

Football Betting and Lotteries Commission meets today

The following is issued on behalf of the Football Betting and Lotteries Commission:

The Football Betting and Lotteries Commission discussed at its meeting today (October 5) various issues relating to the proposed reforms to the betting duty system on horse race betting and authorised betting activities.

The Commission expressed concern about some of the promotional strategies recently adopted by the licensee for lotteries -- HKJC Lotteries Limited.

Specifically, the Commission expressed serious concern about a press release issued by the HKJC Lotteries Limited citing the experience of a winner of the Mark Six, which seemed to imply that there might be strategies in choosing the winning numbers for Mark Six.

The contents also mentioned that selecting Mark Six numbers in certain ways could be a means to become a "multi-millionaire". The Commission considered that such promotional messages might mislead the public about the likelihood of winning Mark Six. It might also suggest that participation in lottery could be a source of earning income.

The Commission requested the Government to ask the licensee to review the case and exercise more caution in promoting Mark Six in future.

The Commission was also concerned about the potential adverse impact of in-match betting as this might encourage punters to place bets in a continuous and irrational manner.

It agreed to request the licensee of authorised football betting -- the HKJC Football Betting Limited, to take account of such concerns in offering this particular type of bets in the overall portfolio of bet types.

The Commission also followed up on its earlier request to the licensees of authorised football betting and lotteries about strengthening publicity measures to warn the public against excessive gambling. It noted that the licensees had already started to display posters issued by the Home Affairs Bureau to warn against excessive gambling in the external glass walls of the off-course betting outlets.

Such requirement would be set out in the Code of Practice of the licences accordingly.

In response to the Commission's request, the licensees also agreed to enlarge the messages to warn against underage betting and excessive gambling on its website.

The Commission expressed in its meeting its in-principle support to the proposed reforms to the betting duty system and associated changes to the regulatory framework on horse race betting, on the understanding that they would help enhance the competitiveness of the licensed operator in

combating illegal gambling.

It also welcomed the proposal to expand the function of the Commission to include advising the Secretary for Home Affairs on matters relating to regulation of horse race betting. It considered that concrete measures and restrictions on the licensee should be put in place to minimise the negative impact of horse race betting on the society.

The Police briefed the Commission on the enforcement measures against illegal gambling activities on the Internet, particularly people placing bets with illegal bookmakers on the Internet.

The Commission exchanged views with Police about how to tackle the problem of illegal on-line gambling activities effectively and agreed to work more closely together with the Police on this in future.

On public concerns about the regulation of authorised betting activities, the Commission decided to organise shortly a tripartite meeting with gambling concern groups and the licensees of authorised football betting and lotteries to discuss the issues of common concern.

The Home Affairs Bureau undertook to carefully consider the Commission's views and convey their concerns to the HKJC Football Betting Limited and HKJC Lotteries Limited as appropriate.

Ends/Wednesday, October 2005

NNNN