

ESSA WELCOMES EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT ON SPORTS GOVERNANCE & INTEGRITY

Brussels, 2 February: International betting integrity body ESSA welcomes the European Parliament's own Initiative Report on good governance in sport and integrity. Drafted by Finnish MEP Hannu Takkula (ALDE), the report focuses on improving governance standards as a means of addressing key issues such as match-fixing and to develop a culture of transparency within the sports sector.

On match-fixing, the Report highlights a number of mitigating actions, including enhanced international cooperation amongst relevant stakeholders, including licensed betting operators and player educational programmes, which ESSA has already been engaged in for a number of years.

The Report also urges the European Commission to publish its Recommendation on match-fixing. ESSA has and will continue to engage in the development of this Recommendation with the Commission on behalf of its members and the wider regulated betting sector.

The parliamentary report also recommends that licensed betting operators be subject to a mandatory financial return to grassroots sport. The gambling industry already pays significant levels of direct (e.g. betting tax) and indirect (e.g. licence fees) in the EU and it is up to each State to decide how to allocate those gambling revenues and to which sector. It should, however, be noted that the 2016 Report by the European Commission Expert Group on Grassroots Sport did not list among its recommendations that sports betting should contribute directly to grassroots sport. Such an approach would also need to comply with state aid regulations.

ESSA actively engages in numerous activities aimed at preventing match-fixing. This includes the player education programme with EU Athletes (see [here](#)) and the international project titled "Keep Crime out of Sport". These programmes are funded by the European Commission (see [here](#)). ESSA recently released its annual 2016 integrity report, which can be accessed [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.

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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, Bet365, BetVictor, Betway, bwin, Digibet, Expekt, Fonbet, Interwetten, Ladbrokes Coral, Paddy Power Betfair, Sky Bet, Sportium, Sporting Index, Sportingbet, Stanleybet, Stoiximan, Unibet, 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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