

Common Position on Responsible Gaming

EPMA members all take a similar approach to responsible gaming issues. Although this approach will vary depending on the geographical location of each company, due to variations in legal requirements, a set of common rules have been implemented by all pari Mutuel operators (1).

On top of national legal requirements, EPMA demonstrates that pari mutuel operators bear, in common, a specific responsibility towards the gambling and the equine sectors. The choice of betting model affects the impact of the gaming activity in question, in terms of the type of responsible gaming policies put in place, and in terms of issues relating to gambling addiction. Such specificity needs to be highlighted (2).

In anticipation of the expected adoption by the European Commission, this autumn, of an Action Plan that will include a set of common rules on responsible gaming and responsible marketing, EPMA is putting forward a set of best practices, with the aim of supporting the approach that the Commission is to set out (3).

When discussing responsible gaming with the European Commission, EPMA has always highlighted to it the need to promote common rules, both offline and online.

1) Common rules implemented by all Pari Mutuel operators

The preventive role of Pari Mutuel operators, by offering gambling products in a responsible manner, and by training vendors, is, of course, not a new one, although the obligation to report to regulators is quite a recent one in certain States. Studies on addiction and treatment are organised by governments, but are usually financed by historic operators, as is the case with pari mutuel operators.

- **Strict rules to protect minors** – the age limit is strictly implemented and in some places, players under 25 are encourage to show their ID
- **Constant education and training of vendors** (done every year, short sentences to keep in mind, help number)
- **Gambling on credit is forbidden**
- **Available information** on point of sale and on the operator's web site + **tests on playing habits** (tests consisting of 10 simple questions to reveal playing habits)
- **Responsible marketing** guidelines - ethical code/guidelines exist(s) internally (non-aggressive customer relations, no communication on money, advertising on horses/jockeys instead of games)
- **Financial** responsibility

ATG (Swedish Tote operator) is contributing around €145 million each year in tax to fund research on, and treatment of, problem gamblers. In Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs allocates each year a budget of €2 million for the prevention of problem gambling. This budget is entirely financed by Finnish gaming operators (Fintoto (horse race betting operator), RAY and Veikkaus). In France, before the tax on gambling (for the treatment of compulsive players) was implemented for all operators in 2010, the PMU operator, in partnership with La Française des Jeux, provided over 3 years more than €1 million for specialised research, and for centres for the prevention of addiction.

2) A common responsibility shared by Pari Mutuel operators

The special nature of Pari Mutuel horse betting reduces the impact of addiction and safeguards the integrity of sport.

- **No race fixing**

Pari Mutuel is a form of betting with internal values, which guarantee the integrity of the sport.

Indeed, with Pari Mutuel betting, the amounts bet are added together and shared among the winners, after the take-out of the operator which is completely independent of the result of the race. The Pari Mutuel operator has therefore absolutely no interest in the outcome of the race.

Pari Mutuel bets can only be placed on successful results.

- **Horse betting attracts expertise**

Horse betting is a game of knowledge. It therefore attracts passionate players who enjoy a challenging game that mixes luck and expertise with the opportunity to socialise at betting outlets and on the web. The skill involved serves to temper the behaviour of many compulsive players.

It should be noted that the rate of addiction prevailing in the field of horse betting is significantly below the average for other forms of gambling, as has been confirmed by studies based on statistical and epidemiological findings.

In Finland, the Ministry of Social Affairs has carried out studies concerning problem gambling. Horse betting is found to be less addictive than other games. In Finland, the national helpline for problem gamblers, called Peluuri, only 1% of the telephone calls received concern horse betting.

In France, the 'prevalence' study conducted in 2010, the results of which were published in September 2011 (Enquête de prévalence OFDT INPES), showed that horse tote betting games were ranked fourth in the list of addictive games: [link to the French 'prevalence' study](#).

In Germany, a study on addiction in sport betting has show that there is hardly any danger to public health from betting on horse racing ('pferdewetten'), and certainly not in connection with tote betting (Toto).The table below shows the rates of incidence of pathological

gambling behaviour in various forms of gambling, based on surveys carried out by therapists on players: see the summary, "Addiction in sports betting," at <http://arbeitsblaetter.stangl-taller.at/SUCHT/Wettsucht.shtml>.

Tab. 1: Bedeutung verschiedener Formen des Glücksspiels für das pathologische Spielverhalten auf Grund von Therapeutenbefragungen¹⁴ und Klientenbefragungen¹⁵

Hauptproblem	Becker	Meyer und Hayer
Geldspielautomaten in Spielhallen/Gaststätten	69,0%	63,5%
Glücksspielautomaten in Spielbanken	11,4%	13,5%
Sportwetten (Wettbüros, Internet)	6,8%	1,7%
Roulette	5,8%	6,2%
Poker (Karten- und Würfelspiele)	3,6%	1,7%
ODDSET Kombi-/TOP-Wette	1,6%	2,8%
Pferdewetten	0,6%	1,7%
Zahlenlotto 6 aus 49	0,5%	0,9%
Rubbellose	0,4%	0,0%
Toto-/Auswahl-/13er-Wette	0,2%	0,0%
Klassenlotterie (SKL/NKL)	0,1%	0,2%
Summe	100%	100%

Table 1: The prevalence, in various forms of gambling, of pathological gambling behaviour, based on surveys of therapists and of clients

3) EPMA's set of best practices:

Create an ethical board:

In Sweden, ATG, the Pari Mutuel operator for horse betting, is an active member of Spelmarknadens Etiska Råd (SPER, "Gambling Market's Ethical Board"), which is a voluntary association made up of Swedish gambling operators. Together, the members of SPER have written common ethical guidelines for the advertising of gambling services.

Win Race, the tote operator in Germany, has committed itself to the principles of the Commission for Youth Media Protection (KJM) in order to promote youth protection on the internet.

UK Tote adheres to the GC's Gambling Industry Code of Practice for Socially Responsible Advertising, which provides social responsibility standards for gambling operators to apply to their advertising.

Limit the amount of communication/marketing budget:

In France, the PMU does not advertise in :

- publications, TV, radio and internet sites dedicated to youth;

- cinema (all movies).

ATG's guidelines for marketing are:

- put the horse in focus, not gambling;
- advertise mainly V75, a race that takes place only once a week.

Promote effective awareness-raising communication tools:

'Negative' messages associated with gambling are not understood by players.

Operators and regulators need to rethink their communication approach together, insisting on education and tests to manage gaming habits.

EPMA asks for:

- **Recognition of the benefits of the Pari Mutuel model: integrity and less impact on addiction**
- **A study on various betting models and their impact on addiction**
- **It to be consulted when prevention messages and campaigns are discussed and adopted**

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