



Press Statement

Visit by H.E. Commissioner McCreevy to the Malta Lotteries and Gaming Authority

The Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Charlie McCreevy held meetings with the Members of the Lotteries and Gaming Authority during which the Chairman and Chief Executive gave a brief overview of the robust and comprehensive setup, functions and measures to regulate gaming operations originating from Malta. The focus of the discussions was, as expected, on remote gaming regulation, which included a detailed and live account of the internet based monitoring systems developed and operated by the authority. Internet gaming regulation in Malta is being continuously updated and upgraded. Over the last months it has been working closely with stakeholders on a development of a "Remote Gaming Standard"

During a meeting with senior officials from companies licensed in Malta the Commissioner was vigorously urged to keep the pressure on Member States and refer those which are obstinately in violation of the Treaty and to the European Courts of Justice. The Commissioner without hesitation declared that he intended pursuing the infringement proceedings, fully aware however, that such decisions are taken not only by himself but by the whole College of 27 Commissioners. When questioned, Commissioner McCreevy stated that in principle if a gaming service provider already holds a license from a Member State such as Malta then he can offer his services freely in other Member States without discriminate restrictions.

Mr. McCreevy also confirmed that there will not be a specific directive to cover gambling services in the internal market as he was sure that such an instrument will enact more restrictions than freedoms.

Commenting on the outcome of the visit, the Chairman of the Authority, Dr. Joseph Zammit Maempel, said "I believe the meeting with Commissioner McCreevy was most fruitful; he had occasion to assess the high level of monitoring carried out by the authority and he heard directly from the stakeholders the unjust harassment they were facing from other Member States. The Authority is confident that Commissioner McCreevy will continue in his efforts to see that the infringement proceedings instituted against defaulting Member States will come to a sustainable conclusion".

On his part Mario Galea, Chief Executive of the Authority highlighted that Malta, in principle, does not interfere with gaming policies of other Member States but frequently questions the regulatory policies measures in place or being adopted by some Member States which must be transparent, objective, proportionate and above all non-discriminatory. He also said that Malta has already extended its cooperation, in order to foster, develop, and promote a sound and comprehensive regulation policy and regulatory dialogue for internet gaming within the Internal market.

Mario Galea concluded that today was yet another milestone for the Authority and its policies and mechanisms that are widely recognized to be the most advanced in the European Union.