

# Bingo News

## Presentation

The formal presentation of the new EUBINGO Federation before the European Parliament took place last January 31. The Federation of European Bingo Associations-EUBINGO has two founding members: Spain and the United Kingdom, but as from now on all other interested countries are expected to join in. EUBINGO aims at becoming the only platform to represent the interests of the Bingo industry, particularly regarding legal regulations. Likewise, EUBINGO aspires to become a European lobby – with headquarters in Brussels – with enough power to propose legal improvements, defend bingo operators' interests and act as an intermediary before the different European Governments.

## Interlink

Several Autonomous Communities have already installed a network of interlinked bingo halls, which have enhanced the game in many ways, such as the handout of higher prizes, a greater number of prizes, speeding up of the actual game, lower stakes, etc. The situation, to date, is the following: Madrid has 50 bingo halls linked to Red Madrid, Andalucía has 30 bingo halls linked to InterSalas, and Catalonia has 50 bingo halls linked to Supertoc of Loto Catalunya, that is the lottery regional governing body.

## Percentages

The new Aragón Regulations establish the percentages to be applied in each of the three bingo modes: traditional, interlinked and bingo plus. Regulation changes establish the amounts to be deducted as follows: halls operating only traditional bingo games only are compelled to allocate 56.5% of all cards sold in each game to the "Bingo" prize and 8,5% of cards sold in each game to the "Line" prize; in the case of

bingo halls operating the three bingo modes, 55% of the sale of cards of each game will go to the "Bingo" prize and 6.5% to the "Line" prize.

## **Bingo Cards**

The Annex Law of the Finance Act of the Valencian Community for 2006 somewhat improves the situation of regional bingo operators. To date, the percentage of 28% of the gaming tax on the sale of bingo cards had to be paid cash at the very moment of buying the cards; from now on, operators are allowed to pay this 28% gaming tax within the first twenty days of the month following the date of purchase.

## **Associations**

In the last years, Bingo associations of the Autonomous Community of Madrid had increased in number, adding up to a total of three associations (AEAM, ASEJU and OMEGA) for a region of only one province. This decontrolling is the result of clashing opinions between entrepreneurs-operators. Things seem to be smoothing out, however, a clear example of which is the fact that AEAM-the association made up of CODERE and RANK is now non-operating and its directors have joined one (ASEJU) of the other associations.

## **Meeting**

The meeting of bingo hall operators from Andalucía produced as result a document about the current situation of the game. One of the first conclusions is that present experience is proving that the traditional bingo game can be made profitable operating side by side with other more modern game modes, such as type-B4 machines (electronic bingo game machines) as well as with the new systems implemented in the development of the game, like interlinked, simultaneous versions, etc. Another important conclusion was entrepreneurs' general demand to the Administration regarding taxes, since experience of the past years shows that the application of a reasonable tax (average

of 7%), allows operators to make a profit in their business, while a high gaming tax (average 10%) makes it impossible for any hall to make a profit, no matter what new gaming mode is introduced. Finally, bingo hall operators from Andalucía formally request the right of entrepreneurs to a free choice of games, that is to say that the bingo halls should be the ones to decide what modes and systems of games will be applied.

## **Complaints**

The CEJ-Confederation of Bingo Associations in Spain has lodged a number of formal complaints before the Administration, against the development of different bingo games in several media, TV and Internet. To date, this type of commercial gaming, private and present in different media is not legalised. Spanish bingo operators demand legal equality, the disappearance of the mentioned games and a compensation for damages to the industry. The bingo game industry in Spain comprises over 450 companies, representing more than 20.000 direct jobs and contributing more than 1,500 mill €uros a year to the public treasury.