PRESS RELEASE

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EU/online gambling: European Lotteries welcomes policy statements by Commissioner Barnier and the European Parliament

- Barnier: Further EU policy steps to be defined in close agreement with Member States
- European Parliament insists on national licences, calls for more action against illegal Internet offers

Strasbourg, 15 November 2011 – Today the European Parliament has adopted a formal political stance (“resolution”) on the Green Paper on online gambling, which the Commission presented in March. In the preceding plenary debate yesterday night, the EU internal market Commissioner Michel Barnier presented his views on the next policy steps.

The European Lotteries’ President, Friedrich Stickler: “We warmly welcome Commissioner Barnier’s intention to define further EU policy steps in the area of online gambling in close agreement with the Member States, and the European Parliament’s call for stepping up the fight against illegal gambling offers on the Internet. We are particularly pleased with the Parliament’s demand that online gambling companies violating the laws of one Member State should lose their licences in other Member States.”

Last night, Barnier said that, as a policy first step, he would seek to enhance the cooperation and mutual trust between national gambling regulators (a role taken by governments in most EU countries) and convene a meeting between them shortly. Further EU actions, such as common EU standards, will be considered in a second step, if, as Barnier made clear, such a recommendation is backed by the national gambling regulators. The Commissioner announced his intention to prepare an action plan by “the middle of the year 2012”.
**Key statements in the European Parliament’s resolution:**

- Welcomes the Commission’s clarification that the political process initiated by means of the Green Paper is in no way aimed at deregulating/liberalising online gambling (§ 2)
- More action should be taken to prevent illegal gambling providers from offering their services online, for example by them; Member States have the right to draw on a wide variety of repressive measures; a gambling company should only be able to operate in a Member State if it does not operate in contravention of the law in any other EU Member State (§§ 19, 20)
- Legal gambling offerings must be attractive to ensure that consumers do not use operators which do not fulfil national licensing requirements (§ 9)
- The EP recognises the Member States’ discretion in determining how gambling is organised: total or partial bans, monopolies or licensing systems (§ 12)
- The EP rejects the application of the mutual recognition principle (§ 16)
- Gambling monopolies under strict government control may ensure consumer protection and the fight against crime more effectively than competition in the market (§ 13)
- The EP rejects any European legislative act uniformly regulating the entire gambling sector, but takes the view that, in some areas there would be clear added value from a coordinated European approach in addition to national regulation; asks the Commission to explore all possible measures at the EU level (§ 11)

In the parliamentary process, the European Parliament rejected many amendments suggested by commercial online gambling operators, such as the calls for a pan-European licensing system and mutual recognition, and for a call on the Commission to “urgently pursue existing and new infringement cases” against Member States, amongst many others.

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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 43 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.

**Further information:**

- **Commissioner Barnier statements** (referred to above) can be viewed and listened to at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/speeches.do?sessionDate=20111114](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/speeches.do?sessionDate=20111114) Transcripts of the speeches (only original language) should be available this afternoon or tomorrow.


- The final **voting list** for today’s vote on the motion is published at the European Parliament website at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/reports.do](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sed/reports.do)

- The **final text of the resolution** will only be at the European Parliament website in the next days.