

Paul Gauselmann opens the International Trade Fair for Amusement and Vending Machines (IMA) in Düsseldorf

Düsseldorf. This year's opening of the IMA, the leading trade show of the German amusement machine industry, was characterised by courageous speeches and the unbroken determination to boldly and with full might oppose state arbitrariness against commercial AWP gaming. Paul Gauselmann, in his position as Chairman of the German Amusement and Vending Machine Industry Association (VDAI), strongly urged all operators, association members, employees and those involved in the industry to participate in the joint fight against the enforcement of an Interstate Gambling Treaty that has been stated as being unconstitutional by recognised legal experts.

Guest speaker Siegfried Kauder, Chairman of the legal committee of the German Federal Parliament, found, moreover, even stronger words for that what state politics wish to force through as new Interstate Gambling Treaty: "The plan of the states solely serves to wipe out competition. And that is improper!" His message to the German AWP industry was thus loud and clear: Don't just accept this any longer – fight back – justice is on your side!

Before the guests could reach the actual reception for the opening event of the IMA 2012 in Düsseldorf, they had to pass along the red carpet through a line of approx. 260 trainees of the AWP industry – about 150 of these trainees from the Gauselmann Group. The young people brought with placards and banners attention to the fact that their future careers are at stake in the face of the current political situation.



Paul Gauselmann and Siegfried Kauder

Practically all those who passed through the protest lane were impressed by the constructive dedication of the young women and men who stand for their interests in such an impressive fashion.

Paul Gauselmann seized on the subject on online gambling right at the beginning of his speech. "Our industry provides gaming fun to millions of people. We pay about 1.5 billion euros in taxes and levies, we employ 70,000 people in our companies, we provide training, we keep to applicable laws, notwithstanding the approximate one billion made in investments that our industry makes on average each year. The Gauselmann Group alone has invested approx. 200 million euros per year in the future". It is evident that the politicians are not aware of the far-reaching consequences of the Interstate Gambling Treaty as they are accelerating illegal and mainly uncontrolled gambling in the internet. Those who wish to curtail gaming in commercial arcades under the pretext of preventing gambling addiction would be placing the door wide open to the completely uncontrolled offer of illegal online games. Paul Gauselmann stated he is curious to see how long politicians will need to recognise this.

Siegfried Kauder from the CDU party began his active speech with clear words: "I find it humiliating that an occupational group has to take matters to court in order to fight for their right to exist!" State authority does not exist to do things like forbid commercial gaming just because some politicians

want to do that. On the opposite: “It is the task, indeed the duty of each politician to create laws that are aligned to valid constitutional law”.



Paul Gauselmann with trainees from Merkur-Spielothek

The state is moreover acting in a “dishonest and pharisaic” way when it in all seriousness claims to be conducting sustainable gambling addiction prevention with the Interstate Gambling Treaty. The law is only there to “wipe out alleged competition”.

At the end he criticised with just as clear words that the industry has been too quiet and too peaceful for too long and has accepted much too much. His message was unmistakable: **“Don’t just accept this any longer, fight back! The law is on your side! Germany is not a banana republic but a constitutional state that we have fought hard for!”**

The guests present at the opening event thanked him with standing ovations for this speech that awoke new confidence in the fight against state arbitrariness.

The Chairmen of the industry associations then focused once again on the young people at the end: Trainees of the AWP industry who had completed their apprenticeship with top marks in the previous year at state and federal level were once again honoured here.

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