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The possibility of a new EU-wide tax on online gambling has been formally raised with the European Commission. MEPs Dick Erixon, Charlie Weimers and Beatrice Timgren, members of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group, have submitted a written question seeking clarification on whether such a levy would be compatible with the EU's principles of subsidiarity and conferral of powers.

The initiative follows the European Parliament's resolution on the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework, adopted on 28 April, which identified an online gambling levy as one of several potential new EU own resources. The proposal forms part of a broader discussion on alternative revenue streams for the EU budget, alongside possible levies on digital services and crypto-related activities.

According to estimates that have circulated in recent weeks, a 3% tax on the net revenues of online gambling operators could generate around €1.9 billion annually, or more than €13 billion over the course of the next seven-year EU budget cycle.

Supporters of the idea argue that new own resources could help reduce the reliance on national contributions while funding common priorities such as education, youth policies, mental health initiatives, addiction prevention and child protection.

However, the ECR lawmakers question both the legal basis and the economic rationale behind the proposal. In their submission, they note that gambling services are excluded from the scope of the EU Services Directive and remain primarily regulated at national level. They also recall the European Commission's 2017 decision to close gambling-related infringement procedures, citing the effectiveness of national regulation.

The MEPs therefore ask on what legal grounds an EU-level gambling tax could be justified, given that taxation powers have not been generally transferred from Member States to the European Union.

They also seek clarification on why financing the EU budget through an online gambling levy would be more beneficial than direct national contributions, arguing that both mechanisms ultimately draw resources from the same economy.

A further concern relates to tax competition. The lawmakers ask whether the

Commission will assess the impact that any harmonisation of gambling taxation could have on Member States' ability to design their own fiscal and regulatory frameworks.

At present, no formal legislative proposal has been tabled. Any new EU own resource would require unanimous approval by all Member States as well as the consent of the European Parliament.

The Commission's response is expected to provide a first indication of whether the online gambling levy will remain a political proposal or evolve into a concrete element of the EU's future budget financing strategy

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