GLOBAL Gambling NEWS

Issue No. 73 | November 2025

SIGMA CENTRAL

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SiGMA 2025

TAKING TRANSFORMATIVE STEPS

Merkur Gaming meets milestones

BEGE 2025 | SCCG Management | SmartSoft | LuckyStreak CEO | India's Ban

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SIGMA CENTRAL EUROPE 2025

La madre di tutti la conferenze

EUROPE: IGAMING POWERHOUSE

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GLOBAL Gambling NEWS

CONNECTING THE GREATEST INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD

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The greatest of all advertising copywriters, David Ogilvy ("At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock"), once wrote a 10-point memo to his staff. No.5 was, "Use short words, short sentences and short paragraphs."

There is lot to cover in this small space, so here goes…

The debut SiGMA Central Europe is calling itself 'The Mother of all Shows'. Eman Pulis joins us this month to explain why it represents the SiGMA brand's coming of age.

BEGE/EEGS is the other key international event this month. It may be smaller, but it is highly focused and every bit as beautiful.

Merkur has taken transformative steps through 2025 and Dominik Raasch, Management Board Member at Merkur Gaming, takes us through what this all means.

This month's Market Report is not a country but an entire continent! And rightly so, as the iGaming Powerhouse that is Europe is at the centre of the global gaming ecosystem.

India's betting ban came into effect on October 1st. But is this public protection or economic naivety? A legal licensing system and regulated market would unquestionably encourage both investment and technological development.

And finally, we are delighted to welcome the legendary figure of Stephen Crystal to the Global Gambling News fold, in a partnership that is already enlightening!

That's it, apart from Mr. Ogilvy's final point: "If you want ACTION, don't write. Go and tell them what you want!" With that in mind, we look forward to seeing you in both Rome and Sofia…

NICK HARDY
CONTENT DIRECTOR

Welcoming 'Mr Las Vegas'

From transforming tribal and riverboat gaming to owning Las Vegas casinos and founding the industry's leading global advisory firm, Stephen Crystal has been at the forefront of gaming innovation for over three decades. His SCCG Management has led over $3bn in project finance, M&A and gaming technology advancements, developed US operations for the UK's largest privately-held bookmaker, secured major deals with the Bengals and Golden Knights, and established sports betting for tribal casinos. An expert in emerging markets, Stephen has visited 100+ countries, supporting over 120 client-partners.

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Corporate & Business: **John Sullivan jsullivan@weareggn.com** Content & Editorial: **Nick Hardy nhardy@weareggn.com**

Japan plans tech and tourism hub around $3.9 billion MGM Osaka

Japan

Building on momentum from the 2025 World Expo, Japan's Osaka Prefecture plans to turn the artificial island of Yumeshima into a high-tech tourism hub anchored by MGM Osaka, the country's first IR resort, it as a global leisure and innovation district.
MGM Osaka is a JPY28bn (US$3.92bn) joint venture between MGM Resorts International and Japan's Orix Corporation, and is scheduled to open in 2030. The project will feature Japan's first legal casino alongside hotels, MICE facilities, retail outlets and entertainment venues and is expected to attract 20 million visitors a year.
Further proposals include a Formula 1 racetrack and a water park.
Hideyuki Araki of the Resona Research Institute told Japan News: "The expo site is vast, and synergy with the IR is expected. It is important not to simply end the project with a large-scale development, but to adopt strategies with a medium- to long-term economic outlook."
Wider opinion towards the project could hardly be more evenly split, with 30.6% in favour, almost one-third opposed and 36.7% neutral.
Hirofumi Yoshimura, Osaka Governor, says that the resort "will create an overwhelmingly extraordinary space, generating new demand in tourism and business and serving as a catalyst for Osaka's economic growth."
Toyonori Takahashi, Orix Kansai representative, adds: "The resort will rival established Asian integrated resorts, particularly in Macau and Singapore."

MGM Resorts withdraws from NYC casino race

USA

MGM Resorts has released a statement announcing the "difficult decision to withdraw its application for a commercial casino license in Yonkers, New York.
This statement goes on to add: "Since submitting our application in June, the competitive and economic assumptions underpinning our application have shifted, altering our return expectations on the proposed $2.3 billion investment.
"The newly defined competitive landscape - with four proposals clustered in a small geographic area - challenges the returns we initially anticipated from this project. Also, our proposal to renovate and expand Empire City Casino was predicated on the receipt of a 30-year commercial casino license, but based on newly issued guidance from the State of New York, we now expect to qualify for only a 15-year license.
"Taken together, these events result in a proposition that no longer aligns with our commitment to capital stewardship, nor that of our real estate partner in Yonkers, VICI.
"MGM Resorts has been a proud partner of the City of Yonkers and the State of New York since we purchased Empire City Casino in 2019. The property has generated more than $5bn for New York State education, including $1.6bn under our ownership. We know our decision will impact many individuals; we remain committed to operating the property in its current format."
MGM Resorts was seen as a front runner for securing one of three metropolitan NYC 'downstate' licenses, but together with fellow industry giants and operating specialists Caesars, Wynn and Las Vegas Sands, they have chosen to fold their hand. What this says about the process, or the viability of other less expert applicants, will naturally be the subject of much debate.

