



# COVID-19: European Gambling Associations Renew Commitment to Safer Online Gambling and Responsible Advertising As Coronavirus Restrictions Return

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As many European countries face the return of more severe Coronavirus-related (COVID-19) restrictions, online gambling associations have renewed their commitment to safer gambling and responsible advertising by outlining essential measures which gambling companies should rigorously apply to protect their customers.

The reintroduction of more severe restrictions could again lead to citizens spending prolonged periods at home and raise concerns that isolation could increase the risks of addictive behaviours, including those related to gambling. Gambling companies should therefore be vigilant to promote safer gambling and protect their customers, particularly those who are vulnerable, during these difficult times.

Despite concerns to the contrary, online gambling substantially declined in Europe during the lockdown between March and May, according to official government reporting.<sup>1</sup> The data published by gambling regulators revealed that, with the cancellation of major sports events, the

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<sup>1</sup> Belgium: 38% decline in traffic to licensed gambling websites between March-April (Belgian Gaming Commission). Denmark: 60% drop in online gambling between March-May (Danish Gambling Authority). France: Online market decreased by 6% in Q2 (ANJ). Sweden: 4.1% decrease in gambling in Q2; with 3.6% increase in online gambling in Q2 (Spelinspektionen). UK: 16.2% decrease in online gambling revenue between March-May (H2 Gambling Capital) with the majority of gamblers not increasing their time or money spent on gambling (Gambling Commission). Europe: 22.3% decrease in gambling revenue forecast for 2020 (H2 Gambling).

majority of sport betting customers simply stopped betting altogether and did not significantly move to other forms of online gambling.

To strengthen and promote safer gambling in these challenging times, we urge all online gambling companies to ensure that their:

- Advertising does not refer to the coronavirus, coronavirus-related public health statements and/or any other coronavirus-related developments.
- Advertising does not portray gambling as a solution to boredom or social, personal or financial problems.
- Advertising and websites contain clear and visible information about minimum age restrictions, national problem gambling helplines and self-exclusion registers where possible.
- Websites contain robust and rigorously enforced identity verification measures to verify the identity of new customers and prevent minors from gambling.
- Websites contain clearly sign-posted safer gambling tools – such as deposit limits, time outs and self-exclusion tools – which customers can use to manage their gambling activity.
- Customers are closely monitored for problematic gambling behaviour and the companies step up direct safer gambling interventions with their customers when appropriate.
- New customers are duly informed of safer gambling tools when they sign up.

These measures build on actions already being taken by our members as part of their safer gambling efforts and are reflective of the European Commission's "Recommendation [2014/478/EU](#) on consumer protection in online gambling" which outlines essential guidelines on safer gambling and responsible advertising of online gambling.

*We urge online gambling companies to share this information with any affiliate marketing companies they work with and ensure their brands are not being promoted in an unethical and socially irresponsible way.*

*"The reintroduction of coronavirus restrictions poses significant challenges for Europe's society. This guidance is intended to help fellow citizens and provides an opportunity for gambling companies to demonstrate their willingness to take responsibility during these challenging times. These are simple but essential measures which all gambling companies should adopt to protect their customers, step up their social responsibility efforts and ensure their advertising is conducted in an ethical and responsible way. We urge all online gambling companies to adhere to them." – Maarten Haijer, Secretary General (EGBA).*

**This statement is supported by the following European online gambling associations**

[APAJO](#) – Associação Portuguesa de Apostas e Jogos Online (Portugal); [BAGO](#) – Belgian Association of Gaming Operators (Belgium); [BGC](#) – Betting and Gaming Council (UK); [BOS](#) – Branschföreningen för Onlinespel (Sweden); [DOCV](#) – Deutscher Online Casinoverband (Germany); [DOGA](#) – Danish Online Gambling Association (Denmark); [DSWV](#) – Deutscher

Sportwettenverband (Germany); [EGBA](#) – European Gaming and Betting Association (Belgium); [IBIA](#) – International Betting Integrity Association (Belgium); [iGEN](#) – iGaming European Network (Malta); [Jdigital](#) – Asociación Española de Juego Digital (Spain); [LOGiCO](#) – Lega Operatori di Gioco su Canale Online (Italy); [NBO](#) – Norsk Bransjeforening for Onlinespill (Norway); [NOGA](#) - the Netherlands Online Gambling Association (Netherlands); and [OVWG](#) – Österreichische Vereinigung für Wetten & Glücksspiel (Austria).