



PRESS STATEMENT

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ESSA ENDORSES INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ON IRREGULAR AND ILLEGAL BETTING

Brussels, 2nd February 2012 – The [European Sports Security Association](#) (ESSA) today welcomed the joint declaration of the [IOC](#) Working Group on the Fight Against Irregular and Illegal Betting on Sports, announced in Lausanne this afternoon.

The declaration, which recommends a number of practical steps to help eliminate betting-relating match-fixing in sport, followed a meeting of the Working Group at which ESSA Head Bookmaker, Mike O’Kane, presented expert conclusions from the betting industry on the monitoring, intelligence and analysis of irregular and illegal betting.

Supporting the move, Khalid Ali, Secretary General, ESSA, said; “This declaration from the IOC marks an important step forward in the battle against irregular and illegal betting. Europe’s licensed, regulated bookmakers have invested substantial resources in recent years to further enhance the protection of consumers from criminals intent on perpetrating betting-related match-fixing. Today, we stand together with the IOC, sports regulators, governing bodies and other responsible sports stakeholders as a sign of solidarity in our fight to stamp out this global problem. Acknowledging that perpetrators of these crimes are often hidden from the view of regulators and enforcement agencies, we aim to ensure that through increased coordination of our efforts, we can and will ensure that betting-related match-fixing becomes a thing of the past.”

ESSA in particular endorses the following five specific points made by the IOC Working Group:

1. Coordinated, concerted action by sports betting regulators, governing bodies and bookmakers:

ESSA actively cooperates with national betting authorities, and has memorandums of understanding (MOUs) in place with the UK Gambling Commission and the Alderney Gambling Control Commission. We expect to sign MOUs with further regulatory bodies in 2012 and will continue to deepen the extent of our cooperation.

2. More cooperation between public and privately-owned betting operators at the global level:

Representing Europe’s leading licensed, regulated bookmakers, ESSA has strong relations with international sports bodies including those domiciled outside the EU. ESSA also recognises the importance of tackling sports integrity issues holistically and actively seeks to work with public- as well privately-owned bookmakers in order to defeat criminal match-fixers. We pledge to make our expertise available to any betting operation that shares our vision of a world in which sport is free from betting-related match-fixing.

3. Establishment of a global forum to facilitate discussion and action among all responsible stakeholders:

Match-fixing is a global problem and as such is one that requires stakeholders to work together at an international level. We believe ESSA, with its network of relationships across bookmaking, sports governance and regulation is ideally placed to help drive such concerted international cooperation forward.

4. Action at the national and international level to enable and promote effective prosecution of sport fraudsters:

ESSA's mission is to promote the integrity of sport and to protect the rights of consumers from being damaged by betting-related match-fixing and we fully support any judicial measure that would help achieve this end by deterring criminals.

5. Wider education of athletes and officials around the risks of match fixing, including the formulation of a universal code of conduct of minimal standards for all sports participants:

The only people who can alter the course of a match or contest are those closely associated with sport such as players or officials. As a result, the best way to defeat betting-related match-fixing in the long-term is to raise awareness and education among these groups. ESSA has been working with [EU Athletes](#) and our industry partners since 2010 to provide young and emerging sports stars from across Europe with educational tools and codes of conduct that they need to kick match-fixing into touch.

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About ESSA

The European Sports Security Association (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, UEFA, EPFL, The FA, DFB, ATP, ITF, WTA and has established close relations with the IOC and many other sports regulators.

For more information on ESSA and its activities please go to the ESSA website www.eu-ssa.org