

**Question for written answer E-010905/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Giles Chichester (ECR) and Ashley Fox (ECR)

Subject: The online gambling sector in Europe

The online gambling sector in the EU is inherently cross-border and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the success of the single market. However, the current fragmentation of the sector is putting a brake on its expansion. Certain Member States operate under different licensing policies, some of which are discriminatory or overly burdensome, making it hard for operators to expand their businesses across the EU. This has led to a highly piecemeal approach to regulating the sector, far from the single market ideal. Greater EU cooperation would both protect consumers and promote competition.

1. Is the Commission aware that the current fragmented regulatory treatment of online gambling within the EU constitutes a competitive opportunity for the United States in the e-commerce sector? What steps does the Commission believe are required to ensure that a more coherent approach is taken in order to prevent a further loss of competitive advantage for the EU?
2. Given the absence of consensus within the EU on the licensing and regulation of online gambling, what steps will the Commission take to ensure effective cooperation between Member States' regulators?
3. Is the Commission concerned that an unintended effect of the current fragmented regulatory framework for online gambling in the EU is that legitimate European operators are rendered less competitive than those outside the EU and that this is pushing consumers into jurisdictions where regulatory oversight and consumer protection are lower?
4. Given the intended application to the online gambling sector of the Fourth Money Laundering Directive, what measures will the Commission be taking to ensure that the sector is put on an equal footing with the broader e-commerce and financial services sectors (e.g. introducing a supranational anti-money laundering coordinator for the sector and reciprocal recognition of licenses and freedom to provide services)?