



Press release

Malta, 23 October 2007

## Unibet CEO detained under European arrest warrant issued by French authorities

### Warrant issued in relation with French monopoly protection legislation of 1836

Petter Nylander, CEO of online gaming company Unibet, was yesterday detained by Dutch authorities after checking in to a flight to get back to his home in the UK. The background for this detention is the proceedings filed in 2006 by the French lottery monopoly Française des Jeux and horse betting monopoly PMU against Unibet, alleging breach of the French national laws from 1836 and 1891 protecting those State-owned monopolies.

Unibet is outraged by France's total disregard of European Community law aiming to protect a domestic commercial gambling monopoly, which is being challenged by the European Commission. However disturbing French authorities' methods are, for Unibet it is business as usual.

While the company was aware of the possibility of this action by the French authorities, the timing of it is very surprising. In March 2007, the European Court of Justice ruled in the Placanica case, confirming that betting services are covered by the EU Treaty. The Court also confirmed that criminal proceedings brought against legitimate operators based in other EU member states are in contradiction with the EU Treaty. On 27 June, the EU Commission issued a reasoned opinion against France, in relation with the infringement proceedings concerning France's restrictions on sports betting. Furthermore, on 10 July, the highest jurisdiction in France (*Cour de cassation*) has overturned a decision that banned a Maltese company from offering online betting on horse races in France. Finally, the French government has stated its will to open a discussion with the European Commission towards a regulated opening of the French online gaming market.

Unibet's CFO and Deputy CEO Ragnar Hellenius has been appointed by the Board of Unibet as acting CEO until Mr. Nylander is released. He comments:

*"This situation is clearly unacceptable and extraordinary in ours and in any industry. It is our view that this use of the possibility for cross-border legal actions is a clear abuse of their true aim, and in all aspects, disproportionate.*

*Unibet is licensed in the UK, Malta and Italy for gambling, listed on the OMX Nordic Stock Exchange and a company complying with European law.*

*This is clearly a breach of the EU Treaty and the fundamental principles of the European Union. We are upset of this unlawful act and harassment against our company and a citizen of Europe and we will take every action possible to bring this matter to justice. This criminalisation of a specific individual is a tactic that we have seen French authorities using before and something we will not tolerate. We take for granted that Petter Nylander will be released immediately."*

#### For more information:

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#### About Unibet

Unibet was founded in 1997 and is an online gambling company listed on OMX Nordic Exchange in Stockholm. Unibet is one of the largest privately-owned gambling operators in the European market and provides services in 20 languages through [www.unibet.com](http://www.unibet.com). Today, Unibet has more than 1.8 million customers in over 100 countries. Unibet is a member of the EGBA, European Gaming and Betting Association, RGA, Remote Gambling Association in the UK and is certified by G4, Global Gaming Guidance Group.

More information about Unibet Group plc can be found on [www.unibetgroupplc.com](http://www.unibetgroupplc.com)

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