

MERKUR Group acquires Luther and expands market leadership with casinos in Lower Saxony

Hanover/Espelkamp, 30 June 2025 – The MERKUR Group will operate all casinos in Lower Saxony from 1 July 2025. The acquisition of the casino company from Casinos Austria International marks the end of a lengthy dispute.

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After the MERKUR Group was awarded the 15-year licence to operate casinos in Lower Saxony in a concept competition in autumn 2023, the second-placed Spielbanken Niedersachsen GmbH filed a lawsuit. In a complex proceeding, the Administrative Court of Hanover confirmed the selection decision of the Lower Saxony Ministry of Finance in its ruling of February 2025. The Luther casino team has already successfully represented the MERKUR Group in these administrative court proceedings.

Following intensive negotiations, a purchase agreement has now been concluded for the acquisition of the casino company, which operates casinos at ten locations in Lower Saxony. The transaction was completed on 1 July 2025, meaning that operations will continue immediately under the MERKUR brand.

With the acquisition of the casino company Spielbanken Niedersachsen GmbH, the MERKUR Group is further expanding its position as the largest national casino operator. In the current proceedings in Lower Saxony, MERKUR again relied on Luther's casino team led by Dr Thomas Gohrke and Dr Daniel Schubmann. This team had already successfully advised on the acquisition of the WestSpiel Group in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2021.

'We knew we were in the best hands with Luther's experienced experts, both in the complex administrative and court proceedings and in the demanding contract negotiations within an extremely ambitious timeframe,' said David Schnabel, the member of the Merkur.com AG Executive Board responsible for the casino business.

About MERKUR:

The MERKUR Group (formerly operating under the name Gauselmann) is a family-owned, internationally active company in the entertainment and leisure industry with headquarters in

Espekamp and Lübbecke (East Westphalia). For over 65 years, the group has been developing, producing and distributing entertainment gaming machines, games, system solutions and cash management systems. The MERKUR Group also operates the MERKUR Casino chain, the MERKUR casinos and casinos on cruise ships, and is active in the areas of sports betting and online gaming. In 2023, the Gauselmann Group generated a combined annual turnover of over EUR 3.8 billion with almost 15,000 employees worldwide.

For MERKUR:

Luther, Gaming Law: *Dr. Thomas Gohrke* (partner, lead), *Theresa Oesch* (senior associate)

Luther, Corporate/M&A: *Dr. Thomas Halberkamp* (partner), *Dr. Daniel Schubmann* (counsel, lead), *Stefan Tolksdorf, LL.M.* (senior associate), *Vivien Seifert* (associate)

Luther, employment law: *Klaus Thönißen, LL.M.* (partner), *Leif Born* (senior associate)

Luther, real estate law: *Patrick Gocht* (senior associate), *Christoph Kolb* (associate)

Luther, antitrust law: *Dr. Helmut Janssen, LL.M.* (partner), *Samira Altdorf* (counsel), *Martin Lawall, LL.M.* (senior associate)

For Casinos Austria International:

Freshfields, M&A: *Dr. Ludwig Hartenau*, *Julius Röck*

Redeker Sellner Dahs, Gaming Law: *Dr. Ulrich Karpenstein*, *Dr. Matthias Ganske*, *Dr. Roya Sangi*

Luther Rechtsanwaltsgesellschaft mbH

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