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## **Position Paper on Responsible Gambling**

Responsible gambling is a term widely used in the gambling industry, despite the absence of a widely-accepted definition. Much of the debate around gambling and the need to encourage responsible gambling arises primarily from concerns about problem gambling. Problem gambling is the form of gambling where gamblers experience harm affecting themselves and their relatives. Therefore, most definitions of responsible gambling refer to the minimisation of potential harm arising from gambling activities. The European Casino Association (ECA) takes a broad approach to the issue of responsible gambling. For us and our members, responsible gambling is an issue that relates to consumers, industry, regulators and the wider community. It involves strategies that reduce gambling-related harm and increases gambling-related benefits across society.

The ECA strongly believes that the promotion of responsible gambling in land-based and online casinos is in customers' interest as much as it is in the interest of the industry. Operating casinos in a socially responsible way is a "conditio sine qua non" for licensed land-based and online casino operators. It is important, both in terms of credibility, as well as reputation – not only for the single operator but also for the whole industry. Furthermore, responsible gambling is a topic that is of utmost importance to all stakeholders in the gambling industry, from governments, to regulators, employees and suppliers.

Only the implementation of effective and efficient responsible gambling measures will ensure the protection of vulnerable customers, but also create a positive public perception, which forms the basis for a prosperous and sustainable future for single operators and the whole sector.

In times of around-the-clock availability of gambling products, efficient, effective and verifiable responsible gambling measures are of utmost importance in order to address the negative impact of uncontrolled, unregulated and unprosecuted growth of unlicensed gambling offers on society. In this respect, the ECA would like to state that more needs to be done to distinguish between operators with meaningful and effective responsible gambling programs and operators that are simply window dressing and flat-out misleading their customers and authorities about their responsible gambling measures.

Within the ECA, a responsible approach to offering gambling products is firmly rooted in the organisational philosophy – as it is the case for each of the ECA members' casinos. All ECA members are committed to conducting their day-to-day business with the utmost attention to the principles and requirements of responsible gambling.

The absolute respect of ECA members for the social responsibility that comes with offering a gambling product is reflected in the communication efforts, the investments made in staff training and information material, as well as the knowledge and experience collected on the subject of

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responsible gambling itself. ECA member casinos are committed to building and maintaining trust with consumers, the licensing authorities, other stakeholders and society in general.

ECA member casinos are also committed to developing, implementing and evaluating responsible gambling measures that are approved best practices and are additionally open to the latest scientific findings and developments in the field.

All staff at ECA member casinos receive basic information and lectures about the issues of problem gambling and responsible gambling measures in order to create awareness of the issues involved throughout the casino operation and its administration.

All staff at ECA member casinos who have direct customer contact receive more in-depth and appropriate knowledge on the issue of problem gambling through regular training. They are familiar with the early warning signs and are also trained to have a meaningful and purposeful conversation with customers on the subject. They also have knowledge about available treatment options and contact persons (supported by the availability of printed brochures covering the subject).

At ECA member casinos, responsible gambling measures and processes cover at least the following areas:

- Prevention of problem gambling
- Employee training
- Quality assurance of processes and measures implemented
- Cooperation with counselling and treatment institutions
- Exchange of best practices with other ECA members

In order to achieve a better and more effective approach towards fighting problem gambling and implementing effective and efficient responsible gambling measures, the ECA introduced its own responsible gambling framework in 2013. This is a collection of measures that are divided into several areas aiming to ensure a pleasant and fun gambling experience for all customers during each visit. The framework is set up in a way that allows for certification of proper implementation by independent auditors.

With this approach towards responsible gambling the ECA and its member casinos set an example for the whole industry.

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