

# **Remote gambling industry tells European Commission that Greek enforcement measures “unworkable and illegal”**

The Remote Gambling Association (RGA) has today submitted a complaint to the European Commission about the enforcement measures introduced in Greece to protect the OPAP online gambling monopoly. The RGA believes that they are illegal and unworkable and calls on the Greek Government to regulate an open market in online gambling for the benefit of Greek customers, the Government and online operators.

The RGA, which represents the majority of the largest European remote gambling operators, has had to make a number of complaints both directly to the Greek authorities and to the European Commission about the Greek gambling regime. The key concern is the extension of OPAP’s land based monopoly to online gambling products and this is the subject of a separate complaint.

In order to protect this monopoly, the Greek Gaming Commission issued a Decision which sets out a range of enforcement measures including the blocking of other gambling websites (internet blocking), preventing banks from facilitating gambling transactions (payments blocking), the sanctions include fines on Operators, Internet Service Providers, Media companies, Payment/Credit Institutions and even the consumers themselves.

The RGA has made a complaint to the European Commission because internet and payment blocking disproportionately

restricts the freedom to provide services, the free movement of capital and payments, and the fundamental freedoms to conduct a business, provide and receive information and of respect for privacy, in violation of EU law.

Clive Hawkswood, CEO of the RGA said: *“The measures that the Greek Government want to introduce have not worked in other jurisdictions such as Norway where the regulator has admitted that its online payments ban has not been a success as research showed more than half of internet gamblers now play as often as they did before the prohibition. Furthermore there is no legal justification for ISP and PSP blocking.*

Members of the RGA expect all operators to be offered a level playing field across Europe. In Greece we have OPAP’s monopoly being protected and extended for a short term gain when in the long run the Greek people would benefit from additional choice and better value if the remote gambling market is opened up.”