



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **GAMBLING SERVICES IN THE EU: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONFIRMS ONCE AGAIN IMPORTANCE OF SUBSIDIARITY AND COUNTRY OF DESTINATION PRINCIPLE**

Brussels/Strasbourg, 10 March 2009 - The European Casino Association (ECA) welcomes the European Parliament's adoption of the Resolution on the integrity of online gambling by the vast majority of the Members of the European Parliament (544 in favour, 36 against and 66 abstentions). The Resolution stresses the special nature of gambling services due to the social and public order aspects linked to them and takes a clear stance against the application of Internal Market principles to this highly sensitive sector.

Ron Goudsmit, Chairman of the European Casino Association, said: *"The European Parliament has always placed social and public order concerns over purely economic interests. The Resolution acknowledges that Member States are best placed to ensure consumer protection and fraud prevention through the regulation and control of their individual gambling markets, and their right to do so has been repeatedly confirmed by the European Courts."*

With reference to the subsidiarity principle, the European Parliament stresses that Member States have the right to regulate and control their gambling markets in accordance with their traditions and cultures. Furthermore, it underlines that online gambling operators must comply with the gambling legislation of the Member State in which they provide their services and the consumer resides.

Noting that self regulation alone is an insufficient tool in the gambling sector, the European Parliament emphasizes that a code of conduct can complement legislation but not replace it.

The Resolution calls in particular on the Commission to carry out research into the risks of online gambling, take appropriate measures to combat illegal online gambling services and aggressive gambling advertising, and to come forward with proposals for an EU approach to regulating online gambling.

Mr. Goudsmit continued: *"With today's vote, we have witnessed yet another clear manifestation of the political will supporting the fundamental principles of subsidiarity and the country of destination."*



With today's parliamentary decision, the Resolution prevailed over an alternative last-minute Resolution proposed by a minority group of pro-liberal parliamentarians. The propositions contained therein are in fundamental contradiction to the line the European Parliament has traditionally taken on gambling, namely the exclusion of the sector from the application of Internal Market principles. Furthermore, in considering gambling to be an economic service like any other, the alternative Resolution ignores established jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice.

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### **About the ECA**

The European Casino Association (ECA) represents the interests of 950 casinos and 80,000 employees across Europe. Founded in the early 90's as the European Casino Forum, the ECA has progressively grown over the years and today includes 23 members from the majority of the EU's Member States, Switzerland and Serbia.

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