

# The current state of Gambling in Switzerland

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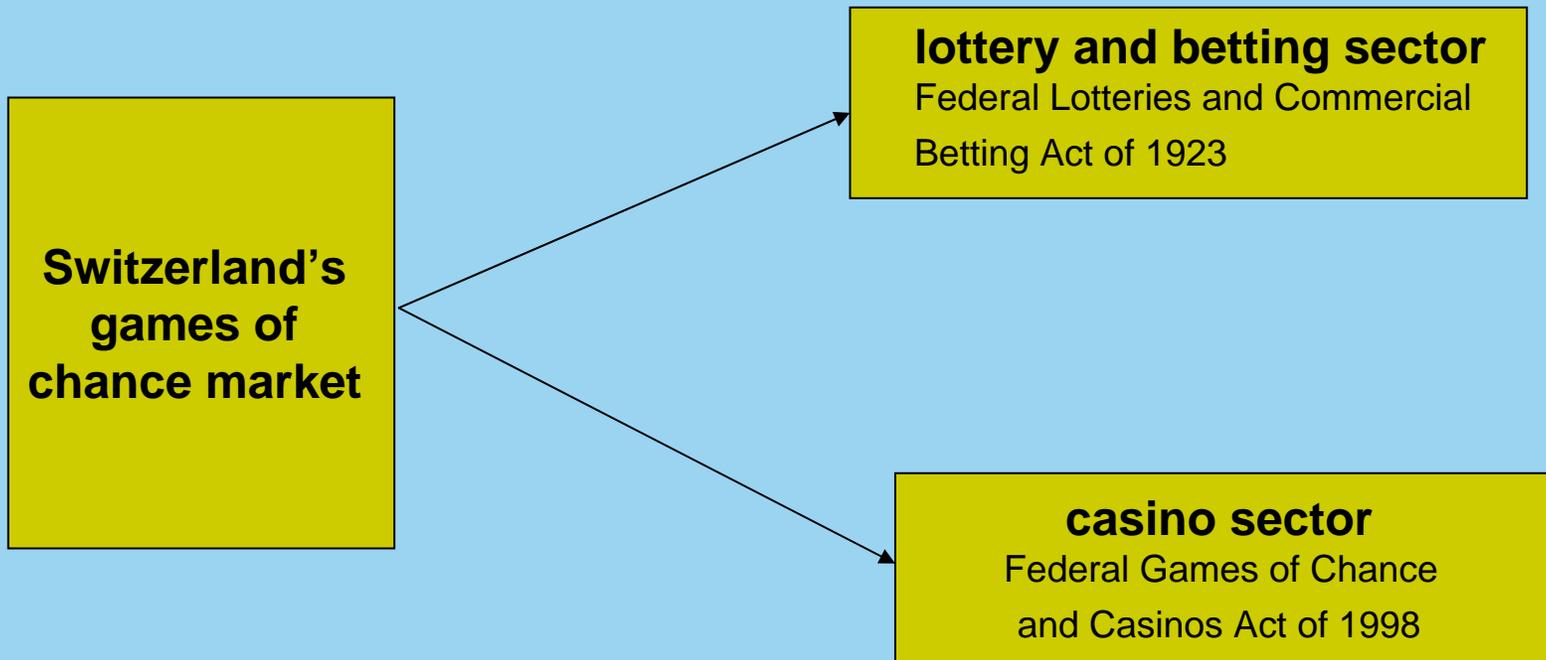
# Facts about Switzerland

- Switzerland today is a federal state composed of 26 cantons
- Resident population of 7.5 million
- Does not belong to the European Union
- Annual gross domestic product averaging € 35'000 per head of population

# The current state of the games of chance market

- In 1993 the prohibition in the casinos was lifted
- Gambling now has a constitutional basis in Article 106 of the Swiss Federal Constitution
- Switzerland's new **Casino Act has been adopted in 2000**
- Casinos opened between summer 2002 and autumn 2003.

# The current state of the games of chance market



# The current state of games of chance: Lotteries and Betting

- Current legislation as it stands upholds the general prohibition on lotteries and betting.
- The only lotteries permitted are those supporting good causes or charitable ends.
- Betting is allowed at a cantonal level within certain constraints.

