

# UK urges 32 nations to back principles on Internet gambling

This week, British Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell will urge 32 nations to back a code of principles on Internet gambling, the first major international measure to regulate the industry as the U.S. imposes a ban.

Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, South Africa and other nations on October 31 will meet outside London for talks hosted by Jowell. The nations will attempt to agree on a code of conduct for companies that offer gambling over the web.

A draft of the agreement seen by Bloomberg News indicates the nations may commit to the idea that "remote gambling should not be a source of crime" and that it "should be fair to the consumer and that the protection of children and vulnerable people should be a key objective." The measures are Britain's attempt to regulate internet gambling instead of criminalizing it as U.S. President George W. Bush favors. On October 13th, he signed a law banning credit card companies from collecting payments for online bets.

Jowell criticized the U.S. for attempting to impose a "new prohibition" against online gaming, saying Bush's measures will prompt fraud and crime by forcing the industry to work illegally from nations that don't regulate the Web.

The world's biggest Internet gambling companies lost USD 7 billion of market value in a day after the U.S. Congress passed legislation on September 30. PartyGaming shares have lost three-quarters of their value since then.

The European Union is pushing countries to scrap measures that protect domestic companies in gaming. On Oct. 12, regulators

told members such as France and Austria to stop discriminating against international bookmakers and casinos.

This week, delegates will also discuss age and identification verification systems, including the role of government in smoothing access to high-quality data for gambling operators to identify customers, according to the documents drafted by U.K. officials.

Besides, they will look at social responsibility associated with remote gambling, including the role of government and whether operators should be required to fund awareness campaigns on problem gambling or offer website links to counseling.

Delegates from each nation will be asked to examine whether there are any legal or ethical considerations around cross-jurisdiction treatment of problem gambling. Jowell wants the International Association of Gambling Regulators to be at the center of the dialog between nations on how to handle internet gambling.