

US online gambling laws against WTO rules: EU

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The online gambling website of 888 holdings is pictured in London in November 2006. The European Commission said Thursday that US laws restricting online gambling went against WTO rules but that Brussels would seek a negotiated solution to the dispute.

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"It is for the US to decide how best to regulate Internet [gambling](#) in its market, but this must be done in a way that fully respects WTO obligations," EU [Trade Commissioner](#) Catherine Ashton said in a statement.

"I am hopeful that we can find a swift, negotiated solution to this issue," she added.

A commission investigation found that the US laws deny access to the US market unfairly under WTO rules and discriminate against foreign online gambling and betting companies.

While the commission said that the findings justified legal action before the [World Trade Organisation](#), it was preferable to tackle the issue directly with the new US administration.

Antigua and Barbuda, the small Caribbean state that is home to many online betting operations, have already lodged legal challenges against controversial US laws restricting Internet gambling.

The commission launched the investigation into the laws in March 2008 after receiving a complaint from the Remote Gambling Association, an industry organisation.

In particular, it alleged that Washington sought to enforce the ban by prosecuting foreign operators while turning a blind eye to some domestic rivals, especially for horse betting.

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