

O’Kane Re-Elected as ESSA Chairman

12 February 2015, Brussels: ESSA, the regulated betting industry’s integrity body, has unanimously re-elected Mike O’Kane as its Chairman for a further two years. O’Kane, Business Director at Ladbrokes and who has nearly 40 years experience in the sector, first took over as ESSA Chairman in 2013 and stated that he was “delighted to be able to continue in the role.” During his tenure, ESSA has increased its membership to 18; developed a new platform for exchanging information on irregular betting patterns; and has been actively involved in looking after the interests of the regulated sector at high level forums at the Council of Europe, European Commission and the IOC.

ESSA Secretary General, Khalid Ali, welcomed the decision stating: “I have worked closely with Mike now for a number of years and he has been a key factor in refocusing the organisation and delivering a number of significant achievements for the regulated sector. The organisation has grown in both membership and influence during that time, and has become a more visible and effective body.”

“ESSA has made significant headway by pushing for an evidenced-based discussion with decision-makers, which has resulted in refocusing the debate to issues such as poor sports governance. Much credit should go to the Board and the wider membership for the hard work that has been put in to achieve that. However, we still face a number of challenges, notably achieving a more coordinated approach to information sharing between stakeholders,” stated ESSA Chairman, Mike O’Kane.

ESSA launched its new corporate identity last year, reflecting its increasing global presence and an evolving membership; the PMU joined at the end of 2014, and Sky Bet has been the most recent addition bringing the organisation to 18 members. ESSA has also been improving its reporting and early warning system, which is more efficient and accessible following considerable investment in cutting-edge technology, making it uniquely equipped to deal with sports betting integrity issues

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Notes for Editors

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. ESSA has information sharing arrangements with: the IOC, FIFA, The FA, DFB, ATP, ITF and many other sports, as well as regulators such as the British Gambling Commission. ESSA members include: ABB, Bet365, Betcltic, Bet-at-Home, Betsson, BetVictor, bwinparty, Digibet, Expekt, Hong Kong Jockey Club, Interwetten, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, PMU, Sky Bet, Stanleybet, Unibet and William Hill.

For more information see ESSA’s website at www.eu-ssa.org or visit us on twitter: @ESSA_Betting

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