# The current state of the games of chance market: Casinos

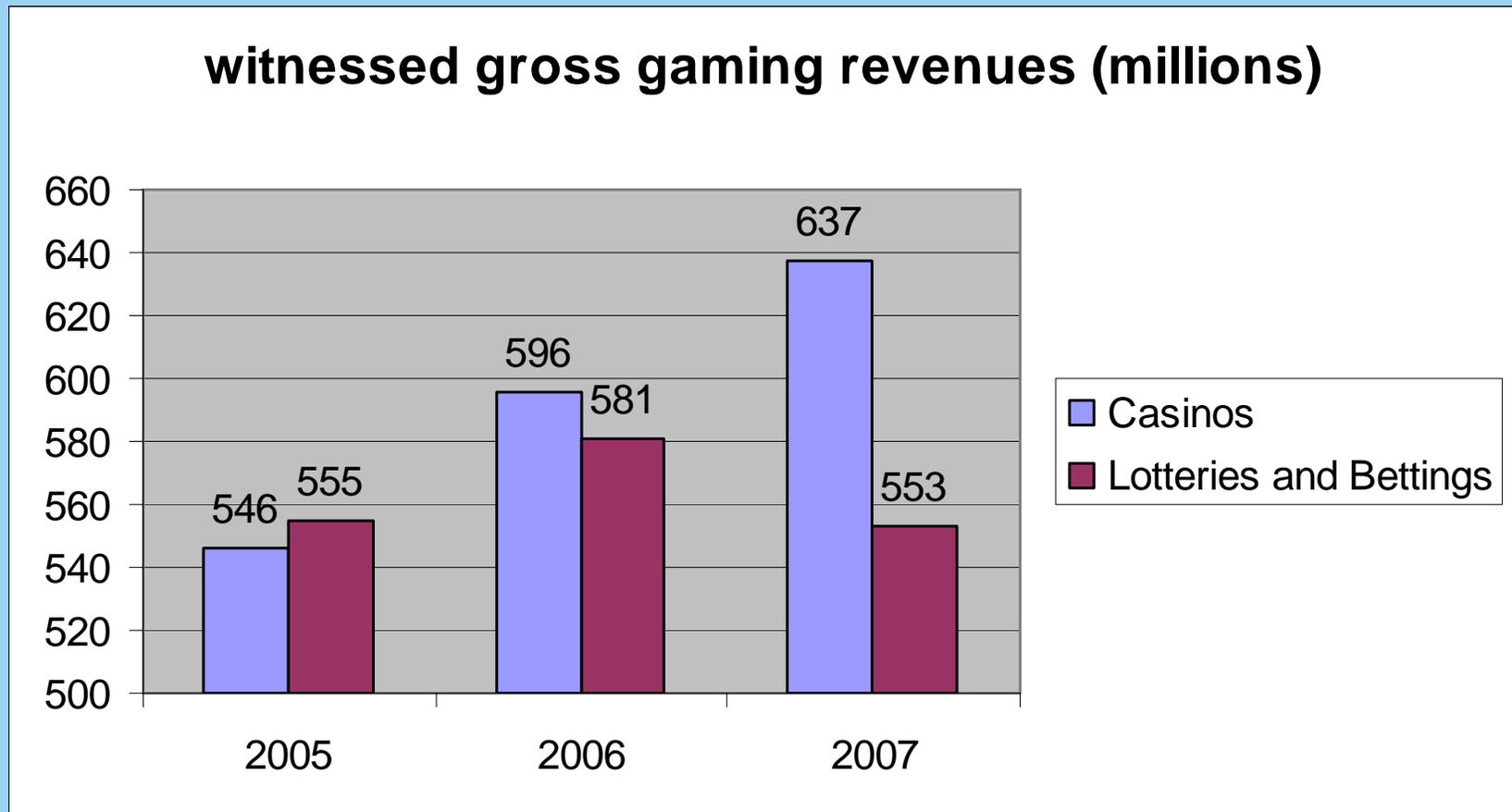
Casinos in Switzerland are overseen by the independent Federal Casino Commission, which is also responsible for enforcing the Casino Act and its executive ordinances. Implementation of the Casino Act is specified by the Executive Ordinance to the Federal Games of Chance and Casinos Act (Casino Ordinance)

