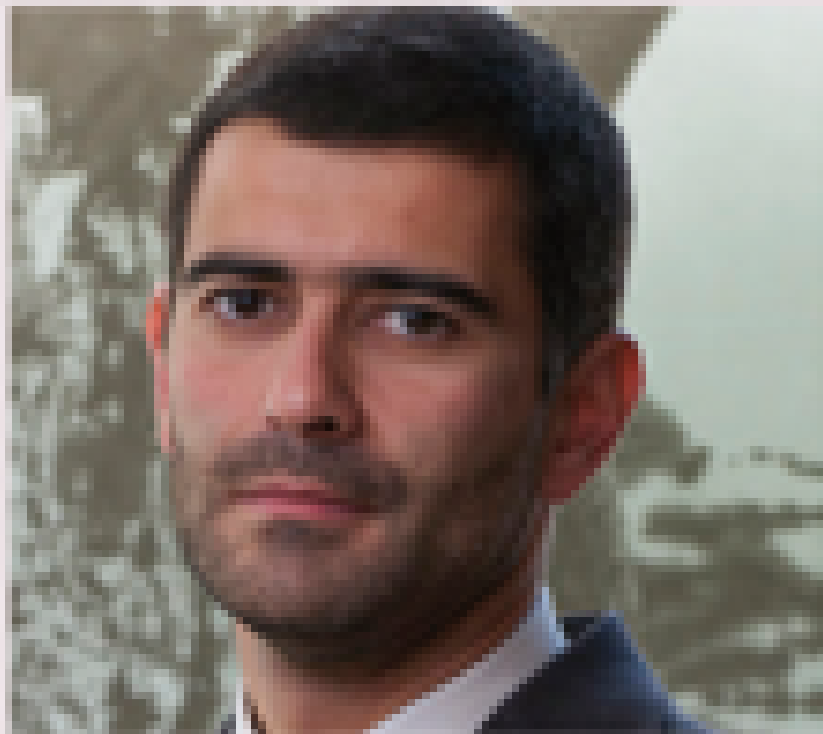


# PORTUGUESE ONLINE GAMBLING MARKET OPENING UP TO FOREIGN OPERATORS - VIEIRA DE ALMEIDA

*Posted on 16/01/2017*



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**Portugal's top sports lawyers are broadening their horizons as opportunities open up in new areas such as online betting.**

The impact of the country's new online betting rules, The Legal Framework for Games and Online Gambling (RJO), is already generating work. The RJO, which was introduced in 2015, opened up the online gambling market to foreign operators, many of whom have sought legal advice.

"Both the online sports betting and e-sports industries are in a very early stage, presenting an opportunity for law firms to enter the market and provide advisory and corporate services to companies wishing to establish themselves in Portugal," says António Mendes de Almeida, managing associate at Vieira de Almeida. "The first two licences have been granted and the expectation is that more companies are currently applying or waiting for their submissions to be analysed."

Mendes de Almeida also expects to capitalise on FIFA's recent deregulation of the rules regarding football players' agents. Under the new system, any person can act as an intermediary in player

transfers, provided the respective national football associations allow them.

"This widening scope of persons qualified to enter into this kind of transaction opens up an opportunity for law firms to provide advisory services concerning the whole transaction, which no other service provider can render," says Mendes de Almedia. "This can lead to a law firm assuming a more important role in these transactions."

These potential lines of new work come as more money enters the top end of the market, particularly in football. "Broadcasting rights for football matches have seen a tremendous increase in the amounts involved, with two major media operators signing record broadcasting agreements with Portugal's top clubs," says Mendes de Almedia.