

Right2Bet explores world of German gambling law

(PRESS RELEASE) – This week on the Right2bet blog, German lawyer and supporter of gambling deregulation, Martin Arendts, talks about gambling law in Germany, which is currently managed through a series of monopolies by the 16 ‚Länder‘ (or states) in the country. Whilst the initial move to state companies was seen as reasonably successful, these companies have recently seen a large dip in profit, having consequences for public spending above and beyond what would be the norm in a commercial market. This has resulted in many states (such as Shleswig-Holstein, close to the Danish Border) believing they can make more from taxing a deregulated industry full of private operators.

The other issue Germany has, according to Arendts, is that each of the 16 states has different rulings and it may prove difficult to operate a commercial market in one area, with a monopoly operating in the neighbouring state. Some of the Northern states encompass only cities (Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin), so one could find that they live in a ‚no man’s land‘ or are able to take advantage of better prices simply by walking down the road.

Surprisingly, given the excuses of the monopolies regarding fighting corruption in sport, one of the biggest voices in favour of the liberalisation of the industry comes from the organisation most affected by recent ‚match-fixing‘ scandals. The German Football association’s president Theo Zwanziger and representative Franz Beckenbauer have both been quoted as believing the transparency of a fully legal, liberal system to be far more attractive than that which current laws allow. Indeed, Arendts believes that by 2012 (when most of the state companies’ licenses are to be renewed), the country will have moved away from state monopolies, towards a liberalised

industry in which multiple private operators compete and pay tax.

In other European deregulation news, authorities in Sweden have taken action to prevent users of public computers accessing gambling sites beyond the local monopoly. In a country famed for its lax approach to bringing perpetrators of internet-related crime to justice, the Swedes have chosen to use a filtering system similar to that used on social networking sites in China and Iran to filter out access to any gambling sites which may be seen as competition to the 'Svenska Spiel' monopoly. One of Right2bet's major concerns is that millions of individuals across the continent are finding their rights curtailed, regardless of their attitude towards or interest in gambling, often purely to cover up the fact that alternatives to the state company offer many more markets and better value, as the Right2bet Charity Challenge shows!

The Right2bet blog is completed this week by the first of a series of 'mythbusters' – produced by Stanleybet – which look into the myths peddled by Governments in order to persuade individuals that private operators are not in the public's interest, starting this week with 'Problem Gambling', a subject that seems to be discussed very often but which has been under-researched. So, which country has the highest number of problem gamblers? Is it the British, who live with a legal commercial market, the protected Scandinavians, or the prohibited Americans? Find out at www.right2bet.net, and remember to sign the petition for European deregulation whilst you're there!