

Question for written answer E-003682/2019
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Proliferation of betting shops and gambling addiction

Spain is the European country with the highest rate of gambling addiction among persons between the ages of 14 and 21 according to the Spanish Federation of Rehabilitated Gamblers (FEJAR). The amount spent by Spaniards on online betting in 2017 was 49% higher than in the corresponding quarter in the previous year, according to data provided by the Spanish Directorate General for the Regulation of Gambling. Compulsive gambling is a public health problem, recognised by the World Health Organisation, which has been exacerbated by the uncontrolled spread of betting shops and online betting systems. In countries such as Italy and Belgium, legislative measures have already been adopted to ban the advertising of betting shops.

In light of the seriousness of the issue and of the growing number of gambling addicts in Europe, I should like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. In light of the above, does the Commission intend to draw up a European directive banning the advertising of betting shops, as it did with tobacco products?
2. Many of these betting shops are close to schools and there is a visible increase in gambling addiction among children. Does the Commission intend to draw up a recommendation to the Member States to prohibit the opening of betting shops near schools and colleges?