

FCSA (UK)
Chris Stevenson
xxxxx Road
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18th September 2015

Dear Sir,

Re: Law Commission Scoping Consultation Paper on Firearms Law

I write regarding the above consultation in my capacity as Chairman of the Fifty Calibre Shooters Association of the United Kingdom, the FCSA (UK).

We are a Home Office registered club (Ref No CFP/10/1/7/4/1/2/1/2/3/364) affiliated to the National Rifle Association (Aff. No. 1361).

Our primary discipline is very long range target shooting. In practicing this sport we primarily use large calibre bolt action target rifles, most commonly of the 1921 vintage .50 calibre but also have the opportunity to use both larger and smaller calibres. Such target shooting is undertaken in MOD firing areas deemed suitable for the use of such firearms in the United Kingdom and some of our members compete on an international basis representing the UK in this sport.

We note that the primary focus of the consultation is to consider the streamlining of the complex and varied existing firearms laws in the United Kingdom into a more coherent, succinct and clear framework and we applaud the Commission in this aim.

We note, however, that the opportunity is provided for the consultees to make suggestions for further alterations to the firearms legislation (8.89 and 9.24 "Do consultees have suggestions of other areas of the law suitable for reform?"). This would appear to introduce the possibility of the Commission making recommendations that extend beyond the current legislative position.

In this regard we are concerned to have been advised that some of the consultees may have expressed an aim to have the type of firearms that we use in our sport, namely those with high muzzle energy, banned from civilian ownership. We also understand that the emotive terms "destructive device", or "material destruction" may have been used in reference to the rifles we utilise. This is a misconception, not least of all as it is the projectile, not the rifle, that is the "destructive device" and that projectiles designed to have augmented material destructive properties are already prohibited to civilians (such as armour piercing, explosive or incendiary).

Further to this, the civilian use of large calibre firearms with high muzzle energy is already regulated through the Home Office in that it is stipulated that only the individual who has the rifle on their firearms certificate may use that rifle (i.e. it cannot be used by other individuals). We believe that it is the individual, rather than the particular firearm, that should be primarily considered when deciding upon suitability for ownership.

It may be that we have misunderstood the objectives and parameters of the consultation, that the possibility of the reclassification of the types of firearms we use in our sport is not up for consideration and, if this is the case, we would be grateful if you could confirm this.

If, however, such reclassification may be on the agenda we would be grateful if, while recognising that our comments have not been specifically sought as consultees, the above points could be considered by the Commission. We would also be grateful, if this were to be the case, that we would be offered the further opportunity to provide further representation to the Commission in writing, person or both.

We recognise the complexities involved in the Commissions work and would welcome the opportunity to better inform the Commission in its considerations with regard to this particular somewhat emotive and complex area, where potential changes to the legislation may be under possible consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Stevenson', with a large, stylized initial 'C' and a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Stevenson, Chairman.

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