

# **bwin e.K.: ECJ judgement in Placanica case: another milestone on the road to opening up the European gaming market**

bwin welcomes today's judgement by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in the Placanica case. The judgement represents a further important decision for the freedom of services as a fundamental pillar of the European Union. In concrete terms, the judgement in the „Placanica“ case means that the Italian legislation prohibiting the cross-border provision of betting under threat of imprisonment is in infringement of the freedom of establishment and services under the Treaty on European Union. State monopolies were not in compliance with EU legislation before, but in the light of this judgement are no longer tenable.

Professor Siegbert Alber, former Vice-President of the European Parliament and Advocate General in the Gambelli proceedings, sees today's ruling by the ECJ as follows: „Monopolies cannot and should not be the only means of regulating gaming. Granting licences can serve the same purpose. The reasons given for Italy's monopoly in the Placanica case are far more honest than the pronouncements made by other member states. At least Italy admits that its approach of simultaneously issuing licences is designed to increase revenues and only to combat illegal gaming operators.“

Following the ECJ's judgement in the Gambelli case and the institution of infringement proceedings by the European Commission against a total of nine member states in connection with gaming, today's Placanica judgement provides

confirmation of bwin's own legal opinion. At the same time, it also represents further vital confirmation of the freedom of services within the European Union.

The bwin Group has over 10 million registered customers (including 7 million playmoney customers) in over 20 core target markets. Operating under international and regional licences in countries like Gibraltar, Kahnawake (Canada), Belize and Germany, Italy, Mexico, Austria and the United Kingdom, the Group has set itself the goal of becoming the number one address for sports betting, games and entertainment via digital distribution channels. The Group offers sports betting, poker, casino games, soft and skill games, as well as audio and video streams on top sporting events such as the German Bundesliga. The parent company bwin Interactive Entertainment AG has been listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange since March 2000 (ID code BWIN, Reuters ID code BWIN.VI).