

European Commission needs to act to uphold EU law

The European Commission has been challenged by the Remote Gambling Association to intervene to prevent the Greek Government's plan to extend OPAP's land based monopoly to online gambling products.

The Greek Government has notified the European Commission that it will amend its existing gambling law so that OPAP's offline monopoly on gambling products is extended to online products, including sports betting and other gambling products such as casino and poker.

The Remote Gambling Association believes this to be a surprising move given that very recently the European Court of Judgement ruled that OPAP's offline monopoly was illegal. The Greek Government is attempting to protect the share price of OPAP in the run up to the privatisation of the remaining OPAP. Unfortunately they have to distort the market and contravene European law to do so.

The actions of the Greek Government have resulted in numerous proceedings being taken by the RGA and its members at a European level and in the Greek Courts. The Commission now has the opportunity to stop a member state from undermining the single market and restore operators rights.

Clive Hawkswood, CEO of the RGA said: "Having received notification that the Greek Government intends to extend what has already been declared an illegal monopoly to online gambling products, the ball is in the Commission's court. The Greek Government has granted an exclusive right to OPAP and that infringes Article 56 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). As defenders of the Treaty we believe that the Commission must act now to prevent Member

States from undermining it._

While Greece continues to support OPAP's monopoly, the Greek people would benefit from additional choice and better value if the remote gambling market is opened up."