Integrity of online gambling

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The Council held an **exchange of views** on the legal framework and the policies adopted in EU Member States on gambling and betting.

Discussion was based on a better knowledge of the legal frameworks and policies adopted in Member States with regard to the general organisation of the sector, the cross-border dimension of gambling, and its objectives and instruments.

The discussion was based on a Presidency report on the work done in the second half of 2008. The launch of this exploratory work follows an initiative taken by the Presidency as early as July following a request emanating jointly from several Member States. It is the first time that Council bodies have addressed this subject in such a detailed manner.

The Presidency's report, which proposes taking joint discussions further, considers the major areas covered by policies on gambling: protection of public order; combating addiction; protection of minors; consumer protection; instruments to combat illegal gambling; and matters of taxation.

It emerges from this account that the **national models for the organisation and regulation of the gambling and betting sector are very heterogeneous**. Member States have produced diverse models, in particular as regards the types of gambling authorised and the extent to which the sector is open, its regulation or the taxation rules applicable, often linked to moral, cultural and social considerations.

The report shows that the policies conducted in many Member States are influenced by considerations of **public order** (combating money laundering and organised crime), **social order** (protection of minors and combating addiction) and **consumer protection** (ensuring that gambling operations and operators are trustworthy, etc.). Member States therefore frequently have recourse to instruments such as bans on access to gambling by minors or restrictions on the amounts of bets or winnings or methods for checking transactions. With regard to the development of on-line gambling, a number of Member States have opted to ban them, whereas others have adopted specific regulations.