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25 May 2009

Charity lotteries challenge state monopolies

Published: Friday 8 May 2009 | Updated: Tuesday 12 May 2009

European charity lotteries are seeking a level-playing field with state lotteries to be able to raise up to € 10 billion annually for a variety of good causes, including sports.

"We want EU member states to allow charity lotteries where they don't exist, and avoid discriminating against them if they do exist," the executive director of the Association of Charity Lotteries in the European Union (ACLEU), Tatiana van Lier, told EurActiv ahead of a Czech EU Presidency [conference](#) on financing the non-profit sector on 4-5 May.

"EU politicians should also recognise this model as an efficient fundraising tool and define a concept for it in future EU legislation," she continued.

She complained that many governments are still protecting their state lotteries from competition, claiming that if charity lotteries were allowed across the [EU 27](#), they could raise much more money for good causes than state lotteries do: "Up to € 10 billion instead of current € 400 million," van Lier argued.

According to the European State Lotteries and Toto Association, the EU-27 state lotteries' contribution to good causes amounted to € 21.6 billion in 2007.

In some countries, charity lotteries are prohibited entirely, while in others, even where tolerated they are not provided with a level-playing field, because state lotteries maintain certain privileges which the charities don't have. According to van Lier, there are restrictions on the rewards that charity lotteries can give, compared to the "huge" prizes offered by state lotteries. In the UK, for example, charity lotteries have a maximum prize limit of £400,000.

Charity lotteries also support grassroots sport as a vehicle for better health, integration and social cohesion. Examples include the establishment of playgrounds in places where there is no access to sport, or where people cannot afford to pay for using sports facilities or educating young people to become trainers and keep youth out of trouble.

"In addition, we support community-based organisations through earmarked participation. When people buy a ticket, they can say they want 50% of their money go to a particular cause," she said. Charity lotteries thus offer a framework to give money and visibility to associations, but ask in return for active promotion of the sale of lottery tickets among their members or supporters.

Such lotteries also support organisations that work in developing countries, such as UNICEF. UNHCR, for example, "does a lot of sports projects in refugee camps," van Lier said. Other prominent NGOs among the 176 organisations supported by charity lotteries include WWF and Oxfam.

Links

European Union

- Commission: [Sport - Public sector support](#)

Other

- Association of Charity Lotteries in the European Union (ACLEU): [website](#)
- European State Lotteries and Toto Association: [website](#)