

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001973/26
to the Commission
Ana Miranda Paz (Verts/ALE)
(12 May 2026)**

Subject: Concern about the increase in gambling addiction among children and young people: stricter regulation needed from public authorities

Gambling addiction creates serious mental health and financial problems for a large part of Europe's population, especially young people. The impact of advertising and the floods of betting adverts are increasing the normalisation of gambling among children and young people. In Spain, gambling addiction is rising among the most vulnerable population aged 18-25, with one of the highest addiction rates in Europe, particularly in sports betting. Up to 4.9% of students aged 14-18 are at risk of gambling addiction because they are regular players and have risk characteristics for mental health issues and debt problems.

We deplore the proliferation of these betting shops in many working-class neighbourhoods. Public authorities must provide a strict response to this phenomenon, which needs to be examined. They must also limit the social impact of the laxity that exists towards betting companies by means of stricter regulation. We regret that governments such as the Galician Government are involved in the openings of betting shop companies, as happened recently.

What measures is the Commission promoting or will it promote to combat gambling addiction among young people and children?

Submitted: 12.5.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(24 September 2026)**

There is no sector-specific EU legislation on gambling. Gambling is regulated by the Member States and national gambling laws often include restrictions on advertising.

The Commission supports Member States in their efforts to modernise their online gambling legal frameworks and facilitates cooperation between regulators.

In EU consumer law, Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices ⁽¹⁾ prohibits misleading or aggressive advertising affecting consumers' transactional decisions, especially when it targets vulnerable consumers, such as minors. In the area of gambling, it serves as a safety net and is without prejudice to national legislation.

Furthermore, Article 28 of the Digital Services Act ⁽²⁾ requires providers of online platforms accessible to minors to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security of minors.

The Commission considers, as set out in its Guidelines on the protection of minors ⁽³⁾, that providers are to put in place measures to prevent minors from accessing age-inappropriate content, including gambling content, and to ensure that minors are not exposed to gambling-like commercial practices.

The Commission is diligently enforcing these obligations ⁽⁴⁾. Moreover, the EU-funded Better Internet for Kids platform provides resources addressing responsible online gaming ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2005/29/oj>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/digital-services-act.html>.

⁽³⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/5519/oj>.

⁽⁴⁾ In October 2025, the Commission requested information from the Apple App Store and Google Play regarding their measures to ensure that minors are not exposed to harmful apps, such as gambling apps.

⁽⁵⁾ It deals with gambling-related elements such as loot boxes and gambling mechanics, and manipulative in-game marketing practices, including guidance on recognising and dealing with online advertising and marketing traps: https://better-Internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/adwiseonline/guide?utm_source=chatgpt.com.