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MARCH | 2025

**Regulation of
Online Sports
Betting in Portugal**

The online sports betting sector, regulated by the Legal Framework for Online Gambling and Betting (RJO), has been gaining increasing relevance in Portugal, following a global trend of gambling digitalization.

This market, at its core, reflects a delicate balance between transparency and uncertainty, competition and regulation, risk and consumer protection. Sporting integrity emerges as a fundamental pillar but is constantly challenged by the dynamics of a sector where technological innovation advances faster than legislation.

■ Legal Framework

The regulation of online gambling in Portugal was established through Authorization Law No. 73/2014, of September 2, which granted the Government legislative authority to create a comprehensive legal framework for the operation of online gambling and betting. The RJO clarified the requirements and obligations applicable to operators, ensuring regulated operations subject to licensing by the Gambling Regulation and Inspection Service (SRIJ). For commercial companies wishing to operate in this sector, compliance with regulatory requirements is essential to ensure their continued presence in the market and to avoid administrative sanctions, such as the suspension or revocation of the operating license, significant fines, and prohibition from operating. For instance, the absence of an effective anti-money laundering system can result in severe penalties imposed by the SRIJ, compromising the operator's viability.

The RJO has the following fundamental objectives:

- Ensuring the transparency and integrity of gambling operations

To this end, the RJO requires all licensed operators to meet strict financial audit requirements and implement real-time betting monitoring systems. Additionally, the regulator mandates the adoption of responsible gambling policies and ethical advertising, preventing deceptive practices that could unlawfully attract consumers.

- Protecting players and preventing excessive gambling

By imposing strict betting limits, allowing players to voluntarily set restrictions on their activities, implementing self-exclusion programs, and running awareness campaigns.

- Combating fraud and money laundering

Operators are required to implement identity verification systems and report suspicious transactions to the competent authorities.

- Enhancing international cooperation in combating illegal online gambling practices

Portugal participates in international networks of gambling regulators, promoting the exchange of information on fraudulent operators and joint strategies to strengthen the fight against sports corruption and illegal gambling.

■ Funding of Sports Activities

Under current legislation, a significant percentage of the net revenue from sports betting is allocated to financing sports federations, clubs, and other entities in the sector. Ordinance No. 314/2015, of September 30, establishes that:

- 37.5% of the revenue from the Special Online Gambling Tax (IEJO) must be allocated to the entities organizing sports events.** The IEJO amount collected is distributed according to the type of competition on which bets were placed. For national competitions, 85% of this amount is allocated to the clubs or sports companies involved, while the remaining 15% is assigned to the corresponding sports federation to promote the sport.
- When bets are placed on national teams, the entire amount of IEJO collected is allocated to the responsible sports federation, ensuring support for the sport.** In multisport competitions involving Portuguese delegations, the funds are fully transferred to the Portuguese Olympic

Committee, the Portuguese Paralympic Committee, or the Portuguese Sports Confederation to provide logistical support and finance preparation programs.

This funding model has supported the development of sports in various areas, from training young athletes to modernizing sports infrastructure. The connection between sports betting and sports funding stands as one of the main arguments for maintaining a strict regulatory system that ensures the fair redistribution of revenue.

■ **Licensing and Regulation**

The operation of fixed-odds sports betting — where players try to predict the outcome of sports events with odds set in advance by operators — requires obtaining a license granted by the SRIJ.

Under Article 17 of the RJO, operators must meet strict requirements regarding integrity, economic capacity, and technical competence.

Furthermore, bets can only be placed on competitions and events included in the list approved by the SRIJ, aiming to prevent illegal practices such as match-fixing. This type of control has proven essential for the integrity of sports competitions, enabling detailed monitoring of betting markets and the detection of abnormal patterns that may indicate fraud.

■ **Illegal Betting and Match-Fixing**

The phenomenon of illegal betting remains a significant issue, impacting not only the economy and the regulated market but also exposing players to financial and security risks. Illegal operators, without any supervision or control, offer attractive products and often resort to aggressive digital marketing practices, including the use of influencers to promote their platforms. These influencers, often lacking proper knowledge of the legal and ethical implications, portray betting as an easy and quick way to make a profit, targeting mainly a younger and less informed audience.

Furthermore, illegal operators function outside the reach of regulatory authorities, allowing them to manipulate odds, hinder withdrawals, and exploit players without any legal recourse. The absence of consumer protection measures makes this issue even more severe, as players have no guarantees regarding the fairness of bets or the security of their personal data.

International studies indicate that about 80% of sports betting globally occurs in unregulated markets. In Portugal, combating illicit platforms has been a priority for the SRIJ, which implements website blocking and collaborates with international organizations to curb these practices.

The fight against match-fixing has been a priority for the sports legislator, as evidenced by Law No. 14/2024, of January 19, which established the legal framework for sports integrity and combating antisporting behaviors. This law essentially defined new crimes, increased the penalties for others (related to this issue), created entities to ensure the fight against match-fixing, and expanded the agents subject to restrictions on certain activities.

■ Conclusion

Online sports betting in Portugal has been consolidating as a regulated sector, but it continues to face significant challenges. For commercial companies, compliance with regulations, the adoption of responsible gambling practices, and investment in technological security are critical factors for their sustainability.



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