



SPORTS BETTING INTEGRITY

ESSA RESPONSE: UK GOVERNMENT SCHEDULE 6 CONSULTATION (NOVEMBER 2016)

INTRODUCTION

1. ESSA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the UK Government's proposed amendments to Schedule 6 of the Gambling Act 2005 on behalf of its members.
2. ESSA is a global betting integrity body that represents many of the largest regulated sports betting operators in the world, and which serve over 40 million consumers in the EU alone.
3. The organisation holds positions on important integrity working groups, notably at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
4. ESSA's principal goal is to protect its members, consumers and sport from potential fraud caused by the unfair manipulation sporting events and associated betting.
5. It helps to combat this fraud with evidence-based intelligence, principally obtained from its alert system, which identifies suspicious activity on its members' betting markets.
6. ESSA also co-funds a multi-jurisdictional player betting education programme and is a partner in an international anti-match-fixing project led by the Council of Europe.¹
7. Many of our members are licensed and operate within the regulatory framework managed by the British Gambling Commission (hereafter referred to as the "Commission").
8. ESSA has an information sharing arrangement with the Commission through which it disseminates data relating to any relevant suspicious betting activity it has identified.
9. ESSA's Chairman is also co-chair of the UK Sports Betting Integrity Forum and helped to develop and promotes the adoption of the SBIF Betting Integrity Action Plan worldwide.²
10. ESSA and its members therefore have an interest in any proposed changes to Schedule 6 of the UK Gambling Act and the impact they may have on sports betting integrity matters.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SCHEDULE 6

11. Betting related match-fixing is focused on manipulating sporting events to defraud betting operators and is primarily perpetrated by corrupt sportspeople, often colluding with criminal elements, and conducting associated illicit activities on an international scale.
12. The purpose of Schedule 6 is to allow the Commission to exchange information with listed bodies regarding instances of suspicious betting to prevent and punish match-fixing.
13. The Commission's licence conditions also require licensees who identify suspicious sports betting to share information with sports governing bodies (SGBs) included in the Schedule.
14. This action supports the Commission's statutory licensing objectives, notably: preventing gambling from being a source of crime, and that it is conducted in a fair and open way.
15. Although the Commission can share information with SGBs not listed in the Schedule, it is a time consuming and resource intensive activity.

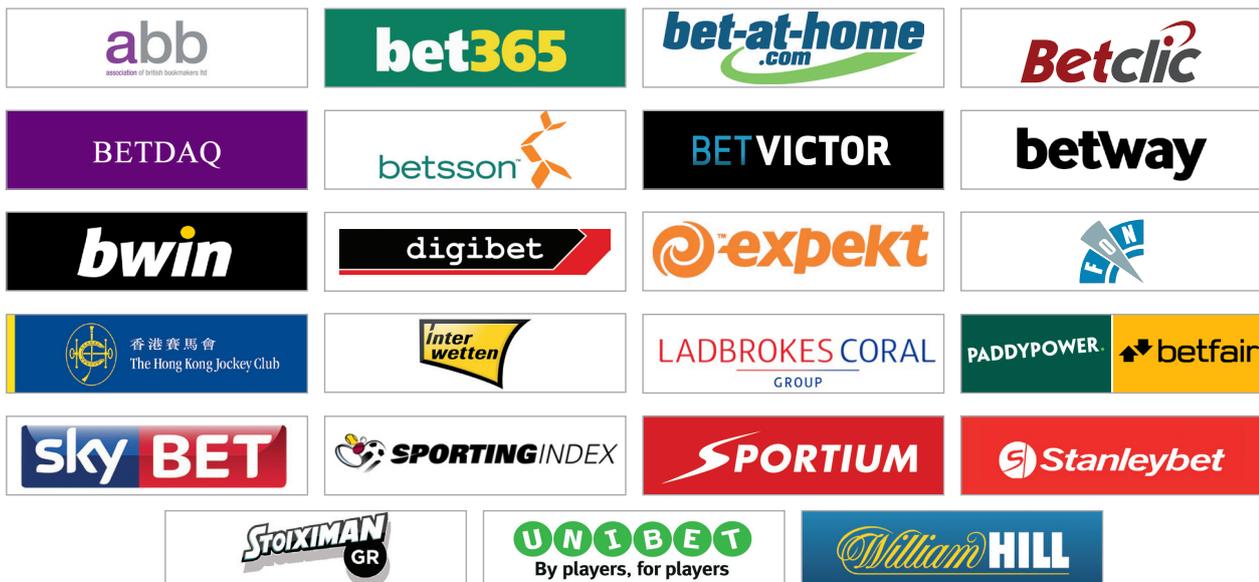
16. ESSA recognises that the additional hurdles required to be met in such circumstances, notably satisfying data protection legislation, can hinder important investigative action.
17. The UK Government has therefore proposed to make a number of changes to Schedule 6 (Part 3), updating it to reflect renamed SGBs already on the list and four additional SGBs.
18. The latter group consists of: Tennis Integrity Unit; Darts Regulation Authority, Rugby League European Federation; and Irish Rugby Football Union. UK Anti-Doping is also added to Part 2.
19. ESSA notes the criteria for new SGBs to be added to the Schedule, as set out in paragraph 16 of the consultation, notably for effective betting rules and integrity practices to be in place.
20. The association concurs with the reasoning and justification behind the Government's approach and therefore supports the consultation's proposed changes to Schedule 6.
21. The association supports this approach as both a necessary and desirable integrity action, albeit it does so on the basis of a continuance of the Commission's policy approach to date.
22. That is principally predicated on maintaining the proportionate, justified and evidence-based approach regarding the supply of betting data to SBGs so far employed by the Commission, and one that is also, importantly, subject to data protection safeguards being in place.
23. On the latter, ESSA members support the supply and dissemination of data relating to suspicious betting patterns where each operator is satisfied that such request is warranted and where that action corresponds with data protection laws and meets all regulatory tests.
24. It is also dependent on there being no related increase in betting operator licence fees, nor adverse impact on the proposal to reduce those fees, as set out in the recent consultation.³

1 http://www.eu-ssa.org/wp-content/uploads/Eu-Athletes_Erasmusfunding_2015_FINAL.pdf & <http://www.eu-ssa.org/wp-content/uploads/PR-ESSA-AND-OTHER-KEY-STAKEHOLDERS-AIM-TO-KICK-CRIME-OUT-OF-SPORT.pdf>

2 http://www.eu-ssa.org/wp-content/uploads/ESSA-PR_ESSA-endorses-plans-to-ensure-betting-integrity-across-Europe.pdf

3 <http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/pdf/proposals%20for%20gambling%20commission%20fees%20from%206%20apr%202012.pdf>

OUR MEMBERS



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