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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.8.2026)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) designed for the armed forces has operational and security requirements (e.g. integration with weapons, communications and other military systems, camouflage, defence-specific conformity assessment processes, confidentiality of sensitive information) that are distinct from the PPE used by emergency service workers and civilians in general. Moreover, defence PPE is closely linked to national defence and security interests, which remain the sole responsibility of each Member State¹.

Regulation (EU) 2016/425² is aimed at PPE placed on the EU market for civilian use and covers all physical, chemical and biological hazards to which emergency service workers can be exposed, including bullet wounds and knife stabs. PPE for emergency service workers was already covered by former Directive 89/686/EEC³ and the risk of bullet wounds and knife stabs was reclassified during the revision⁴ of the Directive.

To guarantee that PPE does not present a risk for emergency workers, it is necessary to continue ensuring compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/425. The Commission has thus no intention to amend Regulation (EU) 2016/425 to exclude these products from its scope.

In the area of safety and health at work, equipment used by emergency and rescue services, as well as PPE worn or used by the military, the police and other public order agencies, is excluded from the minimum requirements of Directive 89/656/EEC on the use of PPE by workers at the workplace. Member States are however free to adopt more stringent protective measures compatible with the Treaties⁵.

¹ Article 4 of the Treaty on European Union, http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/teu/2016/art_4/oj.

² OJ L 81, 31.3.2016, pp. 51–98, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/425/oj>.

³ OJ L 399, 30.12.1989, pp. 18–38, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1989/686/oj>.

⁴ Commission Staff Working document: Impact Assessment accompanying the Proposal for a Regulation on personal protective equipment, SWD(2014) 118 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52014SC0118>.

⁵ Article 153(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.