

Austrian Lotteries face misconduct charges on Youth failures

By [Ted Menmuir](#) - 18th October 2023



Österreichische Lotterien (Austrian Lotteries) has been accused of ‘continued gross misconduct’ in failing to safeguard its youth protections.

The accusations come from Austrian player protection body and gambling addiction advisory body **Spielerhilfe** – which carried out ‘mystery shopping checks’ on Lotterien point-of-sale terminals located in stores in Salzburg and Upper Austria.

Spielerhilfe has previously intervened on Lotterien operations, reporting in April that it had identified “70 reports of youth protection violations”.

The incidents saw Lotterien increase the minimum age of purchase of lottery products from 16 to 18 years. However, recent checks by [Spielerhilfe](#) using 12 to 14-year-olds revealed that 60% of retail outlets sold gambling products to minors.

Speaking at a press conference this morning, Spielerhilfe Chairman **Christoph Holubar** told the media: “The protection of minors is still not guaranteed. In more than half of all test purchases, children were

able to purchase Austrian Lottery products, even though they are only available to those aged 18 and over. The company has big problems controlling its sales partners.”

Of legal concern, Lotterien is accused of breaching the ‘**Salzburg Youth Act**’ on the protection of minors, as Lotterien failed to inform retail partners of the law change despite selling lottery products to under-18s.

Holubar accused Lotterien of “greenwashing” its failures on underage protections, in which it showed complete disregard, knowingly “targeting a vulnerable age group susceptible to gambling addiction”.

Concluding its investigation, Spielerhilfe confirmed that it had submitted 24 incidents of violations based on the Youth Act and has recommended that Lotterien undertake an ‘integrity review’ led by Austria’s Ministry of Finance.

Compliance failures on age verifications can result in fines ranging from €250 to €14,600 and up to four weeks in prison for serious breaches. Furthermore, Austria’s Chamber of Commerce may revoke business licences of repeat offenders.

To safeguard youth protections, Spielerhilfe recommends mandatory registration for all lottery and gambling products to prevent anonymous participation. This could also remove the responsibility for age checks from the sales outlets.

Holubar demanded: “As a basic requirement, the Austrian lotteries must ensure proper player protection. The vehement violations in Salzburg, but also in the other federal states, confirm that this is not guaranteed.

“The protection of young game participants is an absolute basic requirement that fails here. That is why the responsible authorities should now check whether the Austrian lotteries actually have the necessary reliability to be able to continue to keep the licence.”

Österreichische Lotterien is owned by Casinos Austria, a subsidiary of pan-European lottery conglomerate **Allwyn International**.