# The current state of the games of chance market: Casinos

- Density of the 19 casinos



# The current state of the games of chance market: Casinos and Lotteries/Betting



# The current state of the games of chance market: Internet

- Online gambling operations are unlawful in Switzerland
- Online gambling market is entirely offshore

# Characteristics of gamblers

**Künzi et al. (2004):** define consumers of games of chance and frequent gamblers as having the following characteristics (Assortment)

- **Gender:**  
male (57%), female (43%)
- **Age:**  
all age ranges are represented; lotteries and betting: most frequent gamblers are aged 50 years or over, slot machines and casinos: patronized by a younger age group (40% are below 35 years); a strikingly high proportion of gamblers are of pensionable age
- **Social Economical Status:**  
found across all strata of education; a higher statistical representation of gamblers of a lower education level
- **Consumer behavior**  
Data relating to the additional consumption of alcohol and tobacco indicate that frequent gamblers tend to consume more alcohol and to smoke more than the general population aged 18 years and over. This is not the case for the consumption of illegal substances

# Incidence of problems and pathological gambling

**Osiek, C., Bondolfi, G., & Ferrero, F. (1999): Étude de prévalence du jeu pathologique en Suisse (N= 2'536)**

- **2,451 respondents (97%) are described as occasional or non-gamblers;**
- **55 respondents (2.2%) were revealed as problem gamblers or potential pathological gamblers;**
- **20 respondents (0.8%) were probable pathological gamblers;**
  
- **between 32,700 and 77,800 pathological gamblers in Switzerland**
- **between 107,100 and 179,800 problem gamblers**
  - ➔ **this equates to roughly 145,000 to 230,000 people displaying gambling-related problems.**
  - ➔ **high comorbidity between alcohol and pathological gambling**
  - ➔ **link between the availability of games of chance (especially chance-based slot machines outside casinos) from region to region and the proportion of pathological and potentially pathological gamblers.**

# Incidence of problems and pathological gambling

**Brodbeck, J., Dürrenberger, S., & Znoj, H. (2007).  
Grundlagenstudie Spielsucht: Prävalenzen, Nutzung der  
Glücksspielangebote und deren Einfluss auf die Diagnose des  
Pathologischen Spielens  
N= 6,385**

- **Data based on the National Opinion Research Center DSM Screen for Gambling Problems (NODS)**
- **The lifetime prevalence of problem gambling (NODS-score 3-4) in individuals aged 14 years and above was 0.6%**
- **lifetime prevalence of pathological gambling (NODS-score  $\geq$  5) was 0.3% (weighted sample).**
- **At-risk gamblers (NODS-score 1-2) make up 2% of the weighted sample.**

# Demand for treatment offered by drop-in counselling services

- Demand for treatment offered by drop-in counselling services:
  - 146 people in 1998
  - 751 people in 2003
  - People seeking help directly from private psychiatrists and psychotherapists and drop-in psychiatric clinics are not included.
  - Estimation: in 2003 there was a demand for help between 1'000 and 1'500 people

# Social Concept

**The Casino Act provides major safeguards for gamblers in the form of responsible gaming interventions. Each of Switzerland's casinos is obliged to prepare and implement what is known as a social concept.**

It make provisions for the following:

- Measures for the prevention of problem gambling and the early recognition of gamblers at risk
- Training schemes for employees
- Logging of data related to problem gambling

# Preventive interventions and early recognition:

- access to information on the risks of gambling
- help in the form of bans, counselling, self-help groups, and so forth
- self-assessment questionnaire that helps patrons find out the degree to which they are at risk of problem gambling have to be available
- Casino staff must be in possession of guidelines and a checklist to help them spot gamblers at risk and enter into a dialogue with them

# How to ensure the effectiveness of these measures?

- casino staff are issued with a standardised reporting card in the form of a checklist that helps them spot patrons at risk of problem gambling
- Those casino employees entrusted with implementing the social concept must follow a one-off basic course of instruction provided by a qualified body, followed by an annual refresher course

