

AUSTRIA PASSES NEW GAMING ACT

On 16 June last, and after two years of talks, the Austrian Parliament finally passed the reform of the Gaming Act. Austria has been renewing licences for Casinos and operators without putting them to public tender and in breach of European regulations, prompting the European Court of Justice to investigate the matter.

Under the new regulations, which come into force on 1 January 2011, Austria will now have to restructure its licence policy. This should put an end to almost 95% of current operator licences or, in other words, some 1300 companies and 10,000 employees.

A limit of 15-20 operating licences will be granted, under very strict conditions, one being that that companies operating under the new licences may not have any one shareholder holding more than 25% of the company. Slot users will also be obliged to carry a card that will identify them accurately, in order to establish a spending limit on all slots and video-lottery terminals in the country.



Big companies such as Novomatic, owners of Casino Prater, who have at all times complied strictly with legislation, will not be affected by the new rule



Grand Casino Brussels

BELGIUM COMES CLOSE TO PASSING NEW REGULATIONS

Belgium has sent the European Commission draft amended regulations on the supervision and control of games of chance operated in Class I gaming establishments. The main innovation sought by this new Decree is to extend the storage of images recorded in these establishments from four weeks to eight. By December, at the latest, the new law establishes that any group wishing to offer online betting services in Belgium must first obtain a licence, and that operators who provide this type of service must locate their computer servers inside the country. The Belgian Gaming Commission will be responsible for granting licences for all games, except lotteries, which will continue under state monopoly. Accordingly, foreign companies will be obliged to take out a physical business licence, with priority being given to Belgian companies.

ARMENIA PUTS LIMITS ON CASINO LOCATION

The Armenian Parliament has approved changes in legislation under which, from 1 January 2013 onwards, Casinos may be located only in Tsahkadzor, Kotayk, Sevan and certain other government-designated areas, including Yerevan's Zvartnots International Airport and duty-free zones to be created close to the airport. At present, most Casinos are located along the road from Yerevan to the airport. The country currently has 11 Casinos and 103 gaming arcades.



Casino Erevan, owned by Storm Group

APEX GAMING TO SUPPLY B PLUS IN VLT MARKET

APEX Gaming has been selected by B Plus - Italy's leading VLT concessionaire - as a major video lottery terminal (VLT) supplier.

"The VLT's - terminals that allow players to bet up to €10 per game on the outcome of a video game - will be incorporated into B Plus gaming operations in Italy, the country's largest network, in the second half of 2010", noted APEX gaming's Managing Director and owner, Johannes Weissengruber. Italian concessionaire B Plus acquired about 12,000 rights for VLT operation from the Italian Monopolo dello Stato based on a 9 year contract. Furthermore, B Plus operates over 80,000 AWP's in the Italian Comma 6a market.

APEX gaming can look back to over five years of experience in the VLT market with roots firmly established in the VLT markets Czech and Slovakia.



Apex executives: Johannes Weissengruber, President and Franz Plasser. Commercial Manager

ÁNGEL MARÍA ESCOLANO BELLÓ, NEW CHAIRMAN OF CASINO GRAN MADRID

The Board of Directors of Casino Gran Madrid has unanimously chosen Ángel María Escolano Belló as Chairman of Casino Gran Madrid, S.A., which operates Casino Gran Madrid, Casino de Torreloñones, Casino Torrequebrada and Gran Casino Cartagena.

To date, Mr Escolano had been CEO of the company, in addition to Managing Director of Casino Gran Madrid, which position he still holds.

After 30 years at the head of the institution, Ángel Escolano Díez has stepped down, although he will continue to sit on the Board.

In his first speech as Chairman, Ángel María Escolano maintained, "There can be no doubt that our group will continue to strive toward the same ends, satisfying our visitors' needs and reinforcing our leadership of the Casino market"

The new Chairman publicly acknowledged the work of the Executive Committee over the past 30 years, particularly the outgoing Chairman, his father, "from whom I have learned so much, particularly from his reliability and hard work", and the company's CEO, José G. Blanco Sola, whom he praised for his "experience and common sense".

Over this time, the Gran Madrid group of companies has consolidated its position as one of Europe's most important gaming offers, with over 700,000 visitors each year.



Ángel María Escolano Belló



NOVOMATIC CHOSEN BY CASINO MARBELLA

Casino Marbella, part of the Cirsa Group, has chosen Novomatic gaming equipment to take the spotlight on the Casino's newly renovated and extended gaming floor.

