

EA Games conforms to the Belgian gambling legislation

The Belgian federal Minister of Justice Koen Geens is pleased that videogame publisher EA Games has stated that it will remove the paying loot boxes in the game FIFA and that it will comply with the Belgian gambling legislation, and thus follow the position of the Belgian Gaming Commission. The Gaming Commission submitted this file to the Crown prosecutor's office of Brussels in 2018. Earlier, other international publishers such as Activision Blizzard, Valve and 2K also complied at request of the Gaming Commission.

At the request of Minister Koen Geens, the Gaming Commission investigated various video games, including FIFA from publisher EA Games. The conclusion this investigation, as mentioned in the report of the Belgian Gaming Commission released in April 2018, was that a paying loot box meets the definition of a game of chance. According to the Belgian Gaming Commission, paying loot boxes must therefore be regarded as a form of gambling under Belgian law. The loot boxes are, according to the Gaming Commission, subject to the Belgian rules on gambling and betting.

The Gaming Commission uses four parameters to assess a game of chance: the presence of a game element, a stake that can lead to a gain or a loss, and in which chance is a factor. In the case of FIFA, but also in other investigated games such as Overwatch and Counter Strike: Global Offensive, the Gaming Commission ruled that the system of loot boxes forms a game of chance that is subject to Belgian gambling law.

Shortly after the completion of the investigation, the Gaming Commission reached an agreement with publishers Activision-Blizzard, Valve and 2K. Now EA Games also declares to comply with the Belgian legislation, an important step in the protection of especially young and vulnerable players against unexpected gambling elements and influences.

Minister of Justice Koen Geens: *"Mixing gambling and gaming, especially at a young age, is dangerous for mental health. We have already taken numerous measures to protect minors as well as adults against the influence of, for example, gambling advertising. That is why we must also ensure that children and adults are not confronted with games of chance when they seek pleasure in a video game. I am therefore very pleased that publishers of the investigated video games have already complied with Belgian legislation or are planning to do so very soon and thus put the player's well-being first. "*

Sieghild Lacoere

Woordvoerder – Porte-Parole

Kabinet Minister van Justitie | cabinet Ministre de la Justice