UK giants challenge rumoured tax increases

UK

The UK's retail gambling giants are lining up to remind the government of the economic consequences that will result from tax increases in Chancellor Rachel Reeves' November Budget.
John O'Reilly, CEO of Rank Group, says: "Speculation regarding tax changes in the upcoming Budget is, inevitably, hanging over the business. We are engaged with the Treasury on the implications of tax changes on the viability of our venues, employment levels, future investment and the customer.
"Last year the group generated £44.6m in profit after tax, having paid HMRC and local authorities £188m in taxes. The Rank Group, with its strong UK focus, is certainly paying its fair share."
Entain and Evoke have also stated that they would reevaluate their investment strategy in the market if changes to the gambling tax were to occur.
O'Reilly's comments come alongside Rank reporting growth across all areas of its business in Q1 of 2025/26.
He adds: "We have started the year strongly and are confident of delivering Group like-for-like operating profit in line with expectations, notwithstanding the significant cost increases we have incurred in employer National Insurance contributions, the National Living Wage and the new statutory levy."
Further amplifying this message, leading high street bookmaker, Betfred, says all 1,287 of its shops face closure if Chancellor imposes punitive tax rises.
Fred Done, Co-Founder & Chairman, says that 7,500 jobs are at risk, adding that "tax rises are the biggest threat to the industry in his 57 years in the business."
Done adds that 300 of his shops currently lose money, and that a 5% increase on gambling taxes would raise that number to 430.
"Once the industry is closed down, it is gone," he believes. "People will still bet, but they will bet offshore. There are plenty of bookmakers offshore who take bets, who don't pay anything to this country,"
Meanwhile, fellow high street operator, Paddy Power, has already announced the closure of 57 shops in UK (29) and Ireland (28), with 247 staff at risk of redundancy.
Flutter UK & Ireland said the decision was made in light of increasing cost pressures and challenging market conditions.
Taxes currently paid by the UK gambling industry include 21% on online casino gaming stakes, 20% duty on slots and gaming machines, general betting duty on sports fixtures of 15% and general betting duty on horseracing of 15%.
The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) think tank estimated over the summer that additional taxes on the industry, as high as 50%, could raise £3.2bn.
And Chancellor Reeves recently told ITV: "I do think there is a case for gambling firms paying more; they should pay their fair share of taxes, and we will make sure that happens."


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Esports Global launches $50m fund to power next generation of gaming & esports

Guernsey

Esports Global has created the Esports Global Fund LP, a new US$50m investment initiative designed to fuel innovation and long-term growth across the global esports and gaming industries.

The Guernsey-based fund, backed by the Kuwait-based Alshaya family, will target between 10 and 15 promising companies from around the world, offering not just capital but access to Esports Global's deep industry network and expertise.

Alongside this, a portion of the fund will support early-stage and Series B investments to help emerging ventures scale up effectively.

The fund is led by an experienced team with deep roots in esports, technology and investment. Dave Martin, CEO of Esports Global and a co-founder of the London Royal Ravens Call of Duty team, is joined by Chester King, Founder & President of the British Esports Federation.

The leadership group also includes Susanne Chishti, Founder of Fintech Circle; Dr Melita Moore, a physician and consultant specialising in sports and esports; and Mark 'Garvey' Candella, former competitive gamer and industry veteran known for work with Twitch, AcadArena and Nodwin Gaming.

Dave Martin emphasises the fund's role in bridging the gap between innovation and opportunity: "Over the last 10 years we have seen many changes in how the esports ecosystem is owned, operated and funded. The potential for long-term growth, together with the ecosystem's improving infrastructure in tech, defence, data and AI, makes for extremely exciting times.

"But businesses need access to smart capital to give them every chance to succeed, and that is exactly what we are here to do."

Chester King adds: "We have seen many great businesses come and go due to a lack of funding or access to industry knowledge.

"We believe the next five years will see major growth in the ecosystem surrounding gamers, and this fund will help those founders build sustainable companies that support that evolution."

The Alshaya family's backing marks a major step in esports' growing appeal to traditional investors. Known for their extensive portfolio across retail, hospitality and technology, the Alshayas are expanding into esports as part of their broader investment strategy.

Bader Alshaya concludes: "Esports is an exciting new addition to our portfolio. The experience of Chester King and the team at Esports Global is vast in the industry, and we look forward to supporting them with our global network."

SL Green says Times Square Casino bid still alive

USA

According to The Real Deal, Marc Holliday, CEO of real estate investment trust, SL Green, believes that the company's bid to bring a casino to New York's Times Square might not yet be over.

A month after an advisory committee declared the $5.4bn proposal to be one of three Manhattan proposals to be rejected, Holliday is not so sure.

Speaking in a third-quarter earnings call, he said: "The whole process and the outcome is unknown. How many bidders will there be? How many licenses will be awarded? And whether, if any are held back, there will be another shot for casinos in Manhattan or otherwise to come into play."

And he emphasized that the plan, developed with Caesars Entertainment, Roc Nation and Live Nation, is still very much on the table.

Following the September rejections of proposals from SL Green, plus both Silverstein Properties and Stefan Soloviev, the subsequent exit of MGM from the race could see the goalposts moved once more.

Following the $8.4bn acquisition of Paramount Global, the building's largest tenant, by Skydance Media this added stability, plus the building's adaptability for entertainment or hotel use, gives SL Green flexibility to explore multiple paths forward.

The surprise exit of MGM Resort has further knock-on effects, with just three active bids remaining: Bally's in the Bronx, Metropolitan Park near Citi Field and Resorts World NYC in Queens. And Bally's Corporation previously agreed to pay the Trump Organisation more than $100m if its Bronx proposal wins a license.

India reviews iGaming public interest litigation

India

India's Supreme Court is reviewing a public interest litigation (PIL) initiated by the Centre for Accountability and Systemic Change (CASC), which seeks to ban online gambling platforms disguised as social games or esports.

The petition aims to align laws under the Promotion & Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025.

CASC, dedicated to ensuring accountability in governance and enforcing the rule of law, has targeted major tech companies, including Apple and Google India, in the PIL. The organisation believes that these platforms are causing social and economic harm by masking gambling activities under the guise of legitimate games.

The Hindustan Times reports that the PIL requests the court to mandate the government to unify national and state regulations to prohibit these deceptive gaming forms. The legislation would empower parliament to enforce a ban on real-money online gaming, including skill-based games like fantasy sports and poker.

The filing highlights that "betting and gambling are regarded as unlawful activities in the majority of states in India." It further notes that numerous cases are pending in high courts, with affidavits filed by both the government and gaming platforms.

The petition states that 650 million people, nearly half of India's population, are engaged in online gambling, generating an annual revenue of US$20.5 billion.

The Promotion & Regulation of Online Gaming Act aims to protect society's welfare and prevent the "serious evil" of online betting from spreading, as emphasized by the IT Minister in Parliament.

In August, India announced a 40% 'Sin Tax' on gambling and luxury goods, sparking industry criticism.

The Supreme Court's decision on this PIL could significantly impact the country's online gambling landscape.

