

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000710/25
to the Commission
Nadine Morano (PPE)
(17 February 2025)**

Subject: Fight against arms trafficking, especially of assault rifles

On 5 February 2025, several masked men armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles opened fire in the Brussels metro, without hindrance.

These long guns come from Eastern European countries, mainly the Balkans, and are regularly used in drug trafficking, gang-related activity, prison escapes, organised crime and terrorism on European soil. Their use by delinquents and criminals is becoming more and more normal.

In France, Serbian assault rifles bought in Slovakia were notably used in both the Bataclan and Hypercacher attacks in 2015.

In light of this:

What specific actions will the Commission take to combat the trafficking of fire arms from the Balkans?

Submitted: 17.2.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(23 April 2025)**

The investigation into the incident in Brussels on 5 February 2025 is under the competence of Belgian authorities. The Commission has not received official confirmation on the firearms used, their illegal acquisition, or their origin.

The Commission adopted an EU Action plan on firearms trafficking ⁽¹⁾ in 2020 which outlines four key priorities, including enhancing international cooperation. The Plan includes specific actions for South-East Europe including the Western Balkans region, where the Commission works closely with partner countries.

All these actions are embedded in the goals of a regional Roadmap which was agreed among Western Balkans countries. The Roadmap was supported and funded by the EU ⁽²⁾ with a view to enhancing cooperation, improving information sharing, and strengthening law enforcement capabilities to address this serious issue.

At operational level, the Commission actively participates in different actions on firearms within the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats ⁽³⁾, a Member State-led platform that brings together Member States, EU agencies and institutions and is funded by the Commission. The multidisciplinary cooperation also targets the Western Balkans. This comprehensive approach demonstrates the Commission's commitment to addressing the serious issue of firearms trafficking.

In 2025, the Commission will propose common criminal law standards on illicit firearms trafficking, as well as a new EU Action Plan against firearms trafficking, which will focus on safeguarding the licit market, curtailing criminal activities, based on better intelligence and strengthening of international cooperation with a particular focus on Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2020) 608 final.

⁽²⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 1788/2018.

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/law-enforcement-cooperation/empact-fighting-crime-together_en