

ESSA NETS HAT-TRICK OF EU PROJECTS TO COMBAT MATCH-FIXING

Brussels, 27 September 2017: International betting integrity body ESSA is to engage in three new anti-match-fixing projects that have been granted funding from the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme. It will see the association involved in a total of four anti-match-fixing projects simultaneously and is part of ESSA's on-going policy to participate in and promote integrity efforts on behalf of its members, which include leading global sports betting brands.

Khalid Ali, Secretary General for ESSA, welcomed the successful funding applications stating: "These projects have the potential to make a significant positive impact in the fight against match-fixing. They represent an important part of ESSA's goal to protect our members, consumers and sporting events from betting related corruption, in collaboration with key stakeholders. We look forward to working closely with our partners and contributing fully to all of the projects we are involved in."

ESSA has supported the EU Athletes' player betting education programme since 2010 and its new PROtect Integrity+ project is one of the three that have received Erasmus+ funding. The new project's aim is to combat the cross-border match-fixing threat to European sport by providing the first European-wide, athlete-led whistleblowing system. Implemented in the first stage in seven countries and five different sports, the secure mobile application reporting tool will encourage athletes to report approaches and suspicions of match-fixing.

ESSA will also be involved in the T-PREG and Fundacja Ekstraklasy anti-match-fixing projects. The Lisbon and Milan Catholic University coordinated T-PREG project will roll out a programme of workshops designed to educate and deter match-fixing, enhancing the know-how on reporting systems across all levels of sport in at least five EU countries. The Polish football managed Fundacja Ekstraklasy programme will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the reasons motivating match-fixing in European football and seek to implement preventative actions.

These three programmes add to ESSA's existing engagement in Transparency International's Anti Match-Fixing Top Training programme, which was granted Erasmus+ funding last year. It is focused on delivering tailored training for top decision-makers in sport and the media to promote increased understanding, and effective policy action guidelines to the European Commission. ESSA has also recently finished a successful 18-month collaboration with the Council of Europe led Keep Crime out of Sport (KCOOS) project promoting the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions.

The announcement coincides with the EU's annual European Week of Sport (23-30 September), designed to promote sport and physical activity across Europe.

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About ESSA:

ESSA represents many of the world's largest regulated sports betting operators, serving over 40 million consumers in the EU alone. Concerned regulated bookmakers created ESSA in 2005 to monitor betting markets and alert sports bodies and regulatory authorities to suspicious betting patterns. The goal was and is to protect consumers and sports from potential fraud caused by the manipulation of sporting events. ESSA helps to combat this with evidence-based intelligence.

Every year, our members invest over €50m in compliance and internal security systems in order to help combat fraud. They also give back to sport and society by spending €400m on sponsorship around the world - €250m of that in Europe alone. This increases substantially when advertising and photo and video-streaming rights are taken into consideration. ESSA and its members also co-fund an education programme on gambling with EU Athletes that reaches out to 15,000 athletes/players across at least ten different sports in 13 EU countries.

ESSA continues to play a key role as the regulated betting sector's representative body at national and international match-fixing policy forums and holds positions on working groups at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The organisation is continually reassessing and improving its alert and reporting systems and has established information sharing arrangements with a range of sports bodies and regulatory authorities.

ESSA members include: 888sport, ABB, Bet-at-Home, Betclac, Betdaq, Betsson, BetStars, BetVictor, Betway, bet365, bwin, Expekt, Fonbet, Interwetten, Ladbrokes Coral, Paddy Power Betfair, Sky Bet, Sportingbet, Sporting Index, Sportium, Stanleybet, Stoiximan, Unibet and William Hill. For more information see ESSA's website at <http://www.eu-ssa.org/> or visit us on twitter: [@ESSA_Betting](https://twitter.com/ESSA_Betting)

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