# Gambling prohibitions and bans

Bans applies on persons

- under the age of 18 years
- on people banned from gambling
- on casino employees
- a gambler is overly in debt
- the stakes being wagered bear little relation to their financial circumstances
- disrupting influence on the game

# Gambling prohibitions and bans

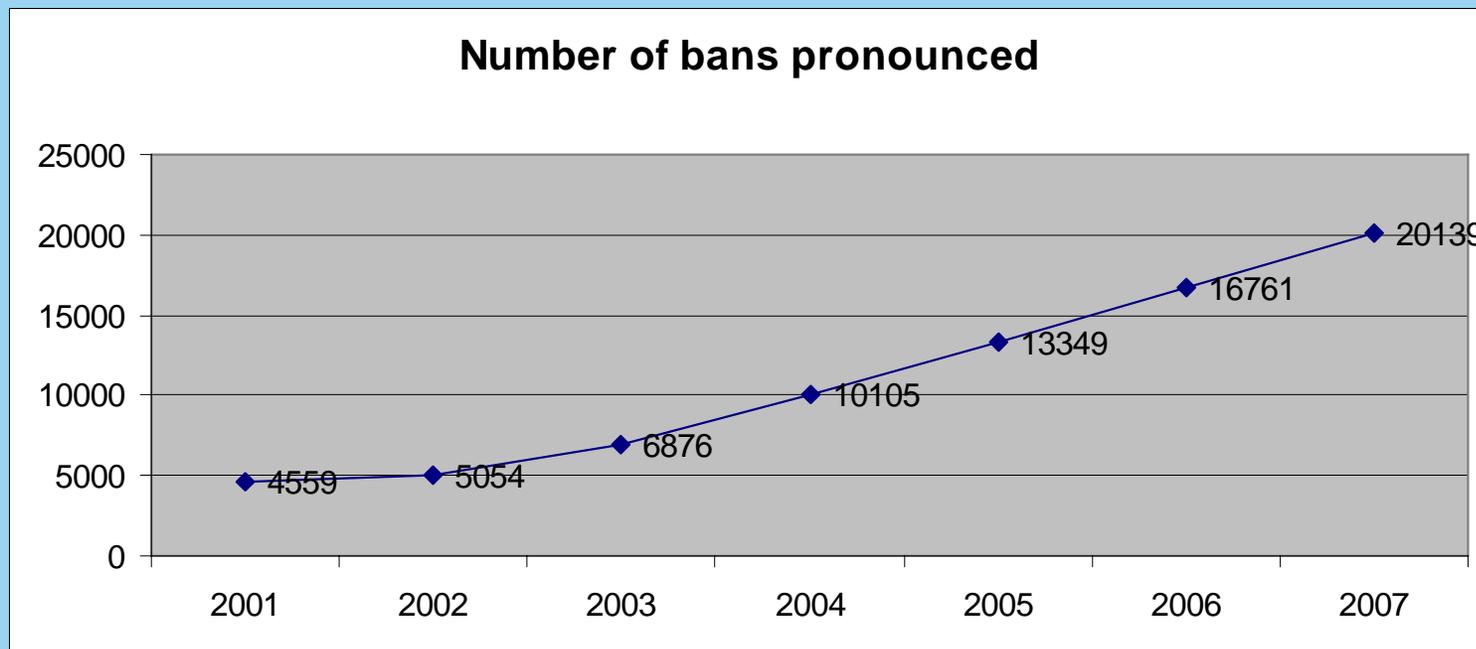
- A ban can be imposed by the casino staff or a patron can initiate a self-imposed ban
- Swiss casinos' electronic access systems and ID checks help to enforce the ban.
- A ban is, in principle, of unlimited duration. A patron can apply for a ban to be lifted one year after its imposition at the earliest, though by requiring evidence of a patron's financial affairs and proof that he or she is financially solvent

