

European Commission President told to end political manoeuvring

Stanleybet International, one of European leading cross-border sports betting operators and the substantive party behind the Gambelli case, has introduced the Fair Play for Sports Betting campaign, calling for fair, open and equal access to 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.

The initiative comes five years after the landmark Gambelli judgement by the European Court of Justice which recognized for the first time the right of a sports betting operator legally established in one Member State to provide services in another.

„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.“

„Yet, Member States continue to act in an unfair, disproportionate and politically motivated way and to deny their citizens access to competitive betting services – 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,“ he said.

In his letter Morris expressed his concern that despite ten Member States receiving 'final warnings' in the form of Reasoned Opinions following investigations by the Commission, a number of those countries remain in defiance of the Commission and that the Commission has not progressed the Reasoned Opinions into the Court of Justice.

Stating that the delay to these infringement procedures undermines the credibility of the Commission in its role as the guardian of the Treaty and the Internal Market, Morris urged the Commission to expedite these infringement cases to vigorously enforce the rules of the Internal Market.