

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6297/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Effects of gambling addiction

According to a recently published report by the Media and Entertainment Consulting Network, an organisation monitoring the international gambling market, of all the Member States Greece is the country with the strongest attachment to gambling, with an average annual expenditure on gambling of 800 euros per head. At world level, Greece is in third position, just behind Singapore and the State of Massachusetts, while the fact that Greeks in 2007 alone spent a total of 10 million euros on gambling tells its own story.

This situation is justifiably a cause of great concern, since gambling addiction has adverse effects on society as a whole and on the real economy. The prospect of easy winnings is leading more and more gamblers into addiction, to the point where their mental health is affected and social cohesion put at risk. At the same time, unrestrained gambling has an impact on the real economy, since productive activity declines as a result.

In the light of the above, will the Commission answer the following:

- Is the above description accurate? What has it done to combat problems related to gambling addiction?
- What specific measures has it taken to inform the public of the effects of gambling addiction?
- What action has it taken - or does it intend to take - to combat illegal gambling in the EU, as well as illegal online gaming, which has been flourishing in recent years?