Georgia closing in on legalized gambling?

USA

Following years of debate, lawmakers in the US state of Georgia are considering allowing voters to decide if they want to legalize gambling, with a Constitutional Amendment requiring the approval of state's electorate.

At the final hearing of the House Gaming Committee on October 16th, Republicans and Democrats seemed to finally be on the same page, with Committee Chair, Watkinsville Republican Marcus Wiedower, thinking the time may now be right. He says: "Ultimately, let the voters decide if they want to participate in it, but I think, within a legal framework, which would be proper."

There is a sense that whilst casino gambling and horse racing may struggle to secure sufficient backing, lawmakers could support legalizing online sports betting, which already has the support of all the major Atlanta sports teams.

Dr. Harry Levant of the Public Health Advocacy Institute warns lawmakers that online sports gambling is potentially dangerous, and if Georgia approves it, it should do so with strict regulations.

"I defer to your wisdom and the wisdom of the body that you represent to decide if, when, and how, but if you are going to do it, you must put this forward as an issue of public health," he says.

Sports betting has some Republican support, plus the support of Democrats.

Yasmin Neal of Jonesboro says: "There are a lot of benefits that we can have that will benefit our children. So, for me, with the proper regulation, absolutely I support it."

The Committee will make its recommendations to the full House in January.

Genting Casinos plans new central London venue

UK

Councillors have given the green light to turn a notable building near London's Piccadilly Circus into a casino.

James Axelby, Genting UK's CFO, says that the company plans to transform the Trocadero on Coventry Street into a two-storey casino and restaurant, potentially creating 350 jobs.

Westminster City Council's planning committee unanimously approved the project, despite opposition from the Soho Society, which expressed concerns over potential late-night disturbances.

The development will replace the former Bubba Gump Restaurant & Opium Nightclub, which ceased operations in 2019 following a shooting incident. The refurbished space aims to accommodate up to 1,250 patrons.

Axelby assured locals that alcohol sales would not exceed 7% of the venue's revenue, adding: "At the heart of the scheme is a robust operational management plan which addresses matters such as dispersal, noise and smoking so the venue operates smoothly and respectfully."

Council planning officers endorsed the casino, noted that casinos generally do not attract large, high-spirited crowds and that the 24-hour operation would help prevent mass exits in the early hours of the morning.

While Westminster City Council does not issue new casino licenses, Genting intends to transfer its license from the now-closed Crockfords Club in Curzon Street.

BetterGambling Report: 800+ UK online operators face closure

UK

BetterGambling, the UK's independent gambling industry think tank, has released its comprehensive Market Intelligence Report, indicating that over 800 UK online casino operators will be forced out of the market by 2027, the largest industry slump in British gambling history.

The study, authored by BetterGambling's stable of former casino bosses and regulatory experts, projects a 30-40% drop in authorised iGaming operators as the 2026 regulatory landscape renders continued operation economically non-viable for low-to-midsized players.

Diana Tunsu, a Reviewer at BetterGambling says: "We are witnessing the greatest scale of change since the Gambling Act 2005. This is not just market consolidation; it is a structural realignment of an industry that supported 2,262 licensed operators as of March 2024."

Between 680 and 900 operators are anticipated to exit the market by the end of 2027 (30-40% of the current market), with new casino launches dropping by 60-70% relative to 2024 levels. White-label operations will see a 45-55% closure rate as a result of shifts in platform economics, and stand-alone online casinos will see 40-50% market consolidation as a result of compliance barriers, as the total first-year compliance investment is projected at between £800,000 and £2.8m per operator.

Compliance investment reality

BetterGambling's analysis of operators reveals the true cash investment required for 2026 compliance. The regulatory fee alone will remove £100m from the industry annually, and technology infrastructure upgrades will cost individual operators between £500,000 and £2m.

Diana Tunsu adds: "The economics are straightforward; operators with GGY below £3m per year are faced with a stark choice, either spend significantly on compliance or consider strategic options including withdrawing from the market."

White-label market transformation

White-label casino businesses are recognised as being severely tested in the report, with 45-55% predicted to merge or close down. Of the estimated 350-450 current white-label businesses, BetterGambling predicts 200-300 will survive past 2027.

BetterGambling's look at the leading UK casino sites shows how giants are already gearing up to make this transition.

Thailand's gaming legislation struggles amid political turmoil

Thailand

The Thailand Entertainment Complex Bill faces significant hurdles, including political and social challenges, casting doubt on its revival by late 2026.

This situation reflects the intricate relationship between Thailand's political sphere and the gaming industry.

Thailand's political landscape is likened to a house of wild cards, leaving the global gaming industry in suspense. Major operators in Macau had been optimistic about the Entertainment Complex Vill through 2024 and 2025, with many establishing a presence in Bangkok. However, political manoeuvring in Bangkok has frustrated stakeholders and shifted attention to two pivotal developments.

The first issue is whether caretaker Prime Minister, Anutin Charnvirakul, will dissolve the current House and call for elections in March or early April. In a policy statement on September 29th, Anutin emphasized a strict stance against narcotics, gambling and fraud, with no support for casino-style entertainment complexes or online gambling legalization.

The EC Bill was withdrawn on July 7th, by then Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra to avoid further political infighting. Despite this withdrawal, a Senate committee under Anutin's watch again rejected it on September 3rd, citing concerns about social impacts, economic disruption,
and national security.

The Shinawatra family's involvement is another key factor. Ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Paetongtarn Shinawatra were prominent advocates of the Bill, alongside local players like CP Group and Bangkok Land Company's IMPACT Arena.

Thaksin's corruption conviction on September 9th 'tainted' the Bill in the eyes of many, despite past momentum when the Ministry of Finance approved it in December 2024 and the Cabinet followed suit in January 2025.

Political dynamics shifted after Paetongtarn's February trip to Beijing, where she disclosed President Xi Jinping's concerns over Thailand legalizing gaming. This gave Anutin political leverage and coincided with the collapse of Bangkok's State Audit Office due to faulty materials, further delaying the EC Bill vote.

Industry efforts to address public concerns backfired, with poorly executed PR campaigns inflaming opposition. And the EC initiative unravelled between May and August, exacerbated by a border conflict with Cambodia and Paetongtarn's suspension and dismissal due to ethics violations.

