

THE ECA REPRESENTS ALMOST 900 CASINOS ACROSS EUROPE



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ECA

The European Casino Association (ECA) held its Annual General Meeting on January 23 last in London. The main topic of discussion was remote gambling services and how to regulate them. In this regard, the ECA, at its meeting of December 2007, had drawn up a document stating its position on the matter, which was brought to the fore once more in London. This paper was approved by a great majority of the 21 ECA members, the only dissenters being the UK, Sweden and Switzerland.

Remote means are no more than the meaning of the words, i.e. alternative means of distribution. The ECA believes that a license system, whereby licensed operators could secure an enhanced license expanding their distribution channels to include remote means, would be the best solution for the gaming sector, in particular with a view to maintaining public policy objectives such as consumer protection and crime prevention. The ECA's demand for license+ systems is based on a recent WTO ruling confirming remote gambling as a like service and thus making it equal to any other form of gambling currently regulated in EU Member States. In light of very diverse national legislation on gambling across EU Member States, the ECA furthermore considers it appropriate in the long term to create a consistent framework for gambling at EU level, creating a level playing field, taking into account all the important elements enshrined in national gambling legislation, such as responsible gambling, crime prevention, consumer protection, taxation etc. In the absence of any such an EU framework, the ECA and its Members call on the Member States to, as a first step, enforce the application of the Country of Destination Principle for gambling services. In other words, the application of the Principle to all gambling operators and to all means of distribution for gambling services (both land-based and remote).

The ECA represents the interests of almost 900 Casinos in 21 countries, approximately 80,000 employees across Europe. Founded in the early 90s as the European Casino Forum, the ECA has gradually grown over the years and today includes members from the majority of the European Union member states and from Switzerland.

Boris Nemeč, HIT Casinos Slovenia; Armin Karu and Anders Galsvenjo, Olympic Casino, Estonia



Matthias Hein, ECA Treasurer; Guido Berghmans, ECA Vice Chairman and Director General Casino 2000, Luxembourg; with Ron Goudsmit, ECA Chairman and Vice President Business Development of Holland Casino



Brett Samuelson, Casinos Austria; Istvan Vadja, Casino Sophron, Hungary; and Marc Friedrich, General Secretary of the Swiss Casino Association



Heliodoro Giner, ECA board member and General Secretary of the Spanish Casino Association, with Jean-Francois Cot, ECA board member and General Secretary of Casinos de France



Representatives from the Greek Casino Association: Dmitris Kyrkos, Stamatis Diavatidis and Tina Karageorgou; and Hermann Pamming, ECA media coordinator



Interrel consultant Saskia Horsch, and Clara Angiolini, ECA EU Office



Heikki Rinta-Panttila, Gran Casino Helsinki, Finland, with Domi De Wilde, Casino Middelkerke, Belgium



Ken Watling, ECA board member and Director of Policy of the British Casino Association, with Claes Tellman, Casino Cosmopol, Sweden