

Brussels, 23rd October 2012

The European Pari Mutuel Association (EPMA) supports the adoption of the European Action Plan on online gambling and betting, while regretting that it does not contain reference to all of the elements that were discussed during the recent political debate.

More specifically, it fails to mention the issue of the link between betting operators and the organisers of horseracing and sports events, including with respect to financial relationship between the two.

With the adoption of the Action Plan by the European Commission today, European Commissioner, Michel Barnier, has set out the key objectives for the online gambling sector over the coming months, such as establishing a structured dialogue and administrative cooperation between regulators, and a set of common rules to protect consumers. Pari Mutuel operators welcome the approach of working towards ensuring a high level of consumer protection, and responsible marketing and advertising activities.

However, EPMA is concerned by the fact that certain topics were not included in the Communication, such as the integrity of sport, and the protection of horseracing and sports events and data. Despite European political groups, as evidenced by the Creutzmann Report of November 2011, having asked the Commission to address the issue of the commercial exploitation of sporting events by betting operators in a way that better clarifies and regulates the relationship between event's organisers and betting operators, the Commission has ignored the matter.

Finally, EPMA regrets that Commissioner Barnier has not asserted the legitimacy of, and the need for supporting the equine sector in Europe by way of a "financial return." If the European Commission is to complete its assessment of national regulations and follow through on the relevant infringement cases that are pending against Member States, a clear position will have to be taken as to how national governments are to go about adopting a coherent legal framework. The Action Plan adopted will not help them to better regulate betting as there is no information on how to protect sporting events, how to protect data linked to these sporting activities, and what is to be considered acceptable in terms of the provision of support and financing to the horseracing and sports sectors. Such considerations were in the European Green Paper of March 2011 on online gambling.

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Members of EPMA are present in 10 countries, traditionally active in developing horseracing and horse breeding (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom). They wish to share their common concerns about developing efficient regulations taking into account the promotion of the equine sector and consumer's fairness and protection.

AB Trav. Galopp (ATG), Sweden - Fintoto Oy, Finland, German Tote GmbH, Germany - Société de la Loterie de la Suisse Romande Suisse - Foundation Norsk Rikstoto, Norway - Pari Mutuel Urbain (P.M.U.), France - Horserace Totalisator Board, Great Britain - Tote Ireland Limited, Ireland - WinRace, Germany, HAHE, Spain



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