



Report of France,

UFA for the 2017 FESAC Congress in Bilbao - 2 June 2017

The year 2016 was a very hectic period for French amateurs.
It was first necessary to recover from the organization of the 2016 Congress of Aix en Provence,
Then digest the new standards of European neutralization,
Finally, to face the shocks given by the soap opera launched by the European Commission with the modification of the directive.

New neutralization

The year 2016 was particularly marked for French collectors, by the arbitrary and unjustified adoption by the European Union, at the end of 2015, of a disastrous regulation and on the neutralization of weapons. We are just beginning to assess the extent of the irreparable damage that these new rules will cause.

Like some of its European neighbors, France witnessed two world wars on its territory. Hence, there remained in our country enormous quantities of equipment and armaments preserved in the families.

After experiencing a regime of total freedom of possession of arms between 1872 and 1939, French amateurs of arms were imposed exceptional legislation adopted in 1939 in the fear of the occurrence of a fascist coup d'état or Communist Party on the eve of the declaration of war.

The purpose of this regulation was twofold: to prohibit individuals from building up stocks of military weapons and to severely control arms transfers between France and abroad, after France had been a hub for arms trafficking during the Spanish Civil War.

The result of these regulations has been the concealment or destruction of many weapons of historical interest.

After admitting a while that a weapon whose chamber was pierced with a 5mm hole into which a pin had been inserted and the tip of the firing pin had been cut, was neutralized, the Ministry of Defense wanted the neutralization rules to be revised in 1978. From that time on, only the neutralizations carried out by the Saint-Etienne test bench were allowed and classified the weapons in the eight category, which corresponds to the current category D2. This neutralization resulted in the issuance of an official certificate and the affixing of an "AN Crowned" punch on certain parts of the weapon. This neutralization of quality has allowed collectors and museums to legally preserve weapons of the contemporary era and to preserve a rich historical heritage.

Those of you who are fortunate enough to live in countries where the collection of contemporary firearms is permitted will find it hard to understand that we can collect neutralized weapons. Nevertheless, the neutralization carried out by the Saint-Étienne test

bench was a lesser evil: to society, it offered a guarantee of security by making it very difficult to reactivate the firearm. To the collectors to retain legally these weapons whose exterior appearance was unmodified and which remained completely removable, allowing collectors, armaments historians and judicial experts to study their mechanisms.

Many of the weapons thus came out of hiding, because their owners considered "bearable" the neutralization carried out by Saint Etienne. This system lasted more than 35 years without any problem. The massive arrival on the market of modern weapons of collection liberated by the end of the Cold War and sometimes neutralized in a very summary way worried the authorities, who remained however in an ambiguous position: hesitant to make compulsory passage By Saint Étienne of any neutralized weapon imported into France. The result has been crimes and delinquent acts carried out with weapons that have not been neutralized abroad and rehabilitated by unscrupulous people.

To the neutralized weapons, which require a certain level of equipment and skills, were added to the weapons processed in Slovakia for blank firing, which was much easier to rehabilitate.

The fact that these reclaimed blankfiring weapons were used in the course of terrorist attacks (Kalashnikovs and Tokarev guns) offered to the European Commission a pretext to totally tighten the neutralization standards with the intention to combat the supply of weapons to terrorists and perpetrators. Each one of you knows the little value that must be given to this justification!

Weapons neutralized before this change in legislation may be retained by their owners but they can not sell them unless they are re-tested by the proofhouse to bring them into compliance with the new legislation. After the death of owners of important collections, the costs involved and the devaluation of the weapons after they have passed back to the test bench for a new neutralization are so important that the inheritors often prefer to choose the destruction of weapons of course of the financial burden.

The present arrangements will ultimately lead to the irremediable loss of a historical heritage, which will cruelly fail to our museums within a century or two, whereas our country was particularly rich in military equipment from the two world wars.

Malicious attempts by the European Commission.

The anti-armed lobby of the European Commission has attempted in 2016 a particularly dishonest operation, trying to restrict the legitimate rights of arms-lovers in an unheard-of manner by relying on the emotion provoked by the bloody terrorist attacks, that had known Europe in 2014 and 2015. It seems that this approach has unfortunately received the support of some governments, including ours!

The vigorous mobilization of European collectors and the support of certain parliamentarians has made it possible to empty the draft of the new directive of the bulk of its deadly content and in this field, FESAC has been at the forefront in defending our rights. We will not expand on this subject at length in our presentation, because we believe that it will be the subject of more precise presentations during this congress. However, we must pay tribute to our President Stephen Petroni and to all the members of FESAC who have been involved in this struggle and to affirm that the union of European arms-lovers and the strengthening of the means of our associations is more than ever necessary, for our adversaries await the first pretext to set out again in struggle against our liberties.

