

Liverpool, 23rd November 2005

Leading bookmaker calls on the Italian President to refuse enactment of the draft Finance Act 2006 because it violates EU laws

On 2nd November 2005, the European Betting Association (EBA) and the Remote Gambling Association (RGA) warned the Italian Government and authorities that Section 66 of the draft Finance Act 2006 directly violates EU law. Section 66 relates to gambling and constitutes a new attempt by the Italian Government to prevent access to the Italian market for foreign gaming operators. EBA and RGA have also drawn the attention of the European Commission to the violations, and expect the Act to be challenged soon.

However, the Act continues to go through the Italian legislative process unabated ignoring the fact that if adopted, Section 66 would be in flagrant violation of EU legislation, including the freedom to provide cross-border services, the freedom to supply telecommunication services and personal data protection.

Stanley International Betting, an EU operator legally active in the Italian market for several years as allowed under EU law, shares the concerns of these European trade associations. Therefore, on 8th November 2005, Stanley International Betting filed an official application to the Italian Antitrust Authority on grounds of Section 21 of Law 287/90, regarding breaches of domestic and EU competition rules created by Section 66.

John WHITTAKER, Managing Director of Stanley International Betting, calls upon the Antitrust Authority *"to scrutinize Section 66 and to issue a recommendation to both the Parliament and Government of its anticompetitive and illegal nature"*. He also calls upon the Antitrust Authority *"to take immediate action so as to restore the application of competition rules in the gambling services sector"*.

Stanley International Betting is very concerned about recent developments at the Senate which has already endorsed the offensive Section 66 and is extremely worried about the upcoming vote at the Chamber of Deputies.

In this very critical context and in order to avoid the adoption of a law which would contain such controversial and illegal provisions, Stanley International Betting calls upon the Constitutional prerogatives of the President of the Italian Republic to refuse the enactment of this law. In an official letter addressed to the President Carlo Azeglio CIAMPI, Stanley International Betting urgently requests a meeting with the President to discuss this matter and highlights that the draft Finance Act is not only in violation with domestic and EU law, but also with the settled case law of the Constitutional Court and the Italian Constitution which both recognize the primacy of EU law resulting from Italy's membership of the European Union.

John WHITTAKER warns *"the Italian Republic against the adoption of a legislative Act in total disregard of EU law which, if passed, will undoubtedly be challenged at European level"*.

Didier DEWYN, Secretary General of the EBA, also calls upon *"the President of the Italian Republic to refuse to sign this piece of legislation, which clearly ignores Italy's commitments towards the EU and to put an end, once and for all, to the legal uncertainty prevailing in the Italian gambling market"*.

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Notes to Editors:

Stanley Leisure - Stanley Leisure plc has a stock market value of c€600 million and, as a member of the FTSE 250 Index, it is one of the largest 350 companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. Stanley Leisure is the largest casino operator in the UK, with a portfolio of 41 casinos, and it also has a growing international sports betting business.

Stanley International Betting – is the main operating company in the Stanley Leisure international sports betting business that includes Eastern and Western Europe where the business has in excess of 500 outlets in Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Italy and Romania.

The agency business in Italy has been the subject of a large number of legal challenges from the authorities, one of which resulted in the *Gambelli* case that was considered in the European Court of Justice in 2003. The European Court of Justice found in favour of Stanley International Betting.

For further information on Stanley Leisure please visit:

<http://www.stanleyleisure.com>