

New Developments in Italy's Ban on Gambling Ads

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Giovanni Angioni

On Thursday, **Italy's Houses of Representatives** approved a bill which will modify the current rules applied to gambling ads. Yet despite what media outlets reported earlier this month, Italy is not going to apply a ban on TV and radio gambling advertising.

The new law will not introduce a full ban, instead only adding some new limitations to gambling TV and radio ads. Furthermore, the new rules are not going to become immediately effective as the text approved only states guidelines for future gambling regulation to be translated into norms during 2014 by Italy's government.

Speaking on the issue, founder of European Gambling Lawyers and Advisors **Giovanni Carboni** told *PokerNews* that while Italy's gambling situation remains uncertain, international operators should not worry about such a dramatic measure to be implemented in Italy, as the Parliament did not state that the country will ban gambling advertising anytime soon.

"On February 4, 2014, a part of the online gambling world had been alarmed by the news of the unanimous approval by the House of Representatives of a ban of gambling advertising from TV channels and radio stations in Italy," Carboni explained.

"I was in London for the *ICE - Totally Gaming* conference when many of my clients started calling and emailing me worried about the news. I explained them that there was no need to be afraid of an upcoming ban and after hearing my views, they went back to their regular work without fearing for the future of their operations in Italy."

Carboni, who is one of Italy's leading industry consultants and is often actively involved in Italy's regulator AAMS operations, has a clear idea of what is happening in Rome and why most of the online gambling criticism will not translate into a gambling ban anytime soon.

"Since late 2011 third sector associations started a strong fight against gambling, mainly criticizing the

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way the number of slots in public premises grew during the past 10 years," Carboni said. "Some of the media and a consistent number of politicians decided to support their views, and online gambling - which accounts for only 4% of total Italian gambling industry in GGR - risks now to be an unwanted victim of this situation."

Politicians admit not knowing much about online gambling

"Politicians know very little about online gambling," said Carboni. "Very recently an influential Senator openly confessed to me that online gambling is a *black hole* for them."



That's why Carboni decided to focus his career on gambling, turning himself into a bridge between authorities and operators for informing and lobbying in favor of a more responsible approach to online gambling.

As for the advertising ban, Carboni points out how the new text substitutes a previous draft that was unclear as well as unsatisfactory for the operators.

"The text voted by the assembly is not the one coming from Nencini, but is the one subsequently proposed by former finance vice-minister **Luigi Casero**, and it rules about the 'prohibition of advertising on TV and radio programs in compliance with principles stated at the European level regarding the protection of minors from games inducing compulsive behaviors,'" he said.

"It must not be forgotten," Carboni added, "that there is a further paragraph in the bill which provides imposition of a 'maximum limit to gambling ads.'"

In conclusion, as a result of the voting, Italy could soon be introducing some new limitations related to minor protection to be applied to gambling (and not only) ads in some particular time slots.

Once such measures are implemented, operators will be still able to advertise their brands and offers in Italy outside these specially 'protected' slots.

"If nothing will unexpectedly change, Italy will simply introduce advertising limitations accordingly with principles stated at European level - which do not refer only to gambling," Carboni continued.

"I believe the industry is favorably inclined to accept such limits. In my opinion this is an

understandable measure that could also be an opportunity to strengthen the adoption of common practices and rules among different EU Countries."

Giovanni Carboni is the Managing Partner of Carboni & Partners gambling consultancy group and founder of the [European Gambling Lawyers and Advisors](#), network of professionals specialized on gaming & gambling market and regulations. Since 2005, he has worked as a consultant of the Italian gambling Authority.

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