



PRESS COMMUNIQUE

For immediate release

ECA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008

Basel, Switzerland, 29 May 2008 --- Representatives of the European casino industry gathered in Casino Basel in Switzerland on 29 May for the 2008 General Assembly of the European Casino Association (ECA). Chairman Ron Goudsmit (Holland Casino) welcomed invited guests and representatives of the ECA from 21 countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland). Apologies were received from the member organisations in Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Lithuania joins ECA

One of the first points on this year's agenda was the unanimous acceptance of Lithuania's application for membership, bringing the total number of ECA member countries to 23.

EU update

The next session focused on current developments in Brussels. Although the EU has elected to leave regulation of the gaming industry under the jurisdiction of Member States, it remains a complex issue. There is uncertainty in some countries concerning regulation, a fact that has led to an increasing number of cases being referred to the European Court of Justice. The ECA expects this practice to continue and even grow in the future, thus reopening the regulatory debate. The ECA fully supports a clear regulatory policy and has set itself the goal of ensuring that national, European and international decision-makers have access to the best information available.

The ECA closely monitors developments and trends affecting the casino industry on a national, European and global level. The issues are diverse, ranging for example from regulatory matters or referrals to the European Court of Justice through to smoking bans. It also tracks initiatives that might not initially seem related to the casino industry, but could indeed have a direct or indirect impact, such as the EU's "TV Without Frontiers" initiative.

A working group has been established to analyse the ECA's strategic focus, assess the gravity and urgency of current trends in the regulatory debate and determine the actions needed. Its goal is to anticipate changes and act accordingly. Also since some MEPs and decision-makers are clearly not sufficiently informed on the actual situation and business practices in the casino industry, the ECA seeks to provide information to ECA members and EU decision-makers to support them in making sound, informed and calculated decisions.

As ECA Chairman Ron Goudsmit confirmed: *"We work very hard to keep up with the pace of developments at an EU level across the entire gaming industry and make sure we try and provide the decision-makers with access to all the information they need."*

FATF update

Next on the agenda was a discussion on the proposals of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) regarding the casino sector. The ECA has set up a dedicated FATF working group of national and international experts to maintain contact with the relevant authorities and associations and ensure they have access to authoritative information on how casinos operate and the measures and procedures they already have in place. The working group seeks and identifies issues, drives discussion with the FATF and has already provided a large number of comments and recommendations on the proposed new risk based approach. The FATF report is expected later this year.

Cooperation with Clarion Gaming

The ECA announced a new marketing and promotion initiative with Clarion Gaming, a leading industry publisher and the largest organiser of gaming industry events and trade fairs worldwide, at the ICE 2008 in London. As part of this initiative, the ECA and Clarion plan to host an annual joint member event prior to the ICE. This event will focus on current topics in the industry and will also be open to members of national casino associations.

In addition to sponsoring the annual ECA European Dealer Championship, Clarion also plans to hold a dedicated Poker Conference in October 2008 as well as a European Slot Feast (date TBA) targeted at technical and slots managers.

Future events

2009 European Dealer Championship, Casino Cosmopol, Stockholm, April 2009

ECA Casino Conference, London, 26 January 2009, followed by ICE – International Casino Exhibition, Earl’s Court, London, 27-29 January 2009

About the ECA

The ECA represents the interests of **950 casinos** and around **80,000 employees** in **23 countries** across Europe. Founded in the early 1990s as the European Casino Forum, the ECA has grown steadily over the years and today includes members from the majority of the EU’s member states and from Switzerland and Serbia. In 2007, ECA member casinos welcomed some **115 million guests** and generated aggregate total annual revenues in excess of **10.2 billion euro**.

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