

**5th meeting of the Firearms Expert Committee  
28th November 2022  
51 St Stephens Green  
Minute**

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**Attendees**

**Chair** Emma Meagher Neville

Paul Walsh

Fabian Connolly

John Guinane

Paul Green (on behalf Superintendent Doyle)

Shane Curran (for discussion of agenda point 2 only)

Dave O'Leary (for discussion of agenda point 2 only)

**Secretary** Aoife Byrne

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The agenda was adopted

1.2 The minutes of the fourth meeting were agreed.

1.2 The report of the fourth meeting for the Department's website was agreed.

**2. Discussion of Assault Rifle definition with GNTB.**

The Committee discussed the definition of an assault rifle with representatives of the GNTB. The Committee agreed that the current definition of an assault rifle should be reviewed and possibly replaced.

Three members of the Committee agreed that a revised definition should be only include the technical functions of an assault rifle only and should not include a reference to visual resemblance in the definition.

An Garda Síochána and the representatives of the GNTB would prefer the inclusion of visual resemblance in the definition but believe that it should be more prescriptive and make reference to the rifle being modelled on a known assault rifle. The secretary will prepare the Committee's position on this matter, with a view to the Committee forming recommendations on how the definition of an assault rifle could be improved in its report.

### **3. Review of text of Report One – Chapter 2**

#### **3.1 Review text on Centre-fire Short Firearms**

The Committee reviewed the text on Centre-fire Short Firearms and agreed the recommendations and positions to be reflected in the report.

#### **3.2 Review text on five round limit.**

The Committee reviewed the draft text on the five round limit and agreed the recommendations and positions to be reflected in the report.

#### **3.3 Review text on Barrel Lengths**

The Committee reviewed the draft text on barrel length and agreed the recommendations and positions to be reflected in the report.

#### **3.4 Discussion of Gas-operated firearms.**

The Committee discussed the current regulation of gas-operated firearms. The secretary will prepare the Committee's position on this matter, with a view the Committee forming recommendations regarding how gas-operated firearms should be regulated.

### **4. Consider whether there should be a limit on the number and type of firearms a person may hold.**

The Committee discussed whether there should be a limit on the number and type of firearms a person may hold. Overall, the Committee agreed that rather than introducing a limit on the number of firearms a person may own it would be more appropriate to provide for graded security standards that would become aligned with a registered firearms dealer for when a person possesses a significant number of firearms.

The secretary will prepare the Committee's position on this matter, with a view the Committee forming recommendations on this matter in its report.

### **5. Engagement with N.I. Authorities**

The Committee agreed to prepare a list of questions to submit to the N.I. Authorities. These questions are to be submitted to the secretary by 5 pm on 1 December 2022, and will be confirmed at the sixth meeting.

## **6. AOB**

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful to hear the views of licencing officers from An Garda Síochána. Inspector Green agreed seek the attendance of some licencing officers at a meeting of the Committee in early 2023.

The Committee was advised that the secretary would be seeking the permission of the Minister for the Committee to discuss issues outside the Committee's terms of reference. These issues are.

- To consider the licencing of add-on devices that are considered firearms under the Act, including silencers and sound moderators, telescope sights light beams, and telescope thermal-imaging sights.
- To consider whether specific qualifications and training should be required in order to be eligible to hold a firearms certificate or to become a registered firearm dealers permitted to repair firearms or make modifications to the functioning of firearms.

The Committee agreed to meet again on 6 December 2022 at 10.30, and on 9 January 2023. The Committee identified 10 February 2023, as a possible date for the ninth meeting.