



RGA



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

RGA disappointed in EC decision to close all pending gambling infringement cases

The European Commission today announced its decision to close all pending infringement cases and outstanding complaints against EU Member States whose regimes regarding online gambling are in breach of EU law. The Remote Gambling Association (RGA) views this decision as highly questionable, especially as it is based on and not on any legal assessment of the merits of the cases.

The current laws and regulations that unfairly restrict or bar online gambling in many EU Member States represent blatant breaches of EU law. This is what led to the significant number of complaints and the European Commission's decisions to open a range of individual infringement proceedings. In doing so the Commission acknowledged that the Member States involved had at least a case to answer, particularly as they pertain to serious cases of discrimination against online gambling companies that are legally based and licensed within the EU.

The actions of these Member States severely undermine the free provision of services, which is one of the four freedoms guaranteed under the EU Treaty. By taking this sweeping action to drop all of those cases the European Commission has ignored the need for more enforcement effort in a field that is inherently of a cross-border nature and cannot be resolved solely at national level. More fundamentally, in doing so the European Commission has blatantly abandoned its role as a Guardian of the Treaty and this must have wider ramifications for the proper working of the Internal Market.

Clive Hawkswood, CEO of the RGA, stated that, 'the existence of infringement proceedings and the Commission's subsequent pressure on Member States to comply with EU law has helped with the introduction of many effective and sensible regulatory regimes for online gambling across Europe. However, many other cases have been left to languish for several years and many unlawful restrictions to the free provisions of services have yet to be addressed. In those circumstances we are of course dismayed that, with regard to the Internal Market, the Commission has effectively abandoned our sector and given a free pass to non-compliant regimes. However, we will continue to work with Member States with the aim of establishing EU-compliant regimes that would benefit European consumers, the online gambling industry, and national Governments.'

END

The RGA is a London & Brussels-based trade association whose members are all licensed for gambling purposes in Europe. Its membership includes most of the world's largest and most respected online gambling companies, many of whom also have interests in terrestrial gambling establishments. The RGA is committed to promoting a well-regulated environment for responsible licensed operators in the world's remote gambling markets. Further information about the RGA and a list of its members can all be found at www.rga.eu.com.

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