opened by the Director of Italy's International Police Cooperation Service and by the EFE chair, Mr Ian Head. They both underlined how firearms are linked to various forms of organised crime in several ways: as an instrument for committing a crime, as a toll for gaining and maintaining power and also as a commodity to be trafficked. They also stressed how the cooperation of law enforcement authorities, judicial authorities and other services is essential in the field of preventing and tackling common threats, with particular focus in the field of the fight against illicit firearms trafficking. Only through common efforts each MS will be able to tackle new challenges which go beyond the national borders.

As regards the **developments in relation to the EFE secretariat and the EFE-vice chair**, the Dutch Police informed the EFE chair that it could no longer host the EFE secretariat and vice-chair the group due to the reorganisation of the Dutch police. The EFE group is still considering how to respond to this situation.

A representative of **Europol** outlined the main activities of the new **Focal Point "Firearms"**, established this year, and highlighted the tools made available for a comparative analysis of operational data from participating Member States, resulting in the production of analysis reports. He invited all MS to improve the exchange of information through Europol.

The driver of the **Operational Action Plan (OAP) "Firearms"** presented the findings of the final report on operational actions carried out in 2014 and stressed the added value of the new Focal Point as well as of the expertise provided by the EFE Group. The meeting was informed that the draft Operational Action Plan for 2015 was finalised for formal adoption at the forthcoming COSI meeting. Information as regards the signing of the "Delegation Agreement" between the Commission and Europol on funding for the priorities identified in the Policy Cycle 2014-2017, was provided.

The EFE received information from the Commission on its activities and developments as regards firearms and the internal security of the EU. The EFE group was informed that following the discussion at the LEWP on the draft Action Plan on illicit trafficking in firearms between the EU and the South East Europe Region (2015-2019) on 6-7 November 2014, a consensus was achieved on this document at the COSI meeting on 10 November 2014, and that it would be submitted to Coreper and the Council for approval (see latest doc. 15516/14).

The Commission's representative pointed out that once the document is approved, individual actions will have to be set out in detail, also in line with OAP "Firearms" 2015 and the Action Plan which is being drafted within the South East Europe Region. To this end, the Commission proposed that experts discuss the relevant actions at Europol in January 2015.

The EFE was briefly updated on the draft Council Conclusions on the Glossary of Firearms Terminology in law enforcement cooperation, which was compiled by the EFE Working Group on Definitions in 2013 and disseminated to all Member States (see latest doc. 14983/14 and 15910/14). It was emphasised that it was appropriate that the work carried out by the EFE receives formal recognition. It was also noted that the Glossary fits in with the evaluation of firearms legislation that the Commission has actively engaged in, including 3 studies for an impact assessment on the matter.

The results of various EFE working groups are detailed below:

- Working Group "Internet": based on a comparative analysis of MS replies to the questionnaire about illicit firearms trafficking via the Internet, a draft basic guide for law enforcement to investigate illegal firearms trade on Internet has been prepared, containing best practices and guidance for police forces. The final version of the manual will be submitted to the LEWP.
- Working Group "SEEC": Given the importance of the Balkan countries at the crossroads of several routes used for illegal firearms trafficking, following the ministerial meetings of Tirana (Albania) and Budva (Montenegro) a firearms expert network has been set up in the region. The first Joint Committee between European Firearms Experts and South East Europe Countries Firearms Experts was held in Brussels on 23 October 2014.

- Working Group “Assignment of commercial security staff” was established in October 2012 to discuss the issue of piracy and the use of armed security staff on board vessels. A first report based on the replies by Member States to a questionnaire is currently being reviewed and will contain common minimum rules to be applied in this field.
- Working Group “Trace & Registration” has been working on updating the manual contained in the Council Recommendation on a standard procedure in Member States for cross-border enquiries by police authorities in investigating supply channels for seized or recovered crime-related firearms<sup>1</sup> (doc. 10000/07). This document will be forwarded to the Presidency for further action in the relevant EU fora. Before the next EFE plenary meeting in Helsinki in April 2015, a webinar will be organised and specific tasks will be assigned to each member of the Working Group.
- Working Group “Communication” held further discussions on the role which the EFE group should assume at European level as well as on its assigned tasks and the strategic objectives to be achieved.

Experts from DE, FR, IT, HU and SE presented case studies linked to police operations in relation to firearms. Two presentations were made at the meeting: a representative of FESAC<sup>2</sup> presented its main tasks and a representative of ANPAM<sup>3</sup> showed a detailed overview of the risks related to the use of 3D printing in the firearms field.

The next EFE meeting will take place on 14-15 April 2015 in Helsinki (Finland).

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<sup>1</sup> European Union Manual Traces on the ownership of Firearms – A Handbook for Systematic Tracking of Firearms seized from illegal possession or in the course of criminal Offences.  
<sup>2</sup> Foundation for European Societies of Arm Collectors.  
<sup>3</sup> Associazione Nazionale Produttori Armi e Munizioni Sportive e Civili.