

Council Directive of 18 June 1991 on control of the
acquisition and possession of weapons (91/477/EEC)

CHAPTER 1

Scope

^{F1}Article 1

1 For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions apply:

- (1) ‘firearm’ means any portable barrelled weapon that expels, is designed to expel or may be converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of a combustible propellant, unless it is excluded from that definition for one of the reasons listed in Part III of Annex I. Firearms are classified in Part II of Annex I.

An object shall be considered to be capable of being converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of a combustible propellant if:

- (a) it has the appearance of a firearm; and
- (b) as a result of its construction or the material from which it is made, it can be so converted;
- (2) ‘essential component’ means the barrel, the frame, the receiver, including both upper and lower receivers, where applicable, the slide, the cylinder, the bolt or the breech block, which, being separate objects, are included in the category of the firearms on which they are or are intended to be mounted;
- (3) ‘ammunition’ means the complete round or the components thereof, including cartridge cases, primers, propellant powder, bullets or projectiles, that are used in a firearm, provided that those components are themselves subject to authorisation in the Member State concerned;
- (4) ‘alarm and signal weapons’ means devices with a cartridge holder which are designed to fire only blanks, irritants, other active substances or pyrotechnic signalling rounds and which are not capable of being converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of a combustible propellant;
- (5) ‘salute and acoustic weapons’ means firearms specifically converted for the sole use of firing blanks, for use such as in theatre performances, photographic sessions, film and television recordings, historical re-enactments, parades, sporting events and training;
- (6) ‘deactivated firearms’ means firearms that have been rendered permanently unfit for use by deactivation, ensuring that all essential components of the firearm in question have been rendered permanently inoperable and incapable of removal, replacement or modification in a manner that would permit the firearm to be reactivated in any way;
- (7) ‘museum’ means a permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches and exhibits firearms, essential components or ammunition for historical, cultural, scientific, technical, educational, heritage or recreational purposes, and recognised as such by the Member State concerned;

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- (8) ‘collector’ means any natural or legal person dedicated to the gathering and conservation of firearms, essential components or ammunition for historical, cultural, scientific, technical, educational or heritage purposes, and recognised as such by the Member State concerned;
- (9) ‘dealer’ means any natural or legal person whose trade or business consists wholly or partly of either of the following:
- (a) the manufacture, trade, exchange, hiring out, repair, modification or conversion of firearms or essential components;
 - (b) the manufacture, trade, exchange, modification or conversion of ammunition;
- (10) ‘broker’ means any natural or legal person, other than a dealer, whose trade or business consists wholly or partly of either of the following:
- (a) the negotiation or arrangement of transactions for the purchase, sale or supply of firearms, essential components or ammunition;
 - (b) arranging the transfer of firearms, essential components or ammunition within a Member State, from one Member State to another Member State, from a Member State to a third country or from a third country to a Member State;
- (11) ‘illicit manufacturing’ means the manufacturing or assembly of firearms, their essential components and ammunition:
- (a) from any essential component of such firearms illicitly trafficked;
 - (b) without an authorisation issued in accordance with Article 4 by a competent authority of the Member State where the manufacture or assembly takes place; or
 - (c) without marking firearms at the time of manufacture in accordance with Article 4;
- (12) ‘illicit trafficking’ means the acquisition, sale, delivery, movement or transfer of firearms, their essential components or ammunition from or through the territory of one Member State to that of another Member State if any one of the Member States concerned does not authorise it in accordance with this Directive or if the firearms, essential components or ammunition are not marked in accordance with Article 4;
- (13) ‘tracing’ means the systematic tracking of firearms and, where possible, their essential components and ammunition from manufacturer to purchaser for the purpose of assisting the competent authorities of Member States in detecting, investigating and analysing illicit manufacturing and illicit trafficking.

2 For the purposes of this Directive, a person shall be considered to be a resident of the country indicated by the address appearing on an official document showing his or her place of residence, such as a passport or a national identity card, which, on a check on acquisition or on possession, is submitted to the competent authorities of a Member State or to a dealer or broker. If a person's address does not appear on his or her passport or national identity card, his or her country of residence shall be determined on the basis of any other official proof of residence recognised by the Member State concerned.

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3 A 'European firearms pass' shall be issued on request by the competent authorities of a Member State to a person lawfully entering into possession of and using a firearm. It shall be valid for a maximum period of 5 years, which may be extended, and shall contain the information set out in Annex II. It shall be non-transferable and shall record the firearm or firearms possessed and used by the holder of the pass. It must always be in the possession of the person using the firearm and any change in the possession or characteristics of the firearm, as well as the loss or theft thereof, shall be indicated on the pass.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Directive \(EU\) 2017/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#).

^{F1}Article 2

1 This Directive is without prejudice to the application of national provisions concerning the carrying of weapons, hunting or target shooting, using weapons lawfully acquired and possessed in accordance with this Directive.

2 This Directive shall not apply to the acquisition or possession of weapons and ammunition, in accordance with national law, by the armed forces, the police or the public authorities. Nor shall it apply to transfers regulated by Directive 2009/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Directive \(EU\) 2017/853 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#).

Article 3

Member States may adopt in their legislation provisions which are more stringent than those provided for in this Directive, subject to the rights conferred on residents of the Member States by Article 12 (2).

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- (1) [^{F1}Directive 2009/43/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 simplifying terms and conditions of transfers of defence-related products within the Community (OJ L 146, 10.6.2009, p. 1).]

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Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by [Directive \(EU\) 2017/853](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (Text with EEA relevance).