

WTO deadline extension could give impetus to Congress

The extension of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) deadline for a negotiated settlement between the US and the EU and seven other trading partners with regard to Antigua's online gaming-related complaint could provide further impetus for the US Congress to regulate online gaming, according to the Safe and Secure Internet Gambling Initiative (SSIGI).

In a statement, the the Washington-based lobbying body said that the new deadline of 14 December provides Congress "further opportunity to avoid paying trade concessions worth an estimated US\$100bn by regulating internet gambling through legislation."

The SSIGI also quotes Naotaka Matsukata, senior policy advisor at Alston and Bird, and former director of policy planning for US Trade Representative, Robert Zoellick, as saying: "Failure by the US to meaningfully engage in the compensation talks puts at risk US negotiating credibility and undermines the institutional process of the WTO."

He added: "The USTR should seriously engage with the US Congress to consider legislative solutions provided by the Frank bill, which would bring the United States into compliance with the WTO on the internet gambling case and eliminate the rationale for potentially significant economic compensation concessions to the EU and a number of other countries."

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