Looking ahead to 2026, there remains a slim chance for reconsideration. The Senate suggested studying entertainment complexes without gaming and proposed stringent entry conditions for Thai nationals. A National Referendum on casinos was also proposed, although industry insiders doubt its feasibility.

Brazil halts retroactive gambling tax

Brazil

Brazil's government has decided to step back from implementing a retroactive tax on gambling operators, following significant debate and opposition.

Provisional Measure 1303, a comprehensive Bill aimed at increasing revenue and addressing tax system loopholes, had proposed taxing gambling companies for activities over the past decade.

This proposal caused widespread concern in Brazil's burgeoning gambling sector as it intended to levy taxes for up to 10 years before gambling was formally regulated. However, following heated discussions, the Chamber of Deputies voted to withdraw the plan by 251 votes to 193, halting its progress.

The government had sought to enroll operators in a voluntary scheme called RERCT Litígio Zero Bets. This would have allowed companies to resolve outstanding tax issues by paying a 15% tax and an additional 15% fine on operations conducted from 2014 to 2024.

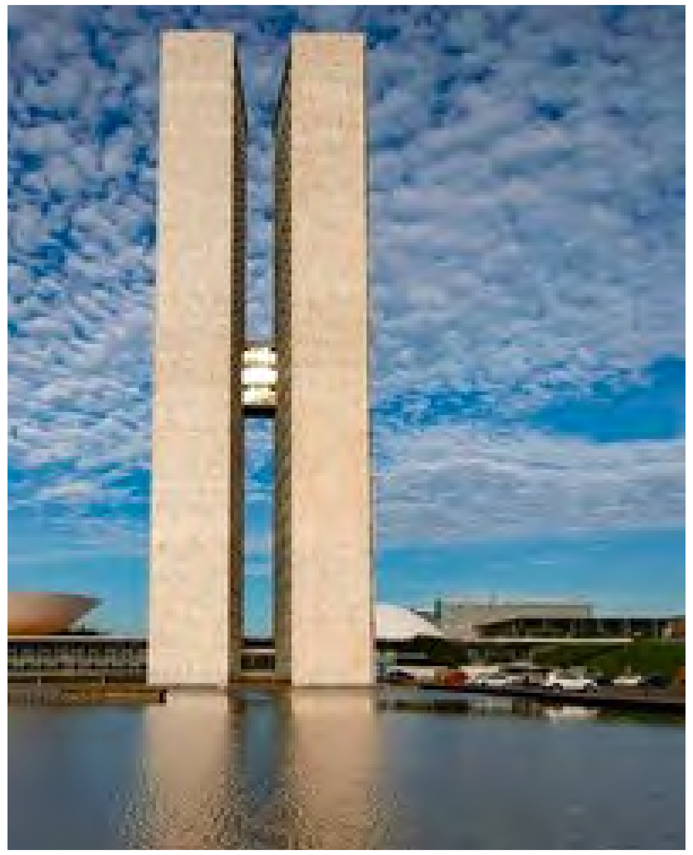
The expectation was to generate BRL5bn (US$940m), an estimated three years' worth of gambling tax revenue. Proponents believed this would clarify legal ambiguities in a market only regulated from January 1st this year. However, critics deemed it unfair to retroactively tax businesses that operated under an unregulated framework.

Finance leaders had anticipated the broader economic reform package would raise BRL17bn ($3.2bn) across various sectors by 2026. Its failure left Senator Renan Calheiros, who chaired the committee, expressing disappointment, noting its adverse impact on public finances.

For now, operators experience temporary reprieve, continuing under the existing 12% tax rate. But legal experts, including Udo Seckelmann from Bichara e Motta Advogados, suggest that the idea of a voluntary settlement may re-emerge, potentially aiding in resolving future tax disputes.

The collapse of the Bill underscores the division within Congress regarding gambling policy. As Brazil navigates newly opened regulated betting markets, lawmakers are tasked with balancing new revenue opportunities against the demand for stricter regulations.

Elvis Lourenço, industry analyst, believes this setback indicates limited congressional support for swift fiscal measures linking betting taxation to broader revenue initiatives. The government is likely to revisit or reintroduce elements of the proposal, but the timeline remains uncertain and the debate over gambling taxation in Brazil is far from concluded.



GGN World News

Allwyn & OPAP merge to create €16 billion giant

Swiss

Allwyn International and OPAP have announced a strategic merger, creating a global leader in lottery and gaming entertainment with an equity valuation of €16bn.
This merger, which combines two major players in the gaming industry, establishes the second largest listed gaming entertainment company worldwide.
Allwyn, holding a 51.78% stake in OPAP, has valued the merger as a pivotal moment in their longstanding collaboration, dating back to 2013 when KKCG, Allwyn's controlling shareholder, first invested in OPAP. This all-share transaction has received approval from the boards of both companies.
Karel Komarek, Allwyn's Founder & Chair, says: "Today's announcement redefines the sector, signalling the creation of the second largest listed gaming entertainment company globally."
He emphasized the merger's potential to drive innovation and significant international growth, focusing on Allwyn's mission to become the world's leading gaming entertainment entity.
For Allwyn, this merger provides access to equity capital markets and enhances its global platform.
The combined entity will continue to be listed on the Athens Stock Exchange, with plans to seek additional listings on other major exchanges like London or New York.
From Q1 of 2026, OPAP will rebrand its consumer identity to Allwyn, reflecting the integration of the two companies into a unified brand.
Robert Chvatal, Allwyn CEO, says: "This transaction marks a further milestone in Allwyn's successful journey."
OPAP will create new Greek subsidiaries and relocate its statutory seat to Luxembourg, forming LuxCo. Allwyn will contribute its assets to LuxCo in exchange for newly issued shares, with the combined company eventually moving its headquarters to Switzerland and adopting the Allwyn name.
Upon completion, Allwyn will hold approximately 78.5% economic interest in the merged entity, while OPAP shareholders will possess 21.5%. KKCG is set to control 85% of total voting rights.
Jan Karas, OPAP's CEO, expressed enthusiasm about the merger's potential to foster growth and innovation.
Financially, the merger promises to deliver consistent dividends to shareholders, with OPAP CFO Pavel Mucha noting the strong financial characteristics of the combined business. The merger's completion, pending shareholder approval, is anticipated in late 2025 or early 2026
Post-merger, the company will maintain a sustainable dividend policy, with a minimum annual dividend of €1.00 per share starting from 2026. Special dividends and buybacks will be considered, supporting both organic and inorganic growth opportunities.
The leadership team will see Chvatal and Allwyn CFO, Kenneth Morton, at the helm of the merged company, while OPAP's existing management will continue to oversee operations in Greece and Cyprus.
The Board will consist of eight members, including six from Allwyn and two new independent Non-Executive Directors.
Additionally, Allwyn is expanding its reach by acquiring fantasy sports operator PrizePicks and iGaming operator Novibet, further solidifying its position as a leading force in the global gaming industry.

