



New campaign urges European Commission to enforce 'Fair Play for Sports Betting'

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Five years on from a landmark ECJ ruling, the European Commission still allows Member States to retain unlawful restrictions in their sports betting markets, disregarding the legal principles of the single market.

Vested interests and political manoeuvring are maintaining state control in this sector, preventing progress by legitimate businesses, asserts new campaign 'Fair Play for Sports Betting'.

Five years ago today in 2003, the European Court of Justice issued the Gambelli judgment recognising for the first time the right of a sports betting operator legally established in one Member State to provide these services in another. Despite this, many Member States continue to defy the rulings of the ECJ and prevent the introduction of an open market either by promises of reform, which are unfulfilled and unchallenged by the Commission, or by continuing to apply unlawful restrictions.

In the face of this intransigence, Stanleybet International, Europe's leading retail cross-border sports betting operator and the substantive party behind Gambelli, has instigated today the Fair Play for Sports Betting campaign (www.FairPlayforSportsBetting.eu). The new campaign calls for fair, open and equal access to all European markets for all EU-based sports betting operators.

Launching it with an open letter to the President of the European Commission, Adrian Morris, Director of the Fair Play for Sports Betting campaign, calls on Jose Manuel Barroso to prevent Member States further delaying, through political manoeuvring, the opening of their sports betting markets and to enforce compliance with the principles of EU law.

"It seems clear to us that some Member States do not accept the clear legal rulings. Rather than following European law, they are seeking to opt out of it. The European Commission, as the defender of the EU Treaty, has not only the legal right to intervene, but, more importantly, the duty to do so," said Adrian Morris.

"It is ironic that as a sports betting business we find our legitimate cause being turned into a political football. Five years ago 'Gambelli' signalled the first step towards a level playing field for both state-owned or controlled and private sports betting operators," Adrian Morris continued. "Yet, Member States continue to act in an unfair, disproportionate and politically motivated way and to deny their citizens access to competitive betting services - www.FairPlayforSportsBetting.eu is an opportunity for those who believe that action should be taken against Member States who flout EU law to register their support and make their voices heard."

Visitors to the website will learn more about the campaign, including information about five popular myths propagated about sports-betting. The campaign was launched at the European Parliament today, hosted by Malcolm Harbour MEP.

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Notes to Editors

About Stanleybet International

Established in 1997, Stanleybet International is licensed in the UK and Malta. Stanleybet International grew its business via a ground-breaking cross-border business model whose compatibility with European law has been endorsed in both the Gambelli [Case C-243/01] (2003) and Placanica [Case C-338/04] (2007) rulings from the European Court of Justice. Stanleybet International is now the leading cross-border retail sports betting company in Europe with the majority of its intermediaries being in Cyprus, Germany and Italy, as well as locally-licensed outlets in Belgium, Croatia, Poland and Romania making a total of over 1,500 outlets.

Stanleybet International has an established track record as a fair and responsible private sports betting company, fully compliant with regulatory requirements in the UK, Malta and under other licenses where it operates. The company commits to protecting its customers by applying high standards of internal policy compliance guided by its core principle of transparency in all corporate operations.

Stanleybet International continues to support its right to offer innovative sports betting services in the EU in a responsible and transparent manner and in line with EU regulation. The company commits itself to the protection of its customers whilst guaranteeing their right to choose the most innovative and entertaining sports betting products on the market.