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EU Probes U.S. Web Gambling Ban

A WALL STREET JOURNAL ONLINE NEWS ROUNDUP
March 10, 2008 1:08 p.m.

The European Union said it will investigate whether U.S. laws banning Internet gambling violate international trade rules.

The investigation disclosed Monday could lead to the EU taking action against the U.S. at the World Trade Organization. European companies claim U.S. Justice Department investigations into their activities infringe on world trade rules.

"The U.S. has the right to address legitimate public policy concerns relating to internet gambling, but discrimination against EU companies cannot be part of the policy mix," EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson said in a statement.

The U.S. has long maintained that Internet gambling, which is permitted in other countries, is illegal. The U.S. passed a law in 2006 designed to prohibit U.S. banks and credit card companies from processing payments for online gambling.

The WTO has already ruled the U.S.'s crackdown on online gambling in unlawful, favoring the tiny Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda. Antigua argued the U.S. violated a 1995 WTO agreement meant to open up parts of other countries' service sectors. The WTO ruled in December that the U.S. must pay the island nation \$21 million a year for violating trade rules.

--Matthew Dalton contributed to this article.

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