

Euromat Summit

5 June 2018

Monte Carlo Bay Hotel and Resort

40 Avenue Princesse Grace, Monte Carlo, Monaco

Keynote Marja Appelman: Past, Present, Future - GREF's programme and priorities

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's my great pleasure being here at the Euromat Summit. I am grateful to Jason Frost, Euromat President, that he invited me as one of the keynote speakers.

His invitation brought to my mind the image of Monaco, with glitter and glamour, the world famous Monte Carlo International Circus Festival, the Monaco Grand Prix Formula One, and – of course - the Monte Carlo Casino. It was great to see that world-famous casino last night. Although I found the tour of the casino very impressive, I felt slightly shaken and stirred about the absence of Mr James Bond¹.

This image of amusement and hospitality fits seamlessly with the image of the gaming and amusement sector that Euromat represents.

Therefore, I think you couldn't have picked a better venue for your summit and I am sure this summit will be very fruitful.

Jason has invited me in two capacities today: as CEO of the Netherlands Gaming Authority and as the brand new Chair of the Gaming Regulators European Forum (GREF).

Later today, I will contribute to your summit from my role as CEO; In this keynote, I will take you into the world of GREF. A world of gambling regulators that is increasingly characterized by fading boundaries in many ways; *blurred lines* as we call it.

I will shortly touch upon past, present and future of GREF.

I will take you to 1989, a year of major changes in Europe and the world; I will paint a picture of the current challenges of regulators; and finally, I will look into a crystal ball and try to predict the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

[Past]

"The gaming industry, its companies, staff and especially its customers, see no frontiers anymore.

¹ The casino features prominently in 2 Bond films; *Never Say Never Again* and *GoldenEye*. "Shaken, **not** stirred" is a [catchphrase](#) of [James Bond](#) and describes his preference for the preparation of his [martini](#) cocktails.

That every country has its own gaming policy and regulations is important for most of them, but these are becoming increasingly less of an obstacle.

Looking at E.C. policy for the coming years, it is clear, despite the different regulations, that an exchange of information and know-how is going to be essential if regulators are to keep in touch with reality.

It is my strong feeling, and this is supported by fellow regulators I have met during the past few years, that a meeting of gaming regulators from within Europe would be particularly useful at the present time."

These words are written in 1989 by Mr Ward-Jones, the then Chairman of the Gaming Board for Great Britain, in collaboration with one of my predecessors, Mr Hoefnagels, the Chairman of the Board for Casino Games in the Netherlands (*and the great-grandfather of Euromat member Frits Huffnagel!*).

Their words led to the establishment of the Gaming Regulators European Forum (GREF) in 1989².

In that year, major changes took place in Europe, culminating in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

In that optimistic atmosphere, the first meeting of GREF took place in the Netherlands. Representatives of Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, UK, and Spain, talked about closer liaison between gaming regulators in Europe.

[Present]

Now, GREF has grown from 6 to 29 European member countries, including many from central and eastern Europe.

GREF has become one of the major regional organizations for gambling regulators. The organisation as such, and its members, participate actively in meetings of other regulatory or gambling related organisations, such as IAGR, IAGA and the Expert Group on Gambling Services of the European Commission.

The organisation has a solid structure, consisting of a Board of Executive Directors and active working groups on eGambling and Technical Issues, Responsible Gambling and Addiction and Information and Statistics.

Moreover, an annual academic lecture and an annual conference, focussing on topics and issues. For instance:

- *crime in gambling* (2015),
- *lotteries* (2016),
- *hands on regulation* (2017);
- this year, last week: *blurred lines*.

This last theme, *blurred lines*, indicates that walls have fallen definitely. Walls, frontiers or distinction between - for example:

- physical country borders => they don't exist anymore in an online world;
- gaming and gambling => they are blending;
- slot machines and online gambling => they get interwoven.

You, Euromat members, experience these blurring lines every day. It creates chances for the entrepreneurs among you. However, it creates threats for others.

² 10 years after the establishment of Euromat (1979).

These blurring lines can make your offerings more attractive to consumers. But they introduce new risks for them as well.

Most regulators regard blurring lines as their top priority. During the last 29 years, due to rapid technological developments, the gambling market has been internationalised like no other market. Regulators experience pressure stemming from inadequate powers to react on this phenomenon. The *blurred lines* lead to new regulatory and supervisory challenges.

And that is why the GREF Board adopted *blurred lines* as the theme of this year's conference. During the meeting, last week, the GREF members discussed these cross-border challenges and possible cross-border solutions in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.

The words of Mr Ward-Jones and Mr Hoefnagels are still very current after 29 years: there are no frontiers anymore/walls have fallen. Each European country has its own gaming policies and regulations; and that demands a certain aligning between regulators. In a way that operators can innovate and consumers can gamble safely.

And that is why GREF is still very much needed.

Since the start of GREF in 1989, GREF has been largely a forum in which European gaming regulators can exchange views, information and know-how on gaming matters. With that, GREF has contributed to cross-border solutions to cross-border challenges.

However, at this point in time, the GREF members realise that being a knowledge sharing organisation will not be sufficient in order to face the 21st century; with its high-tech, virtual, augmented, hybrid, interconnected, cross-border, and 24/7 available gambling environment.

This applies not only to online gambling, but also to the land-based gaming sector.

(It's for a reason that you are here, representatives of European associations of the land-based gaming sector, gathered under the banner of Euromat, discussing several cross-border challenges for the land-based gaming sector.)

Much more is needed to regulate and supervise this 21st century gambling environment and much more is needed to curb the excesses of that environment. Both by operators and regulators.

And that is why the Board of GREF recently took the initiative of a broad dialogue with the GREF members about the future of GREF. What kind of organisation does GREF want or *need* to be in the near future?

During our annual Business Meeting a few days ago, this year kindly hosted by the regulator of the Czech Republic, we've held a *Tour de Table*. All member countries were given the opportunity to indicate which direction GREF should be going according to them.

This was only the first round of our broad dialogue, and it's too early to paint you a clear picture of the future of GREF. However, it is already clear to me that the future will bring

- more real practical cooperation between regulators (and operators!) and
- more joint advocacy.

[Future]

Nobody knows what the future will bring. I do know that GREF will continue its internal broad dialogue. More rounds of dialogue will follow.

It's my intention to close this dialogue at the end of this year and to start 2019 with a GREF that's fit for the 21st century.

Next to this internal dialogue, I strongly encourage dialogue between GREF and organisations like Euromat, being the voices of operators. Euromat is one of the natural counterparts for GREF when seeking to engage with the land-based gaming industry in Europe.

Regulators and operators, be it online or land based, often have to deal with different sides of the same coin.

Therefore, the best solutions for our shared challenges come from joint effort. A multidisciplinary approach will ensure that we will achieve solutions that are good for both regulators and operators.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With this call to work together, I come to the end of this keynote.

I hope that this end is the beginning of very fruitful discussions. I wish you a very good meeting.

Thank you.