Gambling tax rise threatens William Hill shops

UK

Evoke, owner of William Hill, has announced the potential closure of up to 200 UK betting shops due to an anticipated increase in gambling taxes.
This decision could potentially impact 1,500 jobs, highlighting the significant consequences of the upcoming autumn UK Budget.
Evoke is weighing the effects of possible tax hikes on its operations in preparation for the Chancellor's statement on November 26th, where up to 15% of its 1,300 UK outlets may face closure, as initially reported by The Sunday Times.
A spokesperson from Evoke stated: "We are mindful of potential tax increases in the forthcoming budget which would impact investment in the UK and drive more customers to the black market.
"As part of our ongoing planning, we are assessing the potential impact of different overall tax scenarios on our UK operations. This includes the difficult but necessary consideration for shop closures."
Evoke acquired William Hill for £2bn (US$2.6bn) in 2022.
The company operates 1,300 shops and employs around 10,000 people globally, including brands like 888 and Mr. Green.
Despite launching an upgraded William Hill Vegas app recently, the company is burdened with

£1.8bn of debt and reported a nearly £78m pre-tax loss for the first half of 2025.
The discussions of shop closures come as other gambling firms, such as Entain, express similar concerns.
Entain's CEO, Stella David, has warned that higher gambling taxes could lead to shop closures and reduced investments in the UK market.

Discussions continue on Virginia iGaming legislation

USA

Virginia lawmakers have delayed Bills aimed at legalizing iGaming, but discussions continue, with advocates investing in upcoming elections. Industry supporters argue the economic potential is substantial.
In December 2024, Senator Mamie Locke introduced Senate Bill 827, seeking to legalize iGaming. However, she requested a delay in January for further industry study. Meanwhile, a subcommittee formed in 2023 is evaluating the feasibility of a new gambling regulator. This group, meeting as recently as August, discussed the economic potential of iGaming, suggesting it could generate billions.
Locke's Bill proposes allowing the Virginia Lottery Board to issue online casino licenses, with operators required to pay a $1m application fee and a 15% revenue tax. Each of the state's five casinos could apply for up to three iGaming skins.
Since legalizing sports betting in 2020, Virginia sportsbooks have accepted $24.7bn in wagers, generating $2.4bn in revenue.
Virginia Public Radio reports that establishing a new regulatory agency could become a legislative priority by 2026. Lawmakers suggest that this agency must be in place before further gambling expansion.
David Rebuck, former Director of the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, addressed the subcommittee in August, countering fears that legalizing iGaming would harm land-based casinos, and stating that in New Jersey, iGaming has complemented other gaming forms and supported land-based casino growth.

Online betting drives South Africa's US$86.5bn gambling turnover

South Africa

South Africa's National Gambling Board (NGB) has confirmed that in FY 2024/25, the country's total gambling turnover reached R1.5 trillion ($86.5bn), largely driven by a 60% contribution to GGR from the online betting sector.
Total GGR amounted to R75bn ($4.3bn) up from R59.3bn in 2023/24. Betting, including online betting, generated around 70% this total, at R52.3bn, while casinos contributed R16.6bn (22%), a drop of 4.1% attributed to a decline in the number of operational slots and tables, both by around 2%.
The LPM sector remained third largest, generating R4.1bn, with bingo contributing R1.7bn.
The NGB highlights that the gambling industry provides 33,169 direct jobs and over 144,000 indirect jobs and contributed R5.8bn in taxes and levies in 2024/25. However, there is some concern around d the proportion of disposable incomes that South Africans are spending on gambling.
Old Mutual's Savings & Investments Monitor for 2025 showed that 52% of working South Africans gamble, with it being the most popular among men aged 30-49. Sports betting ranks is most popular (61%), followed by the lotto at (53%) and slots (52%).
The NCB identifies a 31% "problem gambling" prevalence over this period.

Old Vegas Values in a New Vegas World:

Why the human touch still matters

Stephen A Crystal,
Founder & CEO, SCCG Management

After 35 years in the casino business, I have seen Las Vegas reinvent itself time and again. But today, as visitor numbers dip and costs climb, it feels like the city has drifted from what made it special. Vegas used to be where you could stretch a dollar, feel welcome and escape the ordinary. Now, for many, it feels like value and connection have slipped away. Visitor traffic is down more than 6% this year, with steeper declines from Canada and Europe.
Gaming now makes up only about one third of Strip revenue, down from nearly 80% decades ago.
The rest comes from nightclubs, high-end dining, sports events and concerts. These attractions are impressive, but they have changed the DNA of what Vegas once was; a place built on hospitality and relationships.

The Lost Art of Connection

I remember my partner in owning six casinos in downtown Las Vegas, D.W. Barrick, insisting that we stand at the front door each morning and greet customers. Make them feel known. This simple practice built loyalty. Today, you rarely see ownership or management on the floor.
One of the few who still embraces that 'Old Vegas' charm is Derek Stevens at Circa Resort & Casino. Guests notice when leadership is present; it makes them feel valued.

The Fading Value Proposition

Vegas was once the home of affordable indulgence: free drinks at the slots, low-cost rooms and the sense you got more than you paid for.
Now, resort fees, inflated prices and long lines tell a different story. Visitors still crave the experience, but they are questioning the value. If half your hotel bill is fees, it is difficult to feel like a winner.
Blending Technology with Humanity

We talk a lot about AI, automation and personalization, and these tools have their place. But technology should enhance not replace the human element.
When someone sits at a bar, the 'three-second rule' should still apply - eye contact, a napkin, a hello. This small interaction is what separates a memory from a transaction.

The New Generation still wants Connection

Even in a mobile-first world, people crave community. Younger visitors want authenticity and shared experiences. The same values that made Vegas thrive decades ago - recognition, conversation, appreciation - still resonate today.
Yes, tariffs, inflation and global economics all play a role in the downturn, but 'fixing' Vegas is not just about new attractions or marketing campaigns.
It is about rediscovering the basics - treating people like guests, creating real moments and bringing back the personal touch that made Las Vegas legendary.

At the helm of gaming innovation, SCCG Management is the leading advisory firm in the global gaming industry. Specialising in iGaming, Sports Betting, Esports and Casino Technology, SCCG draws on three decades of industry experience and an extensive international network to elevate your business. From Europe to Latin America, SCCG's strategic partnerships are your gateway to worldwide growth.

GCB becomes CGA - Curaçao Gaming Authority

Curaçao

Curaçao's Gaming Control Board (GCB) is a foundation established on April 19th,1999, with the specific purpose of becoming the supervisor of the entire gaming industry operating in and from Curaçao.

With the entry into force of the National Ordinance on Games of Chance (LOK) on December 24th, 2024, the GCB has been designated as the Curaçao Gaming Authority (CGA) and will continue operations under this name.

The CGA is led by a Board of Directors under the supervision of a Supervisory Board. Until recently, the CGA fell under the political and administrative responsibility of the Minister of Finance, but on August 19th, 2025, the government transferred this responsibility to the Minister of Justice, as announced on October 13th, 2025.

In the context of its activities and its commitment to transparency, the CGA confirms that the Supervisory Board resigned in mid-September, and the process to appoint new members has already begun. This development has no impact on the performance of the CGA's supervisory duties, including the continued implementation of the LOK. All licensing and supervisory activities continue uninterrupted.

On October 15th, the CGA announced the framework for converting certain B2C licenses issued under NOOGH into B2B licenses under the new LOK regime. Under the NOOGH legislation, certain entities that would be classified as B2B operations under the LOK framework were classified as B2C on (1) the portal and/or (2) the license certificate (hard and soft copy).

The expiry of the Orange Seal (Certificate of Operations) comes into effect on October 15th, effectively bringing the former sublicense system to an end. Therefore, all operators must ensure that their licenses under the LOK correctly reflect their business activities.

Where a conversion or reclassification is required, the CGA has outlined the specific requirements and procedures to be followed.

The CGA reminds all operators that it is their responsibility to ensure that their licenses accurately reflect the nature of their operations under the LOK regime. Failure to complete the transition as outlined will place operators in breach of Curaçao law.

The Authority remains available to assist operators throughout this process, and all communication should be conducted via the CGA portal to ensure transparency and traceability.

Gen.G and Manchester University launch esports initiative

South Korea

South Korean esports giant Gen.G Esports has partnered with Manchester University in the UK to offer students a unique learning experience through the Gen.G Practicum Abroad program.

This collaboration highlights the increasing involvement of British universities in the esports industry, providing students an opportunity to explore the vibrant esports ecosystem in South Korea.

The three-week program, held in Seoul, is designed to immerse students in various aspects of the esports industry. Participants will engage in custom esports programming, receive mentorship from industry professionals, attend lectures and network within the esports community.

Additionally, students will experience South Korean culture firsthand and organisations and gaming publisher studios.

Garrett Schieferstein, Director of Esports at Manchester University, says: "We are incredibly excited to partner with such an amazing esports organisation like Gen.G to provide our students here at Manchester with an amazing opportunity to travel to Seoul and learn the esports industry from the best in the business."

He emphasizes that the program offers students a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn more about esports on a global scale."

Arnold Hur, CEO of Gen.G, adds: "This is our most ambitious program since the launch of Gen.G Practicum Abroad, bringing together some of the best universities in the country to expand their educational programs on campus."

Benjamin Schlarb, Junior Valorant Captain, also shared his excitement: "I think that this partnership with Gen.G is an amazing opportunity for students like me to get hands-on experience in the esports industry before we even graduate."

According to Forbes, Gen.G Esports, known for its success in games like League of Legends, Rocket League and PUBG: Battlegrounds, was valued at $250million in 2022. The organisation recently won the 2025 League of Legends Mid-Season Invitational, further cementing its status in the esports world.

"I think that this partnership with Gen.G is an amazing opportunity for students like me to get hands-on experience in the esports industry before we even graduate."

UAE Lottery announces first AED100m Winner

UAE

On October 18th, a fortunate player has scooped the Grand Prize of AED100m (US$27.23m), the largest single lottery jackpot in the country's history, with the winner beating odds of 1 in 8,835,372.

The event was also the first-ever 6+1 UAE Lottery jackpot, with the winner successfully matching all numbers in both the Days' and Months' sets. Before the Grand Prize is officially awarded, the UAE Lottery is conducting due diligence to ensure compliance with internal procedures and the General Commercial Gaming Regulatory Authority (GCGRA) standards.

The verification process focuses on maintaining transparency and integrity, with the UAE Lottery confirming: "Responsible gaming, player safety and operational transparency remain at the heart of everything we do. Safeguarding the integrity of our draws and maintaining the trust of all players continue to be our highest priorities."

The UAE Lottery began operation on December 14th, 2024, and has since held bi-weekly draws on Saturdays at 20:30. The Lucky Day draw has seen over 100,000 winners, with only UAE residents eligible to participate and claim prizes. Entry requires a payment of AED50 ($13.60) and the selection of seven numbers.

Winners of amounts exceeding AED100,000 must notify the UAE Lottery through their support email and claim their prize in person, adhering to the lottery's established policies.

Trailblazing women reshape Kenya's gaming landscape

Kenya

Kenya's gaming sector is experiencing a significant transformation, with women at the helm, leading the charge in innovation, regulation and technology.
iGaming Business x Women in Gaming Africa have this month highlighted five influential women whose contributions are reshaping the industry's future.
Esther Argwings, the regulator, is Assistant Director at Kenya's Gaming, Betting Control & Licensing Board, and has witnessed the industry's growth over her 26-year career. Her journey from Gaming Inspector to senior leadership reflects the sector's expansion from local casinos to a digitally driven ecosystem.
With the new Gambling Control Act of 2025, Argwings sees opportunities for operators and improved regulatory measures. Her focus on responsible gaming and public education aims to create a safe and compliant gaming environment.
Agatha Wanjugu, Sales & Account Manager at QTech Games, believes that to maximize growth, Kenya should build platforms that connect global content with local players while highlighting African talent. Her emphasis at QTech is on localization and collaboration, adapting offerings to African markets and promoting responsible growth.
Zsuzsanna Zeibig, General Manager at EGT Kenya, has over two decades of experience in the gaming sector. Now based in Nairobi, she oversees digital content distribution and land-based solutions across Africa. Zeibig believes growth lies in adapting technology to African realities while empowering local players and emphasizing the importance of creating regulations unique to African markets rather than copying Western models.

Lola Okulo, Co-founder of Tact Communications and former Head of PR for BetPawa Africa, has been pivotal in shaping the narrative of gaming across the continent. She advocates for communication to be central to business strategy, enhancing trust and driving connectivity, highlighting Kenya's technological edge as a mobile-first market with advanced fintech ecosystems, fostering an environment for responsible gaming growth.
Aileen Yonah-Mima, General Counsel for Carnaval Kenya, has been instrumental in embedding responsible gaming into corporate strategies. She views AI integration as a key opportunity for balancing profitability and responsibility, ensuring sustainable business and player welfare.
Together, these women illustrate a vibrant, ethical and forward-looking Kenyan gaming industry. They represent a shift from potential to progress, with regulators setting standards and professionals advocating for transparency and inclusion.
As Kenya continues to innovate, these leaders remind us that the future of gaming in Africa is about people, vision and building an industry for future generations.
Women in Gaming Africa (WiG Africa) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to connecting, elevating and empowering women across Africa's gaming industry.
Through events, mentorship and advocacy, WiG Africa champions representation, leadership and inclusion, fostering a stronger, more connected African gaming ecosystem.

KSA offers tax refunds for Covid-19 overpayments

Holland

Dutch regulator the Kansspelautoriteit (KSA) is offering partial tax refunds to land-based gambling operators that were forced to close during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.
This decision follows a ruling by the Dutch Council of State, which exempted a specific operator from paying gambling tax on days when it could not operate.
During the pandemic, closures of gambling premises led to financial losses for many operators, with one such operator challenging the imposition of gambling tax during the closure period, leading to the council's ruling in favour of a refund for those specific dates.
In response to the ruling, the KSA announced it will extend similar refund opportunities to other operators affected by the pandemic, with those who believe they meet the criteria having until November 14th to submit claims for the period between 2020 and 2021.
The KSA states: "In practice, this means a partial refund of the levies based on the periods in which the sector was forced to close due to the coronavirus.
"This refund will also include the statutory interest from the payment date by the licence holder, to the repayment date of the tax."
However, the KSA also issued a caution regarding the broader impact of these refunds. It notes that any refund could affect financial support received during the pandemic. Additionally, operators are encouraged to consider their current tax liabilities and whether pursuing a refund is beneficial. Adjustments resulting from refunds will be factored into the final gambling tax calculations for 2022.

Missouri set for sports betting launch on December 1st

USA

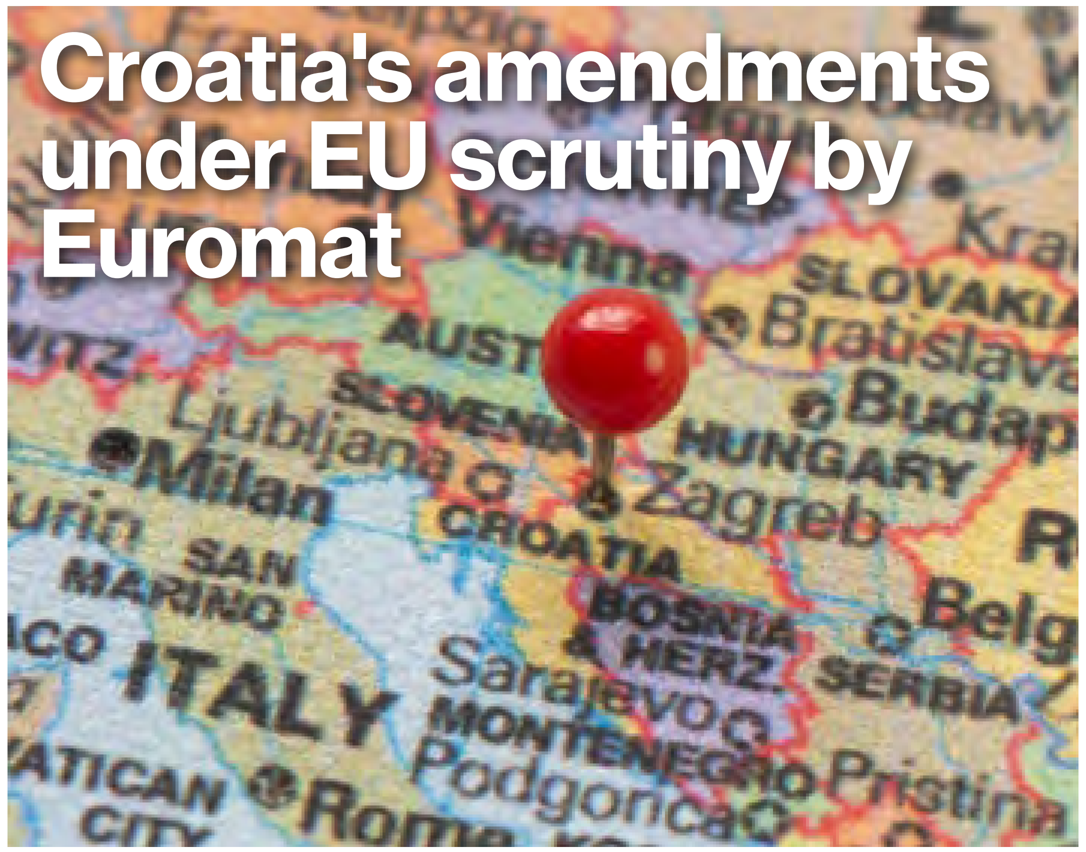
Missouri is on the verge of launching legal sports betting, with rollout planned for December 1st. The Missouri Gaming Commission (MGC) is working diligently to ensure a smooth market opening.
While no bets can be placed yet, efforts are underway to ensure technology providers are ready by launch day. Temporary licenses will be issued before December, allowing suppliers to verify and demonstrate their products' effectiveness prior to going live.
Developing a legal framework for sports betting has been a significant pre-launch task. The process has been intensive and time-consuming due to the need to create regulations from scratch. Staff members have worked long hours, including weekends and holidays, designating the Commission's conference room as a 'War Room' for the project.
Jan Zimmerman, MGC Chairman, noted: "There are hundreds of pages of everything that will regulate sports wagering in Missouri."
The economic impact of legalized sports betting remains uncertain as Missouri approaches its first legal wagers. Zimmerman mentioned early revenue predictions, adding: "The most reasonable number that I have heard has been probably $28m," cautioning that a full year of data is necessary for an accurate assessment, especially since betting will begin mid-football season.
Missouri voters approved legal sports betting last year through a ballot initiative. Under the new framework, tax revenue from sports gambling will support Missouri public education and military veterans' programs.

California welcomes $600 million Hard Rock Casino Tejon

USA

California's $600m Hard Rock Casino Tejon is set to open on November 13th, promising to rival even the grandest Las Vegas establishments.
Owned by the Tejon Indian Tribe and operated by Hard Rock International, this new casino is poised to become a major player in the global gaming and entertainment industry.
Located in Mettler, south of Bakersfield, Hard Rock Casino Tejon sits conveniently near the Grapevine Pass along the 5 Freeway. This massive development is one of California's largest casino projects in recent years, highlighting the increasing popularity of resort-style casinos beyond the Las Vegas strip.
Incorporating elements of the Tejon Indian Tribe's heritage, the casino offers a blend of modern luxury and cultural richness. Visitors will find a wide array of gaming options, including slot machines, table games and an independent poker room.
Beyond gaming, Hard Rock Casino Tejon will host live shows, comedy acts and special events, along with diverse culinary offerings. This immersive experience ensures that guests enjoy a resort-like atmosphere, rather than just a gaming venue.
The new casino will boost the local economy by creating hundreds of jobs in gaming, hospitality and retail. The revenue generated will support tribal community development, extending benefits beyond the casino property.
Additionally, the venue aims to serve as a cultural centre, celebrating the Tejon Indian Tribe's traditions while fostering connections with visitors. Kern County stands to benefit from an influx of tourists, transforming the region into a sought-after recreation and entertainment destination.

Croatia's amendments under EU scrutiny by Euromat



Crotia

Euromat (The European Gambling & Amusement Federation) has lodged a formal complaint with the European Commission over amendments to Croatia's Gambling Act, alleging the changes introduce significant technical rules affecting the Croatian market.
The complaint highlights issues like mandatory player identification, venue restrictions and advertising bans.
Euromat contends that Croatia failed to notify the Commission about the amendments and accompanying regulations, which is a legal requirement for Member States when new laws could affect market access or impose technical requirements.
The Federation argues the changes create an uneven playing field, disadvantaging certain gambling sector segments.
Croatia's amended Gambling Act includes strict measures such as a central player self-exclusion register and temporal restrictions on operations. Moreover, Euromat claims that the new law offers exemptions and regulatory privileges that favour certain operators. These regulations, introduced alongside the Act, were not reported to the European Commission, violating EU procedures.
Jason Frost, Euromat President, stated that it is crucial to alert the Commission to potential EU law breaches, saying: "The notification procedure exists to ensure that national measures are compatible with the principles of the Single Market."
Frost asserts that Croatia's actions threaten legal certainty for businesses across Europe and urges the Commission to act decisively.
Despite repeated warnings to the Croatian Gaming Association and the European Commission, Croatia proceeded with these amendments without fulfilling its obligations.
Felip Jelavi, Secretary General, accused the Croatian Government of sidelining stakeholders and EU institutions, preventing scrutiny of measures that distort competition.
He urged the Commission to assess Euromat's complaint and intervene promptly.

Argentina's gambling law sparks Church and AFA conflict

Argentina

A dispute has arisen in Argentina between the Catholic Church and the Argentine Football Association (AFA) over a proposed law to regulate online gambling.
The Church supports a potential ban on gambling advertising in sports, while football authorities warn it could harm the industry financially.
Reflecting the teachings of Pope Francis, the Church has expressed concern about the growth of online betting, labelling it a threat that fuels addiction, especially among youth. In a letter to the Senate, Bishops urged lawmakers to swiftly pass the Bill, cautioning that "Every smartphone has become a Casino," and criticizing the "intense pressure from economic interests" to prevent restrictions on gambling promotions. Football officials, however, vocally oppose the measure.
Javier Mendez Cartier, an AFA Executive Committee member, stated during a Senate Committee hearing that banning betting sponsorships on kits, stadiums and broadcasts would cause a "historic financial blow", emphasizing that clubs are dedicated to safeguarding young people and not solely driven by commercial aims.
The AFA contends that betting sponsorships are a vital revenue source, underpinning the entire football ecosystem. The proposed law, already passed by the Chamber of Deputies, intends to regulate the advertising, promotion and operation of online gambling, prohibit access for those under 18 and minimize public exposure to gambling triggers that lead to addiction.
If enacted, the legislation would limit gambling advertisements on social networks, digital platforms, billboards and all audiovisual media, including team apparel, sports facilities and players.
This would mean that Argentine football broadcasts, the AFA and the national team could no longer feature betting company sponsors.
The outcome of this clash between the Church and the AFA could significantly impact the future of gambling advertising in Argentine sports, balancing moral considerations with economic realities.

Sri Lanka to go live by June 2026

