

ESSA endorses plans to ensure betting integrity across Europe

Brussels, 14 October 2015 – The fight against corruption in sport moved up a gear today when ESSA, the body representing most of the world’s biggest regulated betting firms, urged the EU to endorse plans to ensure betting integrity across Europe and to use its standing to promote the approach worldwide.

Unveiling the British Integrity Action Plan at the European Parliament, Mike O’Kane, ESSA Chairman who also Co-Chairs the UK’s new Sports Betting Integrity Forum (SBIF), said it constitutes a “blueprint of good practice and effective detection and enforcement measures to protect sporting events, consumers and regulated betting operators from the negative impact of betting related match-fixing.”

He told Members of the European Parliament, senior European Commission officials, representatives from sport and other major stakeholders, that it was imperative that gambling regulators and law enforcement agencies worked hand-in-glove with sports bodies and regulated betting firms to combat the threats to sporting integrity.

The UK approach includes a comprehensive list of preventative actions that each stakeholder is committed to meeting such as player education and high-level governance in sport, effective risk management for betting operators and thorough investigative and prosecution practices to be employed and enforced by public authorities.

“What we have sought to achieve is a detailed strategic joint approach across all sectors to tackling match-fixing,” O’Kane declared, stressing that the action plan is “crucially committed to information sharing with appropriate national and international authorities. It is imperative that similar practices are adopted not just across the EU, but globally, if we are serious in our desire to drive out those criminal elements that are seeking to manipulate sport to defraud betting operators and consumers.”

“Clearly, where possible, common standards are beneficial and this action plan, developed in one of the foremost sporting and regulatory gambling jurisdictions in the world with a highly effective sports betting integrity model, provides the best potential basis for that,” O’Kane concluded.

The event, which focused on the role of sporting bodies, betting operators and regulatory authorities in combating match-fixing, included a number of other high-level speakers such as Prof Dr Ben Van Rompuy of the ASSER Institute. Prof Van Rompuy, commenting on his most recent work assessing a potential correlation between live (or side betting) and match-fixing, explained that: "Empirical evidence shows that betting related match-fixing predominately relates to the final outcome of a match, not side bets," and that suggestions that those regulated markets should be restricted were therefore not justified.

Jean-François Reymond, General Secretary of international players’ association EU Athletes, reinforced the importance of player education as “a highly effective intervention measure and vital component of any preventative action.” Whilst Nigel Mawer, Disciplinary Chairman of the World Professional Billiards and

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Snooker Association (WPBSA) advised the audience that the dangers of match-fixing should be made very clear to players: "The key message should be, if you get caught your career is over."

Szabolcs Horvath, a Member of EU Sport Commissioner Tibor Navracsics' Cabinet closed the event. A full list of the speakers at ESSA's betting integrity event can be accessed [here](#). The speaker presentations can be found [here](#). A copy of the Sport and Sports Betting Integrity Action Plan and press release can be viewed [here](#). A copy of ESSA's recently released Q3 2015 betting integrity figures can be viewed [here](#).

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About ESSA:

ESSA is a key player in the fight against betting related match-fixing and represents the regulated betting sector at national and international match-fixing policy forums, active on working groups at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). ESSA represents many of the world's biggest regulated sports betting operators, serving over 40m consumers in the EU alone.

Concerned regulated bookmakers created ESSA in 2005 to monitor betting markets and alert sporting bodies and national regulators to suspicious betting patterns. The goal is to protect consumers from potential fraud caused by manipulating sporting events. ESSA helps to combat this with evidence-based intelligence it provides to sporting bodies and regulators

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 members include: the ABB, Betclac, Bet-at-Home, Betsson, Bet365, BetVictor, Betway, bwinparty, Digibet, Expekt, the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Interwetten, Ladbrokes, Paddy Power, PMU, Sky Bet, Stanleybet, Unibet and William Hill.

For more information see ESSA's [website](#) or visit us on twitter: @ESSA_Betting

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