# Gambling prohibitions and bans

- Each casino is required by the Casino Act to keep a register of gambling bans. It must submit an annual report to the independent Federal Casino Commission detailing inter alia the following:
  - The training undertaken by the staff
  - The implementation of preventive interventions
  - The implementation of early-recognition interventions
  - The number of patrons referred to addiction prevention services, counselling services or for therapy
  - The gambling bans issued and the number of bans issued and lifted per month

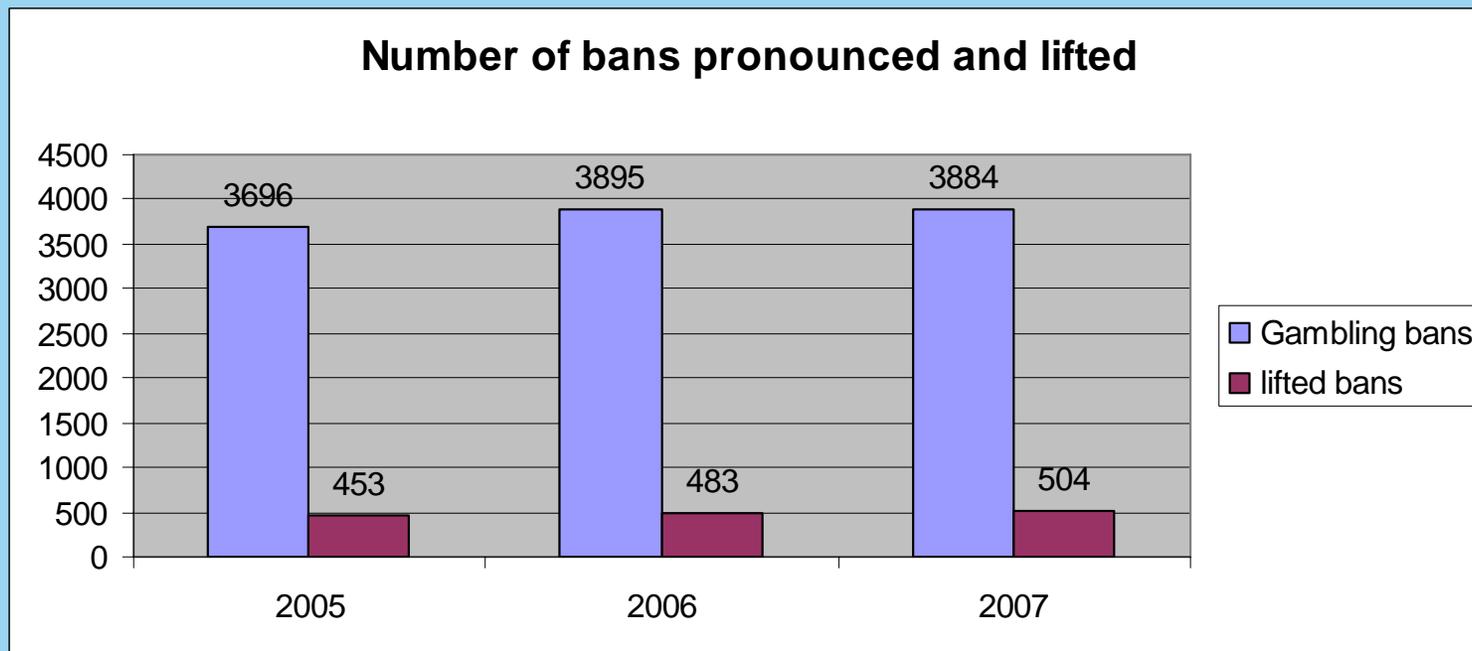
# Social concept

## Effectiveness of casinos' preventive interventions



# Social Concept

## Effectiveness of casinos' preventive interventions



# State health policy

- The prevention and treatment of gambling addiction plays a secondary role in the nation's health policy
- There are no public gambling addiction prevention programmes, and treatment facilities do not have the necessary funds

# Conclusion

- Experience of four years of casino operations so far suggests that it is possible to strike a balance between commercial profitability – needed to raise tax revenues to satisfy the state's fiscal interests – and the state's social and health policy interests
- A lack of a national, and therefore coherent, policy on games of chance is seriously hampering the development of a transparent strategy on future challenges;

**Thank you for your attention!**