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ECA Celebrates Excellence in Casino Slot Operations at Inaugural Slot Floor Excellence Awards in Barcelona

The European Casino Association (ECA) successfully held the inaugural ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards at ICE Barcelona 2026, recognising outstanding individuals and teams who bring Europe's casino slot floors to life. The ceremony took place on the Enterprise Stage at Fira Barcelona Gran Via, marking a significant milestone in celebrating human talent within the European casino industry.

Honouring the People Behind European Casino Excellence

The ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards represent a new chapter in recognising the dedication, professionalism, and exceptional service that define excellence in casino slot floor operations across Europe. Building on the success of the first Slot Team of the Year Award presented at the European Dealer Championship 2025 in Bregenz, Austria, this expanded programme showcases the ECA's commitment to celebrating talent at every career stage.

"Excellence in slot operations depends above all on the individuals and teams whose professionalism and dedication form the foundation of the European casino experience," said Erwin van Lambaart, Chairman of the ECA. "Through these awards, we highlight the importance of human capital, celebrating personal growth, skill development, and lifelong learning."

2026 Award Winners

Following a rigorous evaluation process conducted by an independent jury panel comprising ECA and Clarion representatives and leading global slot manufacturers, winners were announced across three categories.

Slot Floor Rising Star of the Year

This award recognises early-career professionals with a maximum of three years' experience on the slot floor who have demonstrated exceptional potential and achievement.

1st Place: Storm Bertelkamp, Holland Casino, Netherlands

2nd Place: Ruth Waxenegger, Casinos Austria, Austria

3rd Place: Christakis Elia, Melco – City of Dreams Mediterranean, Cyprus

These rising talents bring fresh energy and new perspectives to slot operations, showing strong learning agility and a clear commitment to developing their skills and contributing to team success early in their careers.

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RUE DU COMMERCE 31 • 1000 BRUSSELS • BELGIUM • PHONE +32 (0)496 30 99 88
WWW.EUROPEANCASINOASSOCIATION.ORG • SECRETARY.GENERAL@EUROPEANCASINOASSOCIATION.ORG



Slot Floor Employee of the Year

This award celebrates outstanding frontline professionals who have demonstrated exceptional performance, superior customer service, and leadership qualities that inspire colleagues.

1st Place: Eeva Sirkka, Casino Helsinki, Veikkaus, Finland

2nd Place: Rosie Brooks, Hippodrome Casino, United Kingdom

3rd Place: Halim Ajjouch, Holland Casino, Netherlands

These exceptional employees understand that hospitality is at the heart of casino operations, acting as true hosts who create welcoming and engaging experiences for players and serving as role models for their teams.

Outstanding Slot Team of the Year

This award recognises teams that have demonstrated exceptional collaboration, customer service, initiative, and measurable success in slot floor operations through a significant project or initiative completed within the last 12 months.

1st Place: Hippodrome Casino, United Kingdom

2nd Place (shared): Casinos Austria, Austria, and Holland Casino, Netherlands

3rd Place: Melco – City of Dreams Mediterranean, Cyprus

The winning teams successfully achieved substantial accomplishments—whether launching new slot products, implementing innovative promotional campaigns, or deploying new management systems—whilst maintaining exemplary customer service standards and delivering quantifiable improvements in performance.

Celebrating Europe's Casino Community

The awards ceremony showcased the strength and diversity of Europe's casino industry, with winners and finalists representing operations from Finland to Cyprus, and from the United Kingdom to Austria and the Netherlands. This geographical spread reflects the pan-European nature of the ECA's mission and the universal standards of excellence that unite the continent's casino professionals.

The Vision: Recognising People in a Technology-Driven Sector

Whilst the slot floor remains a cornerstone of the land-based casino experience and serves as a primary attraction for millions of guests across Europe, the success of slot operations depends not merely on technology and equipment. It fundamentally relies on the human qualities, technical expertise, and world-class hospitality delivered by dedicated professionals working on casino floors every day.

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The ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards address this reality by placing people at the centre of recognition. The awards celebrate:

- Exceptional collaboration and teamwork that drives operational success
- Professional dedication and reliability that create outstanding guest experiences while maintaining responsible gaming standards
- Innovation and fresh perspectives that shape the industry's future
- Leadership and mentorship that develop the next generation of talent
- Commitment to continuous learning that raises industry standards

Looking Ahead to 2027

The success of the inaugural ceremony and the high calibre of nominations received have energised the ECA to build on this foundation. The association will launch the nomination process for the 2027 ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards later this year, again inviting member casinos from across Europe to highlight their most outstanding teams and individuals.

"The response from our member casinos has been exceptional," added Tiina Siltanen, ECA Senior Vice Chair. "We received nominations that truly showcased the remarkable talent working on casino floors across Europe, and this inaugural edition has set a high standard for the future."

About the ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards

The ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards are open to all ECA member casinos across Europe. Nominations are evaluated by an independent jury panel using clearly defined criteria that assess collaboration, operational excellence, initiative, measurable success, leadership qualities, customer service, and the strength of supporting recommendations.

The three award categories are designed to recognise excellence at different career stages and in different operational contexts:

- Slot Floor Rising Star of the Year: Honours early-career professionals (maximum three years' experience) who have shown exceptional potential and rapid development.
- Slot Floor Employee of the Year: Celebrates experienced frontline or operational employees who have demonstrated consistent excellence in their roles.
- Outstanding Slot Team of the Year: Recognises teams of a minimum of three employees who have worked collaboratively on a significant project or initiative completed within the past 12 months.



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About the European Casino Association

The European Casino Association (ECA) stands as the preeminent representative of licensed land-based casinos across Europe, encompassing members from 29 European countries. This expansive network oversees approximately 700 casinos and provides employment to over 70,000 individuals, thereby making a significant contribution to local economies throughout the continent. With representation spanning nearly all EU Member States and several non-EU countries, the ECA's mission is multifaceted: it addresses and champions issues pertinent to both land-based and online casinos, spearheads efforts to combat illegal gambling activities, and actively promotes the positive impact of the industry on society and economies. The Association serves as a unified voice for the European casino sector, fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and advocating for responsible gaming initiatives.

Media Contact: Hermann Pamminger

Email: secretary.general@europeancasinoassociation.org

Website: www.europeancasinoassociation.org

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