

Ireland Could Gain From Brexit With Gambling Law Update

14TH FEB 2017 | WRITTEN BY: DAVID ALTANER

If Ireland makes long overdue updates to its gambling laws, Dublin may get a boost from US gambling manufacturers moving there following Brexit, one attorney has said.

Many US gambling companies locate their European offices in London as their “portal to the EU”, said Sean McGuinness, a Nevada-based attorney with Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie. “If the Irish government ever figures out their gaming legislation, that could be a great opportunity for them.”

The impact of Brexit on online gambling in the UK and the European Union was a hot topic at last week’s International Masters of Gaming Law masterclass at the ICE gambling conference in London.

“I can’t imagine we could do without the world’s biggest online gambling market not being part of our regulation,” said Birgitte Sand, director of the Danish Gambling Authority. “It’s like losing an old friend. But old friends are allowed to do crazy things sometimes.”

EU gambling regulators need to work out a way to keep the influential UK Gambling Commission “in the circle” that is **part of information-sharing groups**, Sand said.

“We agree that the UK has a gambling regulation that actually works,” Sand said.

Cooperation with the US is less important, although regulators in Nevada and New Jersey have consulted UK officials, McGuinness said.

“If we had more online gaming in the US, we would have a lot of issues” post-Brexit, he said.

But McGuinness’ view that Ireland could be poised to benefit from Brexit has one important qualification.

The idea that Ireland could modernise its gambling laws in time to benefit from Brexit **has drawn scepticism** from at least one lobbyist, since the country has been talking about updating its laws since 2006, without much movement.

A big loser from Brexit could be Gibraltar, the British overseas territory which depends heavily on freedom of movement across its border with Spain.

With Gibraltar projected to leave the EU along with the UK, Spanish officials have **threatened to curb that movement**, both by land and by air, if they do not get greater control.

But one Gibraltar lawyer, Nyreen Llamas of Hassans, said she was confident a resolution could be worked out in the end.

"We have always had neighbourly relations, despite the rhetoric," she told the audience at the masterclass.

However, to questions whether EU data protection and anti-money laundering rules will apply in the UK post-Brexit, Susan Breen of London law firm Mishcon de Reya could only point to a recently released government **white paper**, which said the plan was that all EU laws would automatically be re-enacted at Brexit and could be changed later.

"In theory it could work," she said.

She said there was no need to panic.

"Basically, business will continue because it has to," Breen said.

Online gambling is a service industry and it is hard to see how government would not act to preserve trade of services, she said.

"There are plenty of things that can be done to minimise the risk from Brexit."

