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The work done in France

Today our Association has all reasons to be generally satisfied. The Legislative Process on Small Arms has just ended with the enactment of the Act of March 6, 2012 (a).

Events, procedures, and negotiations- were so entangled that we have chosen to go event by event and not according to chronology.

Overall, this was a maelstrom where there was a lot of one thing running into another!

The Work of 33 years.

Since 1979, that is to say 33 years ago, the UFA has argued for a broadening of the definition antique firearms.

We had some success in the 1980s with the release of French arms (2), old calibres over 11 mm (3) and the list of exempted arms (4). Then tirelessly since then, we been lobbying on behalf of collectors by visiting offices and Ministers.

For quite a long time we were in talks with our friend Senator Bernard Saugey to file for a proposed gun law. He told us at the end of 2009 "I did not file this proposal because the Interior Minister has promised an overhaul of the law of arms in connection with compliance with the European directive. And if you are not satisfied, there will be time to file this bill! ".

When violence does not rhyme with weapons !

Paradoxically, it was Bruno Le Roux, who paved the way for change. In October 2009 the Commission Statutes of the National Assembly supported a Parliamentary Mission whose title was:

"Violence and firearms."

Altogether a commission of enquiry whose title boded nothing good!

Convened in December 2009, the UFA was surprised by his statement: "The collector of ancient weapons is peaceful, and is absolutely not connected with gun violence" (5).

It seems that the message had finally got through since the parliamentary report published in June 2010, had proposed the date of 1900 to classify ancient weapons and with a collectors license access to certain weapons (6).

A working group.

The fact is that with the FPVA, we have been working since 2006 on a more logical reclassification of weapons and collection materials. Yet it was not until February 2010 that the Working Group of the Ministry of Interior was formed to study this reform with users. Over the past five meetings (7) we have seen little by little the constraints on gun users become more and more excessive. Yet the road map given by the Prime Minister was clear: "make life easier for honest users of legal firearms and complicate the life of traffickers and other illegal possessors of firearms."

For the duration of this Working Group, the FPVA on military equipment, and UFA on arms, focused on contradicting police officers who put forward false arguments to deny the principle of decommissioning of equipment or changes to the classification of vintage and antique weapons: for them, for example, the date of adoption of metallic cartridges was to be 1870 as well the change of powder! We had to argue.

Parliamentary Mission for collectors.

It seems that the UFA had been successful, but at the second meeting of the Working Group (April 2010), the prefect Patrice Molle announced to us the forthcoming appointment of a Senator for a Parliamentary Mission that would listen to collectors and to make proposals.

Their report was published in February 2011 after many other processes had been put in place. The report had taken into account the demands of collectors, although it was chilly on some points. We met with Senator Gerard Cesar many times. He understood collectors so well that in July 2011, he filed a bill in their favour.

April 2010: But as this takes a long time and that in the UFA we are impatient, the Congressman Frank Marlin and three other Members of the National assembly (8) were willing to file a bill, co-signed by sixty other Members, whose content suited our purposes perfectly. This unfortunately became a "dead letter"

Processes that collide.

So there have been many different and competing processes to amend the

legislation on weapons: EP missions, the Working Group, the Proposed Law etc ... Finally, in July 2010, the government was required to file a bill to conclude the work of the Working Group, but members Bruno Le Roux, Claude and Jean-Luc Bodin Warsmann beat them to it by filing an arms bill. Their strength is that they come from opposite political parties. So here was a deal from the right and the left, thus offering no opposition to the project.

Finally the government dropped the idea for their bill to make way for the bill of three parliamentarians above.

In autumn 2010, the UFA participated in several meetings with the rapporteur of the bill Roux-Bodin-Warsman. First, two informal meetings, and then a formal hearing. From this time we increased our efforts against this bad bill more dangerous than the previous (8), so that we won over our critics who had claimed that it was "a good law!"

Then the law was passed in first reading on 25 January 2011 with many unacceptable imperfections. This caused such an outcry that Parliamentarians and Senators recognized the importance of this sensitive issue (9).

March 2011: in an attempt to reverse the bad direction that the legislation was taking, Senator Ladislas Poniatowski file a new bill taking the best of in the bill passed by the National Assembly and the best of the report by Senator Gerard Cesar, and what he thought was good for enthusiasts. In his introduction, he castigated the members who had done a "bad job" (10)

Time passes and it was not until early December 2011 that the law already passed by the Senate in January 2011 for the 1st time passed before them. The sages of the upper house removed some items that annoyed the enthusiasts, and added what they thought necessary. (11) It must be said that the Law Committee of the Senate heard arms enthusiasts 4 times and many telephone conversations were had with the administration of the Law Commission, right up to three days before the vote. While the Government wanted to remove the Collectors Permit, the Senate found a "compromise" between the collectors and the Ministry of Interior to keep the clause which authorised it. The Senate action was decisive. The amendments suggested by the UFA to the Senators were not discussed .

The law which comes to an end.

On Christmas Eve 2011, we were summoned to a hearing by the rapporteur of the law passed in first reading by the National Assembly and senators in the National Assembly. And January 10, 2012 a roundtable brought together weapons enthusiasts that have the opportunity to discuss their various applications (12).

On this occasion we got a number of assurances on the consideration of our requests. Disappointment, the Law Commission kept only very few.

While proponents of the law boasted a consensus with weapons enthusiasts, the UFA has spoken to say that all our demands were not satisfied, there was no consensus of the collectors.

That's when the deputy Bruno Le Roux committed himself to restart the legislative process to satisfy our requests still pending.

So much so that during the passage of the Weapons Act in both the second reading in the National Assembly and the Senate, parliamentaries have cited many times the term collector and collection. And promised to give us satisfaction.

We have already given several times the content of the law and there is still much to say about it.

Jean-Jacques BUIGNE

President of the UFA

- (1) OJ March 7, 2012
- (2) Decree of 18 May 1979
- (3) Decree of 19 June 1961
- (4) Decree of 8 January 1986
- (5) GA 416 in January 2010,
- (6) GA 424 in October 2010,
- (7) GA 422 in July 2010,
- (8) GA 420 May 2010
- (9) GA 429 in March 2011,
- (10) GA 431 in May 2011,
- (11) GA 438 in January 2012,
- (12) GA 439 in February 2012,
- (13) GA 440 in March 2012.