



PRESS RELEASE

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The European Parliament's Resolution on Online Gambling: ESSA has concerns about some aspects of the report relating to the integrity of sport

Brussels, 10 September: ESSA, the licensed betting industry's integrity body, welcomes the European Parliament's Resolution on Online Gambling agreed at today's plenary session but has reservations about some aspects of the report relating to the integrity of sport.

The Parliament's resolution, in response to the European Commission's Communication on online gambling, includes a range of measures aimed at maintaining the integrity of sporting events. In particular, ESSA supports proposals that strengthen cross-sector partnerships involving all stakeholders notably sports, betting operators and regulators. ESSA also supports the European Parliament's proposals that players and sporting officials be banned from betting on any events they are involved in and that there should be a focus on preventative measures such as education.

In addition, the Parliament calls "upon all sports governing bodies to commit to good governance practices in order to reduce the risk of falling victim to match-fixing" including the "safeguarding of salaries". A report in 2012 by FIFPro, the global players' union, showed that a lack of salary payments had been a major factor in players being more vulnerable to approaches from corrupters.

"These are all issues that ESSA has been campaigning on for some years now and we welcome the European Parliament's focus on these in its resolution," stated Khalid Ali, the Secretary General of ESSA. "ESSA was instrumental in establishing one of the first player education programmes, which has been financially supported by the European Commission, and to sharing market information with stakeholders. However, any policy to address match-fixing must take into account all of the components that contribute to this issue, and that means deficiencies within sport itself."

However, ESSA is concerned that restrictions on the types of bet offered by regulated betting operators, which is proposed by the resolution, will fail to have any positive impact on protecting sporting integrity. "It is fundamental to recognise that corrupters actually seek to manipulate the more mainstream markets with higher liquidity, not smaller niche markets such as the number of corners or penalty kicks," Ali stated.

"As Europol and others have confirmed, match-fixers bet primarily on unregulated markets. There is no evidence to support limits on regulated betting, which would be an unjustified restriction on trade based on unsubstantiated integrity grounds. The result would be to push consumers towards unregulated operators not burdened by such restrictions and where no integrity monitoring takes place. That is clearly not in the interests of consumers or the protection of sporting integrity."

ESSA also opposes the establishment of a sports betting right. "There is no integrity basis for the introduction of a new fiscally-motivated right promoted by some sports. Apart from the cost of their own internal security systems, licensed betting operators already make large-scale investments in sport and pay significant sums to regulators to protect betting integrity. Those operators should not also have to pay for the corrupt activities of sports' own participants colluding with criminals and utilising the unregulated market," Ali advised.

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About ESSA

ESSA (The European Sports Security Association) 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 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a number of sports federations including FIFA and the IOC, as well as regulatory bodies such as the UK Gambling Commission, the Gibraltar Gambling Commissioner and the Malta Lotteries and Gaming Authority.

ESSA's members include: Bet-at-home, Bet365, Betcltic, bwin.party, BetVictor didgibet, Expekt, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Goldbet, Interwetten, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, Sportingbet, Stan James, Stanleybet, Unibet and William Hill.

For more information on ESSA and its activities please visit ESSA's website at www.eu-ssa.org

The European Parliamentary resolution is available [here](#).

The FIFPro Black Book can be found [here](#).