New organization of arms control in France

As we have already mentioned, for historical reasons, the control of weapons in France has been placed under the supervision of the Minister of National Defense since 1939, since the legislation

Adopted in 1939 was aimed at the disarmament of the population and the control of the circulation of military equipment.

This organization is today inadequate to the realities of French society in which the armed forces have been reoriented towards external actions, whereas internal order is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense. The most emblematic manifestation of this evolution lies in the passage in 2009 of the Gendarmerie Nationale under the authority of the Minister of the Interior, whereas this police force was a military body, dependent for several centuries on the Minister of National Defense (Also called formerly "minister of war" or "minister of the armies").

The continuation of this reorganization was realized in 2016 by the creation of a single arms control service: the SCA, under the Ministry of the Interior, and the transfer to the SCA of certain prerogatives, hitherto allocated to the Minister Of the national defense.

Control of imports The classification of imported weapons from a third country of the European Union will henceforth be established by the Saint Etienne official proofhouse: this State body therefore takes over the expert mission, which was hitherto ensured by a Military organization: the technical establishment of Bourges (ETBS). The principle is to establish the classification of newly imported weapons prior to their placing on the market.

Administrative facilities are given to the fencers for the period of purchase following a new authorization. Ammunition quotas are calculated differently, etc.

But for the collectors, all that we had asked for is absent from the new decree. The specific decree of collection weapons can be expected, the one that must establish the famous card of the collector.

New registration system for weapons.

The computer file AGRIPPA, created in 1995, which recorded the purchases and sales of category B, C and D1 weapons, is now at the end of its life. Its precipitous implementation in the context of the 1995 legislation change has many weaknesses. Over the course of its 22 years of operation, the various stakeholders (gunsmiths, police officers, gendarmes, private individuals, prefecture officials) have unintentionally grasped a great deal of erroneous data that has stacked so heavily that the file has become too cumbersome and quasi-inoperational.

A new and better file will soon be set up, it will be informed by gunsmiths at each sale of a weapon or by private individuals when a sale is made between private persons. The weapons already declared will remain in AGRIPPA, when they are sold or renewed (for Category B weapons), the weapons already declared will be transferred to the new file.

D2 weapons are not affected by this registration

It is also foreseen that the weapons will be the subject of a new encoding system, avoiding the numbering confusions that currently exist. For example: a P.38 manufactured by Walther in 1940 can perfectly bear the same number as another P38 made by Mauser the following year. In AGRIPPA, therefore, two distinct P38s may be registered under the same number, especially since prefectural officials generally neglect to record the letter following the serial number, considering that only numbers are a number . Now the recording will be more complete and accurate. In this context, the Walther manufacturing P.38 bearing the number 787q can no longer be confused with the Mauser production p.38 787 r, whereas previously, both were recorded as "P.38 No. 787 pistol" .

Application of the European Directive in France

Shooters and collectors awaited anxiously the text implementing the European directive 15 April 2017. The most worried were those who practice shooting sports with military weapons, many of whom had bought formerly transformed assault rifles transformed to being unable to fire automatically. Their fear was to see them banned or to have to reduce the capacity of their magazines to 10 shots. This subject is particularly sensitive in France because it is often the shooters with little financial means who choose to buy these inexpensive, accurate weapons and ammunition available at low prices. Their ban would have been lived as the dispossession of weapons hardly acquired by some.

The decree of May 9, 2017 specifies the application what will be made in France of the European text. It totally prohibits the detention of beld feeded machine guns transformed to semi-automatic firearms for individuals. There is no provision in the decree to allow persons, who have legally acquired such weapons before the regulations, to retain their weapons. It is therefore a veritable spoliation, all the more damaging because the neutralization of these weapons is now so severe that it makes them lose almost any resale value.

A new president

As you know, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, elected President of the Republic on May 7, succeeded President François Hollande.

On the eve of the presidential elections, the UFA had sent a letter to all candidates in the presidential election to inform them of the expectations of users of legal weapons. Only two parties took the trouble to contact us: the Socialist Party and the national front, whose representative in the European Parliament: Mylène Troszcznski had defended the rights of the amateurs of arms and had denounced the activities of the commission as an attempt to disarm The European populations.

The question of the law of arms was ultimately never addressed during the election campaign and does not seem to bother the French politicians. So we do not know how the new government will deal with the issues of interest to us.

The members of the new SCA do not appear to be malicious towards arms-lovers and are inclined to work in co-operation with their associations, but their attitude will ultimately depend on the instructions given by the Minister of the Interior.

The current government has not posited any principled position with regard to arms, but has reaffirmed its commitment to the European institutions. There is reason to fear that, as in the past, the government will react in a cyclical way to Causes weapons and tightens legislation according to the type of weapon involved- and that decisions are taken outside of any control by officials of the commission whose benevolence we know about them is known to us!

Thus the life of the French arms lovers is not a "long quiet river".

Jean-Jacques Buigné

Luc Guillou

Président de l'UFA

Vice Président de l'UFA