

Deputy prime minister Prof. Dr. Andreas Pinkwart and VDAI-chairman Paul Gauselmann opened the 26th International Trade Fair for Amusement and Vending Machines in Düsseldorf

Düsseldorf/Espelkamp. The minister for innovation, science, research, and technology and deputy prime minister of the Land North Rhine-Westphalia opened the 26th IMA (International Trade Fair of Amusement and Vending Machines) on 16 January 2007 together with Espelkamp-based entrepreneur and chairman of the German Industry Association of Coin-Operated Amusement and Vending Machines (VDAI), Paul Gauselmann.

“The German amusement and vending machine industry starts the year 2007 with cautious optimism,” said Paul Gauselmann. “The IMA and the orders placed with us here are especially important for the Gauselmann Group and its employees. It is therefore of utmost importance to come to convince the expert audience once again of the ability of the family-managed company to perform and to innovate. All orders that we bring home from Düsseldorf will secure jobs in the adp-manufacturing plant,” explained the entrepreneur from Espelkamp.

Minister Pinkwart, too, was optimistic: “North Rhine-Westphalia is recovering, North Rhine-Westphalia lives an attractive upswing and we succeeded also in attracting you with this trade fair. As the minister for innovation, science, research, and technology I am delighted, because your industry

has become especially famous for innovation." The North Rhine-Westphalian minister stated that he is very happy that the new gaming regulations, which entered into force on 1 January 2006, provide a framework for the future of the German amusement and vending machine industry. "Innovation policy is always at the same time regulatory policy. The new gaming regulations changed the framework conditions responsibly, so that innovation will now be possible. This will make the German amusement and vending machine industry much more competitive in the European arena." According to minister Pinkwart the German Federal State should use the remaining time granted to them by the Federal Constitutional Court, to try to find possibilities of a compromise between protection of players and commercial competition concerning the legally controversial providers of sports-betting in Germany. Concerning curfews for arcades, the minister also gave rise to hope; in his opinion the protection of players is sufficiently regulated in the gaming regulations and will therefore not have to be enforced with additional curfews. "My colleague, minister for economic affairs, Christa Thoben, actually shares this opinion, so that there is surely scope for changes."

"At this year's IMA we will present manifold product innovations, which contain the experience with the possibilities and opportunities offered by the new gaming regulations. So the visitors can look forward to a whole number of innovative gaming systems," said Paul Gauselmann. For him this is an opportunity to counteract the reduction in market share of commercial AWP gaming from 24.3 percent (1995) to 21.5 percent (2005) in the total gaming and gambling market in Germany.

In order to be able to successfully persist in the long run, modern framework conditions similar to those that other European countries have had for many years were indispensable for the amusement and vending machine industry. Paul Gauselmann feels that it is very positive that the politicians

recognized the basic need to make the gaming regulations more modern. Indeed, not all wishes of the industry were fulfilled, but on the upside the new key data for AWP's opened a much wider creative scope for the game developers. "This gives rise to hope for the future, because from now on it is mainly up to us again to decide, where we are heading," said Paul Gauselmann.

In his welcoming speech on the occasion of the opening ceremony at the Düsseldorf fairgrounds the Lord Mayor of the city of Düsseldorf, Joachim Erwin, was delighted that the IMA has found a new home in the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia. "The change in venue to Düsseldorf will surely contribute to consolidating the success of your industry also in the future."

More than 140 exhibitors were represented at the Düsseldorf trade show with a vast range of electronic entertainment – from AWP's to internet terminals. More than 8,300 national and international expert audience visited the IMA.

