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## **EU Commission: “35 million illicit firearms in the 27 Member States. Stricter rules are needed”**

Today, the Commission is proposing to update EU rules on the import, export and transit of firearms for civilian use. “As many as 35 million illicit firearms are estimated to be in the hands of civilians in the EU, and around 630,000 firearms are listed as stolen or lost in the Schengen Information System”. The updated rules, according to the Commission, “will facilitate the legal trade of firearms for civilian use and reduce the administrative burden of firearms manufacturers, dealers and users. The revised rules will enhance security and address firearms trafficking, and will enable coordinated controls and risk assessments to improve the traceability of firearms”. EU Commission Vice-President, Margaritis Schinas, said: “Firearms trafficking feeds organised crime within the EU and breeds political instability in the EU’s neighbourhood. With the development of fast parcel delivery and of new technologies, trafficking of firearms is taking new forms to escape controls. As legislators, we need to catch up. The reform we are proposing will close down the loopholes in the existing rules which are often circumvented, leading to firearms being smuggled and diverted into the EU”. Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, added: “Criminals are constantly changing how they smuggle deadly weapons into the European Union. We need to stay one step ahead. EU internal security to reduce the illegal use and trafficking of firearms must be built on good law enforcement cooperation, good intelligence, and transparent procedures”.

Valentina Bombelli