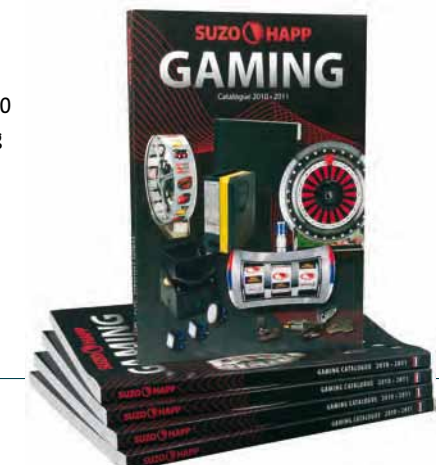
Casino Marbella's guests will now find a comprehensive Novo Touchbet Live-Roulette™ installation running on the server-based Novo Unity™ multi-player platform. The electronic Roulette installation features a dealer operated live Roulette wheel and 12 individual slant top terminals for maximum player comfort and the ultimate in Roulette excitement.

Jordi Pedragosa, Sales Director Novomatic Gaming Spain: "Winning the acceptance of a customer like the Cirsa Group marks a great step forward for our company and positions us ideally at the heart of the Spanish gaming market. Based on our total commitment to product quality and excellence in service Novomatic has quickly established a firm position on the Spanish market and it is a further important step for the brand to win Cirsa Group as a new customer".

NEW SUZO HAPP GAMING CATALOGUE NOW ONLINE

The new Suzo Happ Gaming Catalogue 2010/2011 is now available online. The entire catalogue -more than 220 pages - can thus be accessed at any time of day anywhere around the world. The most comprehensive gaming component catalogue in the industry can be downloaded from www.suzohapp.nl (click on 'catalogue' on the upper bar and then click again on the picture of the new Gaming Catalogue, which will download automatically). The entire catalogue can then be accessed, page by page.

"We are proud to introduce our new online catalogue. With a simple viewing set-up it is easy to find what you are looking for in the online environment. Browsing through our catalogue is now easier than ever!" boasts Erik Wijma, Suzo Happ's European Sales Director.





CIRSA GROUP EXPANDS INTERNATIONAL CASINO OPERATIONS

Spanish multinational CIRSA obtained operating profits of EUR 57.6 million for the first quarter of the year, 10.7% up on the same quarter last year. Operating revenues amounted to EUR 412 million. CIRSA closed 2009 with an operating profit of EUR 209 million, 8.3% up on the previous year. The reasons for this excellent balance sheet are found, according to company sources, in the good performance of the company's businesses in Argentina, Panama, Colombia, Italy and Mexico, along with maintaining a market share of over 50% in the sale of slots to the catering channel in Spain. In Colombia, CIRSA, through its Colombian affiliate Winner Group, has acquired Colombian company Unidelca, which operates 49 Casinos in the country - 8 traditional and 41 electronic Casinos. CIRSA thus reinforces its position as the country's leading gaming and entertainment company, with 17 traditional Casinos and 53 Casinos, 250 live gaming tables, 6500 slots and 2700 employees, and further reinforces its position as Latin America's leading Casino operator, with 29 traditional and 89 electronic Casinos throughout the continent.

ECA NEW MEMBER OF THE GAMING STANDARDS ASSOCIATION

The European Casino Association (ECA) has become a member of the Gaming Standards Association (GSA), an international trade association that creates benefits for gaming manufacturers, suppliers, operators and regulators.

ECA represents the interests of more than 1,000 Casinos and 83,000 employees in 23 countries across Europe. ECA Chairman Ron Goudsmit said: "One of our goals as an organization is to increase awareness and understanding of the Casino industry amongst EU policy makers and stakeholders, and we believe that being an affiliate member of GSA will help us to more directly bring information about the future of gaming to our members".



Ron Goudsmit, ECA Chairman

AGI PURCHASES OCTAVIAN ASSETS

Following the announcement that Octavian International Limited had gone into administration on 7th May 2010, Austrian Gaming Industries (AGI) moved decisively to acquire by purchase several Octavian assets. Certain other assets, including core intellectual properties, had previously been ascribed to AGI. The purpose of this asset acquisition is to enable AGI to ensure that former Octavian customers now have a truly viable alternative source of excellence-driven gaming solutions, backed by one of the world foremost gaming groups.



NOVOMATIC AND R. FRANCO SIGN DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

Austrian Gaming Industries and Recreativos Franco América have reached an agreement whereby R. Franco América will become non-exclusive distributor of Novomatic gaming equipment in Colombia. Jens Halle, Managing Director AGI, commented: "We are absolutely confident that this new distribution arrangement will further enhance Novomatic's growing presence in South America and will guarantee the levels of service and support that Novomatic customers have every right to expect".



