

# **A RESEARCH BASED ASSESSMENT OF THE EU FIREARMS DIRECTIVE**

**ERIK LAKOMAA, PHD  
STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS**



# WHY ARE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS MANDATORY?



## WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH THE DIRECTIVE?

- If the proposed measures have significant benefits (reductions of crime and terrorism)
- If the benefits (the reduction of crime and terrorism) outweigh the cost (bans/restrictions on sport shooting/hunting, national defence etc).
- If the benefits cannot be reached in any other way that would reduce the harm (to shooters/hunters, national defence etc)



# WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- "[F]ailed to identify any gun control that had reduced violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents" (Wellford & al 2004 "National Research Council, Firearms and Violence: a Critical Review" pp 6-10)
- "No significant correlations [of gun ownership levels] with total suicide or homicide rates were found". Killias & Al 2001 p 429f
- "There is no evidence anywhere to show that reducing the availability of firearms in general likewise reduces their availability to persons with criminal intent, or that persons with criminal intent would not be able to arm themselves under any set of general restrictions on firearms" Kates & Mauser 2004 p 670 note 82
- "[T]here is no consistent significant positive association between gun ownership levels violence rates: across (1) time within the United States, (2) U.S. cities, (3) counties within Illinois, (4) country-sized areas like England, U.S. states, (5) regions of the United States, (6) nations, or (7) population subgroups..." (Kleck 1997 pp 22-23)

Research cited in the 2014 evaluation of the firearms directive, Annex A)



# EUROPEAN FINDINGS

- Sweden has the best data of all EU member states (Hagelin 2012, Lakomaa 2015)
- Lakomaa (2015) investigated all reported thefts of firearms in Sweden 2003-2010 (later data had been added and supports the previous findings)
- Hagelin (2012) investigated which firearms that were actually used in crime and the origin of the firearms used.
- Both studies – as being total population studies – are unique.



## LAKOMAA (2015)

- Investigated all reported thefts of firearms 2003-2010 (Stockholm county 1995-2010) –later data do not change results.
- "Actual thefts from legal gun owners are very rare both in absolute terms and when compared with the number of gun owners, with legal guns and with burglaries" (p 9)
- 100 thefts a year on average. Declining trend (projection >80 2016)
- Serious errors in official estimates of thefts. In 16 percent of reported thefts of firearm, no firearm had been stolen. Actual thefts of handguns 1/6 to 1/10 lower than the police estimates.



# HAGELIN (2012)

- Investigated all reported serious crimes (deadly violence, robberies, attempts and preparations of deadly violence and robbery) with firearms 2000-2010 (the only total population study in the world so far)
- Stolen, civilian, firearms are used in serious crime 1-2 times per year (Hagelin 2012).
- Most common type of “firearm” used in crime: no firearm (i.e toy, soft air gun)
- Origin of weapons used: Smuggled from the Balkans
- No firearm of the types now suggested being moved to the prohibited category (A) has ever i) been stolen ii) been used in serious crime. (there are no reports found in other sources before and after)



## SUMMARY – THE EU DIRECTIVE

- Is not based on scientific research – it targets legal owners of firearms, that we know do not pose a significant risk – instead of targeting the sources of firearms used in crime.
  - Legal firearms rarely stolen, rarely used in crime
- Will disproportionately harm people (completive sports shooters, hunters) who are not involved in crime, but rather (as criminals is not allowed to have firearms in any EU country) a group that is by definition the most law-abiding in society.







# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make impact assessment
- Make sure the proposal is evidence based.



# A SWEDISH EXAMPLE

