УДК 351.762:811.112
Kateryna Pasholok
student of group SS-415m NU “Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic”

CURRENT STATE OF THE GAMING BUSINESS IN UKRAINE

K.K. Pasholok

The gambling industry in Ukraine developed as follows: “In 1991, the first legal casino was opened in Kyiv, marking the beginning of the gambling industry in Ukraine. In 2009, due to the growing level of gambling addiction and the absence of proper regulation, gambling was prohibited, which led to the expansion of illegal gambling establishments and betting offices” [2].

On May 15, 2009, Ukraine banned gambling and participation in games of chance. The Law of Ukraine “On the Prohibition of Gambling Business in Ukraine"

No. 38, Article 536, was adopted. It states: "This Law introduces restrictions on the conduct of gambling business in Ukraine, based on constitutional principles of priority of human and citizen rights and freedoms, protection of morality and public health, and prohibition of using property to the detriment of individuals and society." [1]. Thus, measures were intended to mitigate the situation with gambling within Ukraine.

The consequences of this decision were mostly negative. The prohibition of 2009 contributed to the expansion of the illegal sector, where no mechanisms for player protection existed. In contrast, legal operators are obliged to implement principles of responsible gambling and measures aimed at minimizing the risks of addiction, thereby creating conditions for a more controlled and safer functioning of this sphere.

According to the media resource Liga 360, another significant drawback can be identified: "The immediate introduction of such norms may result in the mass liquidation of gambling establishments and, consequently, mass dismissals of their employees, who will join the ranks of the unemployed (approximately 200,000 people). This, in turn, will lead to a violation of the constitutional right of citizens to work, which includes the possibility to earn a living by work they freely choose (Part One of Article 43), and the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families (Article 48)."[3].

As of March 12, 2026, gambling addiction has been incorporated into Ukrainian legislation, accompanied by the legalization of the gambling industry, including online and offline casinos, betting activities, lotteries, slot machine halls, poker, and other similar forms of leisure. Referring to the Report on the Results of the First National Study on Gambling Addiction in Ukraine, prepared by Toporetska Z., Slobodnichenko M., Aymedov K., Synytska T., Shum S., and Oliinyk O. in 2023, attention should be drawn to the following: "The Law of Ukraine "On State Regulation of Activities Related to the Organization and Conduct of Gambling" of July 14, 2020, No. 768-IX, for the first time introduced the term 'ludomania' into Ukrainian legislation and enshrined in Part Two of Article 4 among the principles of state policy on gambling:

1. Protection of the rights, legitimate Interests, life, and health of citizens;
2. Ensuring the principle of responsible gambling;
3. Combating gambling addiction (ludomania)." [4, p. 7].

Thus, measures have been undertaken to place this type of addiction under state control through the legalization of the gambling industry. This legislative framework demonstrates Ukraine's attempt to balance economic interests with public health concerns, highlighting the dual nature of legalization as both an opportunity and a challenge for society.

According to information from the electronic encyclopedia Wikipedia [5], on September 23, 2020, a state organization was established in Ukraine under the name "Commission for the Regulation of Gambling and Lotteries", also referred to as UGLC. This Ukrainian state regulator was responsible for licensing and regulating gambling activities in Ukraine.

In 2025, a decision was made to liquidate CRGL, and instead, a new executive body PlayCity - was established. “The government decided to liquidate the Commission for the Regulation of Gambling and Lotteries (CRGL),” announced on March 25 by Taras Melnychuk, the Cabinet of Ministers' representative in the Verkhovna Rada. “On March 21, the government adopted a resolution to create a new central executive body –‘PlayCity,’ which will implement state policy in the field of gambling and lotteries.” [6] –reports the media resource Radio Liberty. The new agency was created to ensure more intensive control of the gambling Industry after the loss of trust in the previously established commission.

This decision was commented on by the media resource Comments.ua in an article titled “PlayCity instead of UGLC: “How the New Gambling Regulator Will Differ,” authored by Ksenia Nedyilko: “This step was a response to numerous complaints and criticism directed at the Commission for the Regulation of Gambling and Lotteries (UGLC), which had lost public trust. The government assures that the new body will operate more effectively, transparently, and in line with the modern challenges of the gambling market.” [7].

In conclusion, the evolution of Ukraine’s gambling industry reflects the state’s attempt to balance economic interests with social responsibility, though it remains marked by both risks and opportunities.

REFERENCES

1. On the prohibition of gambling in Ukraine: Law of Ukraine: (adopted by the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine № 1334-VI of 15.05.2009). URL : https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1334-17/ed20120812/ (Accessed : 03/13/2026).

2. Gambling business in Ukraine: Electronic Encyclopedia. *Wikipedia*. URL : https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gambling_business_in_Ukraine:_Electronic_Encyclopedia/ (Accessed : 03/13/2026).

3. On the prohibition of gambling business in Ukraine: Law of Ukraine dated May 15, 2009 No. 1334-VI. *LIGA: ZAKON*. URL : https://ips.ligazakon.net/document/bf3ak00o?an=5/ (Accessed : 03/13/2026)

4. Toporetska Z., Slobodnichenko M., Aimedov K., Sinitska T., Shum S., Oliynyk O. Report on the results of the first national study in Ukraine in the field of gambling addiction. Kyiv. 2023. 149 p.

5. Commission for the Regulation of Gambling and Lotteries of Ukraine. *Wikipedia*. URL : https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commission_for_the_Regulation_of_Gambling_and_Lotteries_of_Ukraine/ (Accessed: 12.03.2026).

6. UGLC is being liquidated: the government has adopted a decision on the commission for regulating gambling. *Radio Liberty*. 2024. URL : https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-krial-azartni-ihry-komisiya-likvidatsiya/33358699.html/ (Accessed: 13.03.2026).

7. Nedylko K. PlayCity instead of UGLC: what will be the difference between the new gambling regulator. *Comments.ua*. 2025. URL : https://azart.comments.ua/ua/article/2025/playcity-zamist-krail-chim-vidriznyatimetsya-noviy-regulyator-azartnih-igor-765087.html/ (Accessed: 12.03.2026).