PRESS RELEASE
Grassroots Sport – Shaping Europe
High Level Group presents its Recommendations for the Promotion of Grassroots Sport in Europe, highlighting the significant role of Lotteries

Brussels, 29 June 2016: The High Level Group (HLG) on Grassroots Sport, composed by 15 high level independent experts in relevant matters, set up under the political leadership of Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, after 9 months of intensive work, presented today its recommendations to Commissioner Navracsics. The High Level Group’s report contains general recommendations as well as specific ones, within the areas of health, social inclusion, informal learning and skills development, volunteering, economic dimension, sustainable financing and urban planning and infrastructure.

EL welcomes the fact that the report makes a special reference to the role of Lotteries, recommending to the Commission to recognise the role of Lotteries in the sustainable financing of grassroots sport and urging Member–States to promote and safeguard the role of Lotteries in terms of their financing of grassroots sports and take measures to prevent and/or combat illegal betting.

EL President, Hansjörg Höltkemeier notes: “EL Members belong to a sustainable model which is based on principles, like solidarity, precaution and integrity. Driven by these principles, Lotteries have been a sustainable pillar of funding of grassroots sport in Europe. In fact, our core principles enable Lotteries to go even further and consider sport as a tool for social inclusion and non–formal education and we are delighted that these dimensions are clearly reflected in the High Level Group’s Report. We now have to work hard towards the implementation of these significant recommendations”.

Indeed, Lotteries have been for decades the primary partners of European sport, providing a sustainable financing of more than 2bn EUR per year to sport and in fact this contribution according to a recent study (SportEconAustin, 2015) has a further impact on economy and employment, with around 40,000 direct and indirect jobs secured each year thanks to this contribution. The safeguarding of this funding is indeed vital and, as illegal betting might jeopardise this sustainable funding of grassroots sport, concrete measures against illegal operators (as also required by the EPAS Convention against the manipulation of sport competitions) need to be taken by Member–States.

The full report of the High Level Group on Grassroots Sport can be accessed here.

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European Lotteries (EL) is the European umbrella organisation of national lotteries operating games of chance for the public benefit. EL has members from 45 European countries including all 28 EU Member States. The association’s EU members contribute more than 20 billion € 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.