



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee  
Weekly Update  
**05.02.10**

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## **Public consultation on Europe 2020 – first overview of responses**

The public consultation on Europe 2020, which the Commission launched on 24th November 2009, officially closed on 15 January 2010. The Commission received over 1500 contributions from Member States, EU and national organisations, social partners from both the EU and national levels, regional and local authorities, business and professional federations, individual companies, NGOs, 'think tanks', representatives of the academic community and numerous European citizens. Some non-EU countries and stakeholders also responded.

Although it intends to publish a detailed overview of the results of the public consultation in the next few weeks, the Commission felt the need to provide preliminary indications as to the main trends emerging from the consultation before the Informal European Council which will meet on 11 February. This provisional report can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/president/pdf/Overview\\_of\\_responses\\_to\\_the\\_public\\_consultation.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/Overview_of_responses_to_the_public_consultation.pdf)

## **Workshop on the impact of the crisis on SMEs**

Parliament's Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (CRIS), and experts agreed that small firms must be given incentives and support, including easier access to credit, help with innovation, tax breaks and less red tape due to the fact that they have been hard hit by the economic crisis

Yiorgos Ioannidis, Visiting Fellow in the Department of Political and International Studies of Cambridge University said that SMEs were "hit twice" by the crisis: first in terms of credit access and then by falling demand for their goods and services, citing an OECD study. Mr Ioannidis highlighted an "absence of statistics" necessary to compare developments across Europe.

MEPs Diogo Feio and Burkhard Balz quizzed speakers about the role of state and public authorities in supporting small firms and ensuring that the EU Small Business Act is applied. All speakers agreed that "all assistance is welcome", because "everything we can do to promote creativity will promote our growth and development."

The experts' input will feed further discussion among MEPs and the final report by MEP Special Committee rapporteur Pervenche Berès. The draft should be unveiled on 29 April, to allow time for amendments before the final report is adopted in Committee on 13 July. The CRIS report than will be put to a vote by Parliament as a whole at the September II Plenary session.

Read more:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/042-68319-032-02-06-907-20100201IPR68316-01-02-2010-2010-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/042-68319-032-02-06-907-20100201IPR68316-01-02-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm)



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## Online gambling in relation to recent ECJ rulings

In its ruling in Case C-42/07 (*Liga Portuguesa de Futebol Profissional (CA/LPFP), Bwin International Ltd, formerly Baw International Ltd v Departamento de Jogos da Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa*), the European Court of Justice confirmed that each Member State is free to set the objectives of its policy on betting and gambling and to define the level of protection sought. Therefore any Member State is allowed to prohibit operators from offering games of chance via the internet within the territory of that Member State, even when they are established in other Member States in which they lawfully provide similar services. Nevertheless, restrictions on the freedom to provide services should be suitable for achieving the objectives invoked by the Member State concerned, must be proportionate and must be applied without discrimination. This latter point was unlined by the Court in its ruling C-153/08 (*Commission of the European Communities v Kingdom of Spain*).

On 10 March 2009 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the integrity of online gambling. With reference to this Resolution Parliament has presented the following questions to the Commission:

- What action does the Commission plan to take in the light of these EC judgements on online gambling, and furthermore, what is the state of play of the infringement proceedings the Commission started against several Member States in order to verify whether national measures limiting the cross-border supply of online gambling services are compatible with Community law?
- Could the Commission comment on recent legislative developments in the Member States in the context of these ECJ rulings?
- Does the Commission anticipate a common regulatory framework for the growing number of cross-border online gambling activities, to ensure responsible online gambling, with a view to protecting vulnerable consumers, preventing addictions and compulsiveness and avoiding organised crime?

Parliament will hold a debate on the above questions on the 11<sup>th</sup> February.

To view the European Parliament's resolution on the integrity of online gambling go to:  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0097&language=EN>