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**Chairman: Paul Walsh, Fia Rua, Ballinclare, Ballycanew, Gorey, Co Wexford**  
**Tele: 086-828 2700**      **Email: [paul.a.walshpc@gmail.com](mailto:paul.a.walshpc@gmail.com)**

### **SPORTS COALITION BOYCOTTS FIREARMS CONSULTATIVE PANEL**

The Sports Coalition, an organisation representing the interests of varied groups of countrysports people, has served notice of its boycotting meetings of the Firearms Consultative Panel (FCP) and the Department of Justice because the Minister and his Department continue to sit around the table with people who are representing the interests of those who are the subject of a Garda investigation in relation to illegal use of firearms. This has arisen as a result of one NGO member's unlawful use of the Garda logo, which is a criminal offence under the Garda Síochána Act and its acknowledged indemnity protection of illegal use of firearms while failing to report such incidents to the appropriate authorities. The Chairman of the Sports Coalition, Paul Walsh, said that it beggars belief that the Minister is prepared to encourage input in relation to the administration of firearms licensing policy from an organisation which has been caught condoning and covering up the illegal use of guns. Mr Walsh said, *"This is crying out for the Minister to demonstrate the kind of moral leadership which citizens are entitled to expect. The people concerned should be excluded from any official meetings while criminal investigations are ongoing. The illegal acts identified are ones which would debar a person from owning a gun due to public safety concerns."* He said that the failure to report and the failure of the Minister to respond appropriately gives comfort to firearms offenders.

**ENDS**

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#### **For further information contact:**

Paul Walsh

Email: [paul.a.walshpc@gmail.com](mailto:paul.a.walshpc@gmail.com)

Mobile: 086 828 2700