



Brussels, 19 June 2007

Responsible Gambling in the EU

A Working Paper by the European Casino Association

In order to address the issue of responsible gambling it is important to understand what is meant by the concept of responsible vs irresponsible gambling also known as “problem gambling”.

Despite the absence of universally agreed definitions, the European Casino Association (ECA) decided to address this important issue. Taking into account existing research and research currently being carried out in Europe,¹ the ECA works with the definition that irresponsible gambling refers to any gambling that is not responsible gambling and as such causes harm to the person concerned and/or others in the person’s environment.

Subsequently, responsible gambling can be described as gambling within someone’s means including both money and time.

Player protection describes measures casinos have put in place to welcome responsible gambling and discourage irresponsible gambling.

Why is responsible gambling important?

Based on its Members’ extensive experience in operating in the gambling market, the ECA considers it of utmost importance to promote responsible gambling in land-based casinos and in doing so to tackle the issue of irresponsible gambling.

The promotion of responsible gambling embraces the concept of the informed citizen and as such the ECA encourages and supports the informed and self-responsible behaviour of a responsible player.

The ECA believes that the promotion of responsible gambling in land-based casinos is in their own self-interest as much as it is in their clients’ interest. Operating socially responsible and in doing so addressing problem gambling is a “conditio sine qua non” for casino operators. It is important both in terms of the casinos’ reputation as well as its credibility. To this end land-based casinos are fully committed to a secure gambling environment and responsible gambling both of which are incorporated in their player protection programmes.

¹ There is currently no universally acknowledged study on the concept and definition of irresponsible gambling. However, studies are currently being carried out, or are under preparation at national level in Europe. This is for instance the case in France, the UK, and in Switzerland, where studies on irresponsible gambling are currently being prepared.

Clients have a right to expect such commitment!

Land-based casinos are fully committed to addressing responsible gambling. Given the clear legal framework for land-based casinos, operators across Member States have devised specific programmes, measures and practices to address and tackle the issue of irresponsible gambling. Each of these activities are in line with national restrictions as well as additional voluntary industry codes including player protection programmes.

As a result the prevalence of irresponsible gambling inside land-based casinos is low and well controlled. This unfortunately is not yet always the case when one looks at gambling through remote technologies (internet, mobile phones, dial-in services, and digital television). In many Member States there are either no or insufficient rules to control gambling through remote technologies.

In addition to a situation where control of remote gambling is less advanced, it is important to understand that remote gambling has a different risk profile than other sorts of gambling. Given the different accessibility profile of remote gambling, new measures will be required to address the higher risk of impulsive gambling, which is the biggest risk factor for problem gambling.

With a view to meet public order objectives the ECA promotes responsible gambling.

What are the priorities?

ECA members have three objectives in relation to irresponsible gambling:

- Protect vulnerable people
- Protect minors by restricting their access to gambling services
- Promote responsible gambling

The ECA believes that it is important that casino operators share ideas, experience and best practices on how to tackle irresponsible gambling and how to promote responsible gambling. Concretely, the aim of such intelligence sharing on player protection measures would be both to prevent problem gambling and to increase the entertainment and pleasure of responsible gambling.

The right approach?

There are different national approaches to counter irresponsible gambling and promote responsible gambling. The most common measures applied in casinos across Europe include:

- Availability of information on responsible gambling
- Availability of information on help for irresponsible players
- Counselling services for irresponsible players
- Allow for self-limitation and self-exclusion of players
- Prevent minors from gambling
- Promote controlled consumption of alcoholic beverages

- Train casino management and employees in how to identify and how to deal with irresponsible gambling

Members of the ECA support these measures. An integrated approach to address the issue of irresponsible gambling is vital with a view to secure a responsible gambling and entertainment environment.

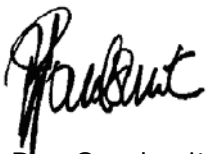
In addition to the existing law and the various guidelines established by the national regulators, the ECA considers that the best way for the casino operators to serve the public and protect vulnerable individuals is by adopting an ethical and transparent approach to their activities. To this regards, the ECA has adopted a "Code of Practice for Responsible Gaming in the Casino Environment".

This code provides an industry approach to the promotion of responsible gambling practices and is based on the casino industry's commitment to best practices in respect of responsible gambling².

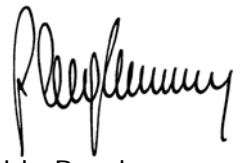
As stated in the Code of Practice, ECA members are committed to:

- Implement schemes of self-exclusion for players requesting to be excluded
- Provide remedial actions including information and advice on the help available through counselling services
- Control access to gambling facilities with a view to control and prevent access for vulnerable people and adolescents
- Train casino management and employees in how to identify and how to deal with irresponsible gambling

ECA members agree that the casino industry has the prime responsibility to offer their services in a way that does not encourage behaviors leading to irresponsible gambling both for the benefit of their customers and to the benefit of the casino operators themselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Goudsmit'.

Ron Goudsmit
Chairman, ECA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guido Berghmans'.

Guido Berghmans
Vice-chairman, ECA

The European Casino Association (ECA) represents the interests of over 900 casinos and almost 80,000 employees across Europe. Founded in the early 90's as the European Casino Forum, the ECA has gradually grown over the years and today includes members from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

² The Code of Practice is endorsed by the European Association for the Study of Gambling (EASG). For more information on the ECA Code of Practice for Responsible Gaming see "ECA Code of Practice for Responsible Gaming in the Casino Environment" from January 2006.