Headquarters of Recreativos Franco in Bogota, Colombia



Casino Madrid executives Angel Escolano, Chairman, and Paula Arriaga, Assistant General Manager, with Simon Bold, President of winners and guests

CASINO GRAN MADRID INAUGURATES SPORTS BETTING ROOM

Casino Gran Madrid has become the first Spanish Casino to offer visitors a sports betting room. The Casino, in association with winners, has inaugurated the "Red Zone", which will initially remain open until 13 July, to coincide with the football World Cup, and will accept bets on a range of over 20 different sports. Some 100,000 visitors are expected to pass through the sports betting area and, according to early calculations, some 15,000 bets could be made each week. The Red Zone has a 280 m² multi-screen room, a bar and an extensive sports betting offer. At the moment, the Red Zone is being run as an experiment, with the view to making it a more permanent part of the Casino's gaming offer.

CASINO APOLLONIA IN MACEDONIA SELECTS SUZO HAPP

Suzo Happ has announced the successful completion of the value-added trial of the MEI CASHFLOW SC banknote reader at Casino Apollonia in Macedonia. Management at Casino Apollonia has now specified MEI with immediate effect for all new slots purchases. Suzo Happ introduced the MEI CASHFLOW SC banknote reader to Casino Apollonia last year. Casino Apollonia operates a total of 184 slots, from WMS and Novomatic, among others suppliers. This close collaboration with Suzo Happ has paid further dividends for Casino Apollonia. All slots on the Casino floor have been updated with ASSA locks, also provided by Suzo Happ.



Casino Apollonia



APEX PRODUCTS SHINES THROUGH IN SERBIA

Austrian manufacturer Apex's products are proving very popular with Serbian operators. One of these is the "Quikker" electronic table. 'Quikker' combines the thrills of roulette with black jack and is just at home as a high-stake electronic table in the VIP area as in the low-stake sector for street gaming. Also very successful is the new 'Pinnacle' cabinet that offers the renowned APEX gaming cabinet quality with a whole host of innovations. 'Pinnacle' incorporates two 22" monitors. The Dolby Surround Sound™ is so integrated that players enjoy a real acoustic experience. Furthermore, 'Pinnacle' has been constructed to allow utmost flexibility, thus allowing customers to choose between several options such as player tracking and TITO, which are all available together. These products were presented at the recent edition of Gaming Expo Belgrade.



Paul van Leeuwen

PAUL VAN LEEUWEN WINS EUROPEAN DEALER CHAMPIONSHIP

33 dealers from 19 European countries demonstrated their skills at the Blackjack and American Roulette tables in the Finals of the ECA's 2010 European Dealer Championship held at Olympic Casino Vilnius from May 11-12. The competition remained captivating right to the end, with Paul van Leeuwen from Holland Casino finally emerging the winner in an intense final round, and taking home the top prize of a trip to Las Vegas. This was van Leeuwen's second title, after winning the 1st European Dealer Championship back in 2007. Runner-up was David Tran (Casino Copenhagen, Denmark), followed by Matti Kankainen (Casino Helsinki, Finland) in third place.

TWO CASINOS CLOSE IN SPAIN

The effects of the economic crisis are also being felt in the gaming sector. Over the past quarter, two Spanish Casinos have had to close their doors. The first was Casino San Roque, owned by the French Partouche group. After several years of falling visitor numbers and revenues, the group abandoned its activities in the south of Spain. Spanish group Casinos del Mediterráneo has also closed Casino de Villajoyosa, with losses of over EUR 14 million in 2009, even though the owners had invested over EUR 30 million in it over the past decade.



Casino San Roque, recently closed

FINLAND'S GRAN CASINO HELSINKI CONTINUES TO CASH IN

In the Casino industry, as in others, optimum purchasing decisions can have an immediate and positive impact on operations. Great purchasing decisions stand the test of time and provide years of positive returns. Gran Casino Helsinki made such a decision over two and half years ago when it acquired CASHFLOW SC, a product that has exceeded all expectations. After a Value-Added Trial (VAT) over two and a half years ago, the Casino now specifies CASHFLOW SC on all slot purchases.



Grand Casino Helsinki

EUROPEAN BUSINESSES TURN THEIR BACK ON SAGSE PANAMA

The newest edition of Sagse Panama was held recently, with an almost complete absence of European companies. Once more, the event was a total failure, with a meagre trickle of visitors and very few exhibitors. Although the organisers of this sham fair insist on holding the event year after year, the truth is that it just does not have the support of the industry.



One of the many deserted stands at the fair. This is the tourist office, which one would expect to be one of the busiest