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## Maltese gaming industry to benefit as France lifts restrictions

France has finally liberalised its on-line gaming industry, a development which is expected to directly benefit Malta, which hosts many on-line gaming companies.

The European Commission announced today that it had closed infringement procedures against France as it was now satisfied that French citizens have access to a wider choice of duly authorised on-line gambling services as a result of amendments to French laws.

Malta-based gaming companies had in the past few years been involved in several complex court cases as France sought to protect its state monopolies.

Malta had also been lobbying Brussels to enforce a European court decision declaring the restrictions imposed by France over foreign on-line operators as illegal. The Commission had started infringement procedures against Paris demanding that the French authorities change their laws and open the market for more competition.

"This is a very important development for the future of Malta's online gaming industry," a spokesman of an online gaming agency based in Malta said.

"We have argued for a long time that on-line gaming companies cannot be restricted in other EU jurisdictions and we hope that the decision by France to will now be followed by other EU member sates which are still restricting us to penetrate their markets," the official said.

The European Commission is also handling similar issues with Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands and Sweden and is insisting that they too must open their online gaming sectors.

Before France changed its law, French residents who wished to engage into on-line gambling and betting activities could only choose between two French operators that offered a limited selection of such services, Pari Mutuel Urbain (PMU), for horse racing, and the Français de Jeux, for all other forms of sports betting. Both enjoyed exclusive rights to organise certain forms of sports betting on-line (and in shops). As a result, no other European gambling operator could offer its online services in France.

Maltese gambling operators now have the possibility to apply for French licences and offer their services in France. Nevertheless, gambling continues to be safeguarded in the general interest in order to protect vulnerable consumers and to prevent gambling addiction as well as criminal activities.

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### Comments

**J. De Bono**(4 hours, 59 minutes ago) 

Malta is slowly becoming less attractive to these firms who employ thousands of people here. As mentioned below a number of the larger companies are in the process of moving departments out of the island to the likes of Ireland and Gibraltar. This is due to various reasons one being terrible internet infrastructure in Malta, a real time internet product cannot survive with limited connectivity, obviously there are other reason behind the moves but all in all Malta is at a lost and it is near to impossible to reverse this now and will eventually spread to the other large and medium size firms on the island. It wont be long before other non lgaming international companies begin packing up and leaving. Why the people set in charge of such matters do not lift a finger baffles me.

**Gustav Andersson**(18 hours, 39 minutes ago) 

When will we read an article that 3 of the biggest gaming companies in Malta are in the process of getting gaming license in Gibraltar? Hundreds of jobs will leave Malta. More will follow... The maltese licenses are not attractive enough..

**Jason Padley**(19 hours, 55 minutes ago) 

Why are no questions being asked as to why the biggest firms in the Industry in Malta are looking to move elsewhere?

**Jason Padley**(19 hours, 57 minutes ago) 

This is indeed good news, but anybody paying attention to the the industry would notice that the biggest firms in Malta, Betfair & Betcliv/Expekt have applied for licenses abroad and are starting to move some of their employees in the next few months. It is doubtful therefore that this would be good news for Companies still in Malta. It is a shame these companies are leaving Malta be it for financial or infrastructure, it is surely not good news for Malta's future

**Joseph Grima**(20 hours, 11 minutes ago) 

Ok good. But do we Maltese have any right to participate in foreign lotteries such as the UK Lottery???

**david worsley(6 hours, 33 minutes ago)**

Not that your point has anything to do with the article, yes you do. You just need to purchase a ticket. Check out google before making weak arguments.

**Joseph Attard (6 hours, 25 minutes ago)**

Of course you can! You can participate in both lotteries and online gambling.

**C Cassar(4 hours, 38 minutes ago)**

No you can't. You need to be a UK resident or purchase the tickets in the UK. If you try buying them online, you'll get a warning that it's known you're outside the UK. This will be brought in in about 3 weeks:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11572581>

You can go ahead and purchase the tickets but you won't be paid any winnings if you've bought them from Malta (via your IP address).