

Combating firearms trafficking and other firearms-related offences

2026/0059(COD) - 26/02/2026 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to improve the EU legal framework on tackling firearms-related offences and to strengthen enforcement at national level.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the rise in firearms trafficking and other firearms-related offences and their effects, which undermine the effectiveness of Union firearms law, is a matter of continuing concern in the Union. Such offences increasingly extend beyond the borders of the Member States in which they are committed.

Furthermore, illicit firearms pose a serious threat to EU citizens' security, as they enable a wide range of serious and organised crimes including drug trafficking, extortion, robbery, and gang violence.

Additionally, technological advances like 3D printing make it easier to produce firearms and heighten the threat, stressing the need for stronger preventive measures.

The EU has adopted several instruments in the field of firearms, from the perspective of the internal legal market. These EU instruments regulate the legal acquisition and possession of firearms. By defining what is legal, both instruments inevitably demarcate what is illegal, yet do not determine what is criminal. Therefore, no EU rules exist as of yet, on criminal offences related to firearms.

Therefore, EU legislation requiring consistent and harmonised data collection on seized firearms would enhance law enforcement officers and policymakers' capabilities, allowing for better resource allocation, threat and policy evaluation. Stronger, harmonised EU action would also support broader - cross-border - security goals, as firearms crimes are closely linked to terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking, and other types of organised crimes—ultimately reinforcing Europe's overall internal security.

This is the first legislative initiative to be adopted under the European Internal Security Strategy, ProtectEU.

CONTENT: the proposed directive establishes minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and penalties in the area of firearms, as well as measures to improve cross-border cooperation and rules for the establishment of a minimum dataset on firearms seizures. It seeks to enhance public safety and tackle organised crime by introducing stronger and more harmonised rules across Member States.

It should be noted that this proposal only targets **intentional acts** involving illicit firearms, fully preserving legitimate activities by authorised dealers, industry and citizens. It does not change nor affect in any way the existing EU rules on the legal acquisition, possession and cross-border movement of firearms.

Coordination and cooperation between competent authorities within a Member State

The proposal provides that each Member State should designate a single **National Firearms Focal Point**, for coordination and cooperation at strategic and operational levels among all its competent authorities involved in the prevention of, and the fight against, firearms-related criminal offences. Furthermore, the provision also establishes that Member States can cooperate in regard to the joint testing of **blueprints** suspected to be designed to privately manufacture firearms, essential components or ammunition.

EU-wide definitions and penalties

The proposal introduces harmonised definitions and penalties, including for:

- the trafficking, manufacturing or possession of illicit firearms, essential components of firearms, and ammunition;
- falsifying or illicitly removing or altering the mandatory markings that uniquely identify firearms and their essential components, serving as an 'identity tag' throughout their lifecycle;
- the illicit creation, acquisition, possession and dissemination of blueprints for 3D printing of firearms, which represents a new and growing security threat.

Member States should set an upper limit of penalties for firearms-related offences of at least **2 years** of imprisonment for the creation, acquisition, possession and dissemination of 3D blueprints, at least **5 years** for the possession of illicit firearms, essential components and ammunition, and at least **8 years** for the trafficking and manufacturing of illicit firearms.

Improved data collection

The proposal introduces new measures to improve the collection and standardisation of the available data on firearms. This includes a minimum dataset to register firearms seized by law enforcement or other competent authorities. Data on seizures of firearms should be available in a **Union repository** to facilitate cooperation between Member States, in particular cross-border investigations, prosecutions and convictions of firearms-related offences.

Statistical data

The proposal also introduces a requirement for Member States to gather existing statistical data in relation to the different firearms-related offences and to share it with the Commission every five years. This includes data on the number of firearms seized in the context of criminal offences, as well as statistical data on the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, dismissed cases, number of legal persons involved, the level and type of penalties imposed. This will increase the availability of comparable data across Member States and allow for an improved situational picture, better monitoring as well as increased public awareness.

It also establishes an obligation to transmit the information on registered seized firearms to Europol. This provision also establishes the requirement for Member States to keep the data for at least 20 years.