

Municipalities and the Regulation of the Gambling Market in the Czech Republic



ROUS, Z.¹, DRBOHLAVOVÁ, B.^{1,2,3}, TION LEŠTINOVÁ, Z.¹, ČERNÝ, J.^{1,4}, MRAVČÍK, V.^{1,2,3}

¹National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction, Prague, Czech Republic

²Department of Addictology, 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague and General University Hospital in Prague, Czech Republic

³National Institute of Mental Health, Czech Republic

⁴Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

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BACKGROUND: Municipalities can issue local ordinances which regulate gambling opportunities in the area. Since 2011, the number of these ordinances has been increasing.

METHODS: A 51-item online questionnaire survey asking about gambling and local regulation was carried out in 2015. All the municipalities in the Czech Republic were contacted. Responses were provided by about 6% of them, with their population representing 22% of the Czech population. **RESULTS:** 50% of the municipalities had at least one venue with EGMs. 27% had issued local ordinances regarding gambling. 90% of these were issued after 2011. Almost half of them imposed a total prohibition of EGMs, one third regulated the number of premises, and one quarter regulated the time and/or place of gambling opportunities. Illegal gambling venues appeared in 9% of the municipalities and “kvízomaty” (EGMs incorporating quiz questions) appeared in 4% of them. They were found in 30% of the municipalities with local ordinances, but only in 1% of those with no ordinances in place. Civil or political initiatives

against gambling appeared in 18% of the municipalities in 2014. For 16% of the municipalities the gambling issue was a topic that featured in local elections. 12% of the municipalities had recorded political or economic pressure from the gambling operators, much more often where there were local ordinances in place (39% vs. 2%). Monetary contributions from gambling only accounted for 1.6% of municipal budgets on average. Revenues from gambling are not important for almost 80% of the municipalities. According to municipal representatives, the number of opportunities to gamble (especially EGMs) should be reduced centrally and the powers to regulate should be increased on both the local and national levels. **CONCLUSION:** The majority of the municipalities called for greater regulation of gambling and more powers on the part of the municipalities in this respect. Stronger local regulation is reflected in an increase in illegal gambling. There is a discrepancy between permitting gambling on the national level and its regulation on the municipal level.

KEY WORDS: GAMBLING – REGULATION – MUNICIPALITIES – LOCAL ORDINANCES

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Address for correspondence: Zdeněk Rous / rous.zdenek@vlada.cz / National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction, Office of the Government, nábř. E. Beneše 4, 118 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic