

Betting industry welcomes international match-fixing cooperation

Brussels, 18 September 2014: The European regulated betting industry welcomes the Council of Europe's Convention on match-fixing, which aims to prevent the manipulation of sports results. The EGBA, ESSA, and the RGA, believe that it represents a relatively positive and potentially significant development in the fight against sport and betting related fraud. At the same time, certain provisions raise concerns regarding their compatibility with EU law.

Maarten Haijer, Secretary General of the EGBA, stated: *"The convention rightly addresses match fixing as a cross border issue that requires international cooperation. It is our hope that it will further set the tone for a more effective cooperation between all stakeholders to eradicate match fixing. However, we are aware that the CJEU has rightly been asked to provide its opinion on the compatibility of the definition of 'illegal sports betting' with EU law, and consider that the application of at least this provision should be postponed until the CJEU has provided legal clarity."*

Clive Hawkswood, Chief Executive of the RGA concluded that: *"The Convention discussions were at times challenging, with pressure from some stakeholders to introduce a sports betting right and even blanket restrictions on certain bet types. The regulated betting sector worked hard to explain why measures of this kind would not make any material difference to the integrity of sport."*

"The fact those provisions were not included is testament to the constructive policy adopted by the Council of Europe's secretariat and many of its Member States. What we have now is a relatively balanced and workable framework, which rightly seeks to reflect the range of existing national regulatory frameworks rather than replace them. However there are still a small number of areas that we believe could be improved upon and we hope there will be opportunities to review them in due course."

Khalid Ali, Secretary General of ESSA, added: *"The Convention is principally focused on addressing the danger to sport and to the regulated betting markets from match-fixing, which primarily emanates from organised international criminal gangs, corrupt sportspeople and the unregulated betting sector. As one of the potential victims of that criminal activity, the regulated betting sector welcomes the aims of the Convention, however, it is important that it does impose any unnecessary restrictions that could drive consumers to the unregulated markets."*

An evidence-based [report](#) on sports betting was recently [released](#) by the three associations which found that the "proposal that new markets, such as in-play (or live) betting, offered by regulated betting operators should be restricted or prohibited on sporting integrity grounds does not, given the weight of independent data, appear to be a policy generated from any firm evidence base".

Notes to Editors

The sports betting report can be found here <http://www.eu-ssa.org/wp-content/uploads/Sports-Betting-Report-FINAL.pdf>

About EGBA

The EGBA is an association of leading European gaming and betting operators Bet-at-home.com, BetClic, bwinparty, Digibet, Expekt, and Unibet. The Gibraltar Betting and Gaming Association (GBGA) is an affiliate member of EGBA. EGBA is a Brussels-based non-profit association. It promotes the right of private gaming and betting operators that are regulated and licensed in one Member State to a fair market access throughout the European Union. Online gaming and betting is a fast growing market, but will remain for the next decades a limited part of the overall European gaming market in which the traditional land based offer is expected to grow from € 79.7 Billion GGR in 2012 to € 83 Billion GGR in 2015, thus keeping the lion's share with 85% of the market. Source: H2 Gambling Capital, September 2013. www.egba.eu

About the RGA

The RGA is the largest online gambling trade association in the world representing the largest licensed and stock market-listed remote gambling operators and software providers. Further information and a full list of members can be found at www.rga.eu.com

For further information or comment please contact Brian Wright, RGA Director of Business +44 (0) 20 3585 1241.

About ESSA

ESSA was established in 2005 by the leading online sports book operators in Europe to monitor any irregular betting patterns or possible insider betting from within each sport. To achieve this goal ESSA implemented an early warning system between its members that highlights any suspicious betting activity. The Early Warning System allows ESSA to work with the sports regulators and their disciplinary and legal department, ensuring that when an alert is given the regulator is informed immediately which may prevent the possibility of any game manipulation on a given event.

So far, ESSA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with FIFA, The FA, DFB, ATP, ITF, WTA and has established close relations with the IOC and many other sports regulators. ESSA also has information sharing agreements with a number of regulatory bodies such as the UK Gambling Commission, the Gibraltar Gambling Commissioner and the Malta Lotteries and Gaming Authority.

ESSA members include the ABB, Bet365, Betclic, Bet-at-Home; Betsson, BetVictor, bwinparty, Digibet, Expekt; the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Interwetten, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, Stanleybet, Unibet and William Hill. For more information please go to www.eu-ssa.org or visit our Twitter page.