

ESSA (Sports Betting Integrity) statement: ESSA supports ratification of the CoE Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions but cautions over illegal betting definition hurdles

Brussels, 16 May: The Council of Europe has today announced that the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions will enter into force on 1 September 2019 following Switzerland's ratification. Switzerland today became the fifth Council of Europe member state to ratify the Convention – following Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine – triggering its entry into force. The Council of Europe's press release can be accessed here <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/ground-breaking-international-treaty-on-match-fixing-to-enter-into-force-in-september>

Khalid Ali, Secretary General of international betting integrity body ESSA, which engaged in the drafting of the Convention on behalf of the sector, stated: "The Convention sets out a range of practical measures to address match-fixing internationally and it has been broadly supported by ESSA and the wider betting sector. Ratification of the Convention is therefore a predominately positive move. However, there remain hurdles to overcome. The definition of illegal sports betting, in particular, continues to present challenges to universal acceptance of the Convention text."

Last year, the Council of Europe requested that ESSA coordinate and deliver a thematic report on sports betting integrity issues on behalf of the regulated private betting sector as part of the preparations for ratification of the Convention. That document sets out the betting sector's view of the main challenges to the adoption of the Convention and the fight against match-fixing, including the Convention's definition of illegal sports betting, restrictions on betting markets and integrity payments, amongst others. The document can be accessed here <http://www.eu-ssa.org/wp-content/uploads/Thematic-Report-ESSA-Betting-Integrity-Research-Project-FINAL-2018.pdf>

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About ESSA:

ESSA represents many of the world's biggest regulated sports betting operators, serving over 40 million consumers in the EU alone. Concerned regulated bookmakers created ESSA in 2005 to monitor betting markets and alert sporting bodies and national regulators to suspicious betting patterns. The goal was and is to protect consumers from potential fraud caused by manipulating sporting events. ESSA helps to combat this with evidence-based intelligence it provides to sporting bodies and regulators.

Every year, our members invest over €50m in compliance and internal security systems in order to help combat fraud. They also give back to sport and society by spending €400m on sponsorship around the world - €250m of that in Europe alone. This increases substantially when advertising and photo and video-streaming rights are taken into consideration. ESSA and its members also co-fund an education programme on gambling with EU Athletes that reaches out to 15,000 athletes/players across at least ten different sports in 13 EU countries.

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ESSA continues to play a key role as the regulated betting sector's representative body at national and international match-fixing policy forums and holds positions on working groups at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The organisation is continually reassessing and improving its alert and reporting systems and has established information sharing arrangements with a range of sports bodies and regulatory authorities.

ESSA members include: 888sport, ABB, Bet-at-Home, Betclac, Betdaq, Betfred, Betsson, BetStars, BetVictor, Betway, bet365, bwin, Cashpoint, Expekt, Gamesys, Interwetten, Ladbrokes Coral, Paddy Power Betfair, Perform Group (affiliate), Sky Bet, Sportingbet, Sporting Index, Sportium, Stanleybet, Stoiximan, Unibet and William Hill. For more information see ESSA's website at <http://www.eu-ssa.org>/or visit us on twitter: [@ESSA Betting](https://twitter.com/ESSA_Betting)

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