

European betting operators continue to deter corruption

8 referrals of suspicious betting patterns in 2011

Brussels, 5 June 2012: Europe's leading sports betting operators have released integrity statistics for 2011 which show a similarly small number of betting corruption alerts as the previous year. The impressive figures demonstrate the value of the sophisticated detection, deterrent and risk assessment protocols employed by those operators in protecting consumers and the sport and betting products from corruption. The information has been released by the European Sports Security Association (ESSA), the licensed private industry's betting integrity body.

The members of ESSA represent the majority of the largest European licensed gambling companies which have a significant part of the global sports betting market. ESSA's members offer tens of thousands of separate sports betting markets each week, with millions of bets assessed and taken.

During 2011, those transactions resulted in 69 alerts, which after detailed examination lead to 8 referrals of suspicious betting patterns to the relevant sports governing and gambling regulatory authorities. Khalid Ali, ESSA's Secretary General, announced that the organisation was pleased with the integrity figures. "Put simply, corrupters are steering clear of ESSA's well-regulated and vigilant sports betting operators; our detection systems are too effective," he stated.

"ESSA members are some of the most knowledgeable and experienced operators in the global sports betting market. These are reputable companies which have invested sizable sums in cutting-edge internal security systems built on that expertise," Ali advised. ESSA does not however intend to become complacent. "We are continually reassessing our systems

and how we can improve on our current risk assessment protocols and our relationships with other stakeholders,” he added.

On the latter, ESSA has recently agreed information sharing arrangements with the gambling regulators of Malta, Alderney and Gibraltar, and is in discussions with others. This adds to its already impressive list of agreements with over 20 sports governing bodies, including FIFA, UEFA, IOC and the UK Gambling Commission.

“As the betting industry’s integrity body, ESSA will continue to seek to promote cross-sector partnerships, such the ground breaking agreement with the IOC to protect the London 2012 Games. We want to work with sport and other stakeholders on an equitable basis,” Ali stated.

“ESSA operators have a clear business need to maintain the integrity of sporting events. That does not mean, however, that licensed operators should bear the cost of the corrupt activities of the unlicensed market. ESSA members already pay authorities large amounts in licence fees and other business costs on top of our expenditure on internal systems and education programmes. It is also important to remember that many examples of match-fixing have no betting component.”

Looking forward, Ali highlighted the organisation’s desire to expand to include more well-regulated operators outside of Europe. “ESSA’s members are major global operators, but we are aware that there are other important players in this market. Our future plans involve reaching out to those parties with a similar aim as our own and enhancing our existing information network capabilities. Such action will undoubtedly benefit sporting bodies, the licensed betting market and consumers.”

The ESSA integrity document can be downloaded via:
<http://www.eu-ssa.org>.