

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Online gambling: European Parliament wants to keep Member States in the driver seat and votes for protecting European consumers against illegal operators

- European Parliament supports EC approach: no sectoral online gambling Directive
- Parliament calls for concrete enforcement measures against illegal operators and highlights the sustainable contribution of lotteries

Strasbourg, 10 September 2013 – EL welcomes the new European Parliament Resolution on online gambling adopted today by an overwhelming majority wherein the Parliament clearly endorses the approach of the European Commission’s Action Plan to not propose a sectoral harmonisation Directive for online gambling.

EL President Friedrich Stickler: “The European Parliament has spoken out very clearly that a sectoral online gambling Directive is not desirable: gambling is not an ordinary economic activity. We are pleased that the threat for consumers from illegal gambling offerings is taken seriously. This Resolution takes a clear stance on the need for law enforcement at the national level and cooperation between the Member States: we welcome in particular the adoption of the ‘unfair operator principle’: online gambling companies that violate the laws of one Member State should lose their licence in other Member States.”

The European Parliament has taken a strong stance on the need for a broad set of measures to fight illegal operators, such as setting up of payment blocking mechanisms, black lists and white lists. The European Commission must now include these fundamental points in its forthcoming Recommendations to Member States on consumer protection and advertising.

EL highlights that the European Parliament today expressed support for the strict regulation or prohibition of dangerous forms of gambling, which should be defined through an in-depth evaluation at the national level. EL welcomes the clear position that gambling is an economic activity of special nature and the insistence of the European Parliament on the application of the principle of subsidiarity. The

European Parliament very clearly underlines the right of Member States to set their own gambling policy according to their own values and enforce it effectively.

Finally, the European Parliament today also recognised the sustainable contribution and specific role of lotteries that should be acknowledged in discussions at the European level. EL members contribute more than 20 billion EUR per year to the state budget or directly to public interest causes.

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About EL

The European Lotteries (EL) is the European umbrella organisation of national lotteries operating games of chance for the public benefit. EL has members from 46 European countries including all 27 EU Member States. The association's EU members contribute more than 20 billion EUR p.a. to the state budgets and the funding of sport, culture, social projects, research and other causes of general interest. Unlike many commercial online gambling operators, EL members only offer gambling and betting services in the jurisdictions in which they are licensed by the respective national government.

Link

The text of the European Parliament's motion for a resolution put to vote is published (in all official EU languages) at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0218&language=EN&mode=XML>

The final text of the resolution will be available on the European Parliament website in the next days.