

About Us

Established in 1997, Stanleybet International (SBI) is Europe's leading cross-border retail sports betting company with a total of over 1,500 outlets across Europe.

We do this by:

- **Providing value and quality products for consumers**
- **Protecting young and vulnerable people from betting**
- **Ensuring an open and transparent betting environment**

We are licensed in the UK, Croatia, Poland, Romania and Malta and have grown a ground-breaking cross-border business model whose compatibility with European law has been endorsed in both the Gambelli (2003) and Placanica (2007) rulings from the European Court of Justice.

Stanleybet believes in regulated and competitive cross-border betting markets which operate according to the principles of the European Union, markets which would provide benefits through competitive growth across the European markets, as well as ensuring that consumers can enjoy betting as an entertainment and leisure service in a safe, regulated environment.

Fair Play for Sports Betting in the European Union

FairPlayforSportsBetting.eu has been launched to campaign for fair, open and equal access to all European markets for all EU-based sports betting operators. We believe that Member States that restrict their sports betting markets are acting in an unfair, disproportionate and politically motivated way. We support well regulated sports betting markets across the EU.

We call for:

- **A level playing field between public and private operators**
- **Member States to observe EU law, not seek national opt-outs**
- **Tough action by the European Commission on Member States that flout EU law**

We welcome support from everyone who would like to join our campaign.

Five Years of Struggle

The right to provide sports betting services across Europe is enshrined in European law with Article 43 (Freedom of establishment) and Article 49 (Freedom to provide services) being the most relevant Articles of the EC Treaty.

The two key legal milestones in the battle against sports betting restrictions that are incompatible with European Union law are the landmark Gambelli (2003) judgment of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the later Placanica (2007) judgment. Stanleybet International was the principal party behind both court cases.

Gambelli (2003)

With Gambelli, for the first time, the ECJ clearly recognised the right of a sports betting operator legally established in one Member State to offer its services in another Member State.

The ECJ stated that “where a company established in a Member State (such as Stanley) pursues the activity of collecting bets through the intermediary of an organisation of agencies established in another Member State (such as the defendants in the main proceedings), any restrictions on the activities of those agencies constitute obstacles to the freedom of establishment”.

The ECJ added that “a prohibition, enforced by criminal penalties, on participating in betting games organised in Member States other than in the country where the bettor is established constitutes a restriction on the freedom to provide services”.

Placanica (2007)

The Placanica ruling reaffirmed that legislation on sports betting must not contain provisions which ‘constitute a restriction on the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services, provided for in Articles 43 EC and Articles 49 EC respectively.’

The ECJ also explicitly acknowledged that the freedom to provide services, as enshrined in Article 49 of the EC Treaty, involves a dual right: the right of an operator to provide their services but also the right of consumers to benefit from a choice between different services being offered. At a time when a strong consensus exists on the huge benefits that the single market has brought to European citizens, securing choice of high quality services, best value and product innovation in the sports betting market is long overdue.

Infringement Proceedings

Following these ECJ judgments, and as a direct result of numerous complaints by private sports betting operators, the European Commission launched a number of infringement proceedings against 10 Member States.

- April 2006** Commission inquires into restrictions on sports betting services in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden (IP/06/436)
- October 2006** Commission inquires into restrictions on the provision of certain gambling services in Austria, France and Italy (IP/2006/1362)
- March 2007** Commission acts to remove obstacles to provision of sports betting services in Denmark, Finland and Hungary (IP/07/360)
- June 2007** Commission acts to remove obstacles to the provision of sports betting services in France, Greece and Sweden (IP/07/909)
- January 2008** Commission inquires into restrictions on the provision of certain gambling services in Sweden (IP/08/118)
Commission inquires into restrictions on gambling services in Germany (IP/08/119)
- February 2008** Commission acts to remove obstacles to provision of gambling services in Greece and the Netherlands (IP/08/330)

What Next?

Five years on since the landmark Gambelli judgment, a number of Member States who have already received “final warnings” from the European Commission, remain in defiance of European law. The result of this is that the internal market remains little more than a dream in the sports betting sector.

We now expect the European Commission and Member States to move swiftly to enforce ECJ rulings to allow for fair, open and equal access to all European markets for all EU-based sports betting operators and to the benefit of consumers.