



EXCLUSION OF GAMBLING FROM THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE: IT IS NOW TIME FOR THE COMMISSION TO ACT

Strasbourg 16th February, 2006

The European remote gambling industry regrets that the European Parliament decided today to exclude gambling from the scope of the Services Directive.

The European Betting Association (EBA) and the Remote Gambling Association (RGA) believe that the European Parliament has missed an important opportunity to promote the adoption of fair and sustainable rules for the EU gambling market.

Didier Dewyn, Secretary General of the EBA, stresses that *"the European Parliament appears not to want to deal with the issue of gambling at European level, when it is very clear that EU rules are the only responsible option to organise a market which, due to rapid technological developments, now knows no borders."*

Both European associations consider that by refusing to include gambling into the Services Directive, this sector will, for the time-being, only be subject to the EC Treaty, mainly Articles 43 and 49, as interpreted by the settled case law of the European Court of Justice.

Karin Riis-Jørgensen, head of the Danish Liberal delegation in the European Parliament and Vice-President of ALDE (Liberal) group, comments that *"this exclusion will obviously increase the already alarming number of court cases and complaints addressed to the European Commission. The Commission must now launch infringement procedures in order to clarify the legal situation in this sector. Action should be taken urgently"*.

The remote gambling industry will not be idle following this vote and will vigorously support the strict adherence to the provisions of the Treaty in relation to gambling.

Furthermore, the EBA and the RGA believe that as gambling is not addressed by the Framework Services Directive, it is crucial that specific rules are adopted at EU level. Such rules would bring long-term and sustainable solutions both in terms of business, but also for the prevention of problem gambling and criminal infiltration. Both associations vehemently feel that it would be regrettable if no EU initiative is taken rapidly, since this might put at risk consumer protection, jobs and revenues for EU Member States.

Clive Hawkwood, Chief Executive of the RGA stresses that *"such initiative should be based on the facts and data gathered by the Swiss Institute Study which is due to be finalised in the next few months. We call on the Commission to propose harmonised rules that are in line with EU law as soon as possible after the study is published"*.

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Notes to Editors:

RGA and EBA represent the European remote gambling industry. Our members are mainly public limited companies who offer betting and gaming opportunities via the Internet, telephone and interactive television. Many of them also operate large numbers of bricks and mortar gambling establishments.