

Betting dead easy? Testing Youth Protection and Addiction Prevention at ODDSET

by Attorney-at-Law Alice Wotsch, Arendts Anwälte

Ever since the Federal Constitutional Court's decision of 28 March 2006 ODDSET does not tire of emphasising that only state operators can guarantee effective youth and consumer protection as well as practise effective addiction prevention.

The state operators try to give the impression as if they their concept of youth protection and addiction prevention were the only possible one. Recently conducted tests of the radio station „Antenne Bayern“ and a Munich based law office have proved, that theory and practice do differ substantially, though.

The test conducted by „Antenne Bayern“ with two minors clearly under the legal age of 18 (13 and 15 years old) showed that 2 out of 3 tested LOTTO shops accepted sports bets placed by minors without trouble. Only about every third store asked for an ID.

The result proves to be scandalous for the state operator ODDSET, who claims to accord highest priority to youth protection and addiction prevention and who describes itself as „responsible and serious“ on its homepage.

According to „Antenne Bayern“ the reasons for the insufficient age control are the LOTTO-shops 7% share in the turnover and the fact that the shop owners do not want to put off the teen customers as they do not only place wagers but also regularly buy other products such as magazines, collector's albums and

pictures therefore, exercise books etc.

This again proves, that the distribution of state sports bets in kiosks and stationary shops is inapt for guaranteeing youth protection and addiction prevention. Adolescents buying magazines or albums are inevitably confronted with the state sports betting offer. In consequence it is only logical that one or another adolescent succumbs to the temptation to touch up his/her pocket money. On the other hand, minors under the age of 18 are not allowed in private operators shops in the first place.

ODDSET performed even worse in a recently conducted test by a Munich based law firm also with two adolescents aged 13 and 15. The two football-crazy adolescents did not have any problem placing their wagers with 17 of 21 ODDSET stores in the Munich area. This corresponds to 81% of the tested stores.

According to the statement made by the two adolescents right after the test it was „dead easy“.

Youth protection especially in the form of addiction prevention is of particular importance. The Federal Constitutional Court expressly reminded the states to protect minors from gaming addiction.

Studies showed, that adolescents are particularly vulnerable for developing a problematic gaming behaviour. The state youth welfare office's addiction expert confirmed this in an interview with „Antenne Bayern“. The addiction expert said: „One plays and receives the profit immediately.“ This made sports bets particularly attractive for adolescents. This in mind, the insufficient age control in ODDSET-shops must be regarded as a major violation of the requirements set up by the Federal Constitutional Court. In view of these test results it is highly questionable, whether ODDSET's distribution channel kiosks and stationary shops is apt for guaranteeing youth protection and addiction prevention.

ARENDS ANWÄLTE,

Perlacher Str. 68, D – 82031 Grünwald (near Munich), Germany

Tel. Int.: + 49 + 89 – 64 91 11 – 75

Fax Int.: + 49 + 89 – 64 91 11 – 76

E-Mail: gaminglaw@anlageanwalt.de