

Denmark to open market

The local government is investigating the possibility of ending its monopoly on gambling and allowing foreign firms to advertise and operate legally.

Speaking on radio over the weekend, Kristian Jensen, Minister for Tax for Denmark, stated that it is currently illegal for foreign gambling sites to market their products in the Scandinavian nation.

However, he said that his office is investigating the possibility of opening up the market to allow non-Danish gambling companies to operate alongside State-owned Danske Spil as long as they met Government demands.

All foreign gambling companies operating within the country would require a license under Jensen's proposals, providing a valuable source of income for sports clubs, youth organizations and other social causes. The Minister stated that he would like to see a regulated market with organization as current legislation provides the Government with little or no control over where Danish citizens gamble or where their money is coming from or going to.

He revealed that sports betting would be the first market to be made available to foreign gambling companies with the lottery remaining under the Government control for the time being. Malta-based online gambling operator Unibet welcomed the developments in Denmark and stated that it is looking forward to working with authorities.

"We are looking forward to, together with the Danish Government, creating a modern, regulated and responsible Danish gambling market," said Petter Nylander, Chief Executive Officer for Unibet.

Denmark faces the possibility of being forced to defend its

gambling monopoly before the European Court of Justice after receiving a reasoned opinion from the European Commission in March of 2007 along with Finland and Hungary. The Commission stated that restrictions on its sports betting market were not compatible with existing laws and that measures restricting the free movement of services were not necessary or proportionate.