



Resolution 1777 (2010)¹

Final version

Promoting a prevention policy on online gambling addiction

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Online gambling – comprising games of chance and betting on the Internet – has grown significantly in recent years, both in terms of the opportunities on offer and the take-up rate. As a result of easy access, the attractiveness of what is on offer and proactive marketing, online gambling carries a much greater risk of players becoming addicted than is the case with more conventional games of chance. Gambling addiction is often common among vulnerable groups (minors, people on a low income, isolated people, etc.) or combined with other problems (psychoactive substance abuse, debt, neglect of child care, etc.). Unless multi-level action is taken, there is a risk that online gambling addiction will increase in direct proportion to the increasing use made of the Internet.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly is extremely concerned about the considerable economic and social consequences of gambling addiction, or pathological gambling. It notes with concern that the majority of member states have yet to become fully aware of the problem at national level and respond appropriately with targeted policies. European and national regulations on the liberalisation of markets and licensing contain manifest contradictions and loopholes, leaving too much scope for illegal gambling sites to operate and making them attractive for gamblers. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that illegal games accumulate the risk factors for developing a pathological gambling addiction.

3. Accordingly, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member states to take resolute measures at different levels and in the various relevant fields, and notably to:

3.1. create a framework, at national level, for the liberalisation of online gambling markets by means of strict domestic legislation and by establishing regulatory authorities to monitor the implementation of such legislation;

3.2. request, of those member states which are also members of the European Union, that the regulation of online gambling be clarified and communicated in a clear manner, and that the respective national policies be accompanied by a relevant European policy also aimed at protecting players from online addiction and criminal practices;

3.3. examine the possibility of dedicating at least a share of fiscal revenues originating from the taxation of online games to activities of public interest and in particular the fight against gambling addiction;

3.4. study in greater depth the problem of pathological gambling and its social consequences, especially among the most vulnerable persons, and its relationship with associated addictions;

3.5. acknowledge online gambling as a serious social and public-health problem and outline appropriate policies to deal with pathological gambling, including measures aimed at prevention, such as the supervision of publicity and stimulation of game consumption, education programmes on media awareness for young people and gambler support measures;

3.6. develop services to offer treatment and support for gambling addicts, comparable to those already in place for the treatment of those addicted to psychoactive substances;

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 12 November 2010 (see [Doc. 12421](#), report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Béteille).*



- 3.7. promote a legal offer of online gambling which could constitute an attractive alternative to the illegal offers, which carry a greater risk of addiction;
- 3.8. call on gambling operators to develop “responsible gambling” sites;
- 3.9. run national information campaigns on the dangers of online gambling;
- 3.10. co-operate at European and international levels to harmonise approaches vis-à-vis illegal gambling operators and to learn from best practices in this field.