

New ESSA Chair in Board Restructure

Brussels, 11 May 2017: International betting integrity body ESSA has elected a new Chairperson and expanded its board. GVC's Heike Mayer succeeds outgoing ESSA Chair, Mike O'Kane, who has held the position since 2012. The ESSA board has also expanded to reflect its growing membership, with Betway's Jon Russell and David Foster of Paddy Power Betfair strengthening the board of directors.

Heike Mayer, who is responsible for Public and Regulatory Affairs at GVC, is well-versed in the issues facing the sector and moves from her position as Vice Chair of ESSA. She takes over as Chair of the association from Mike O'Kane, a veteran of over 40 years in the industry, who has stepped down following his retirement from Ladbrokes.

"I'd like to thank Mike for all of his hard work over the last five years. He has done a great job in repositioning the association and has been an influential and vocal advocate of ESSA members and our sector in general. There are a number of key issues and opportunities facing the industry going forward. I will be working with my board colleagues to deliver and implement a strategy that meets those challenges and maintains the strong working relationships that ESSA has built," Mayer said.

ESSA Secretary General Khalid Ali explained that: "The expansion of the board reflects a desire to ensure that we are best placed to represent the association's increasing membership and to meet the ongoing challenges facing the sports betting sector. We are very fortunate to have a wealth of experience and knowledge within our membership to help drive us forward to achieve our goals."

ESSA holds positions on match-fixing policy forums at the European Commission, Council of Europe and the IOC. It is driving a number of activities aimed at addressing match-fixing, including a player education programme with EU Athletes (see [here](#)) and an international project, entitled "Keep Crime out of Sport", led by the Council of Europe (see [here](#)); both receive funding from the European Commission. ESSA has recently released its Q1 2017 report, available [here](#).

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About ESSA:

ESSA represents many of the world's biggest 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 sporting bodies and national regulators to suspicious betting patterns. The goal was and 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 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, Betcltic, Betdaq, Betsson, BetStars, BetVictor, Betway, bet365, bwin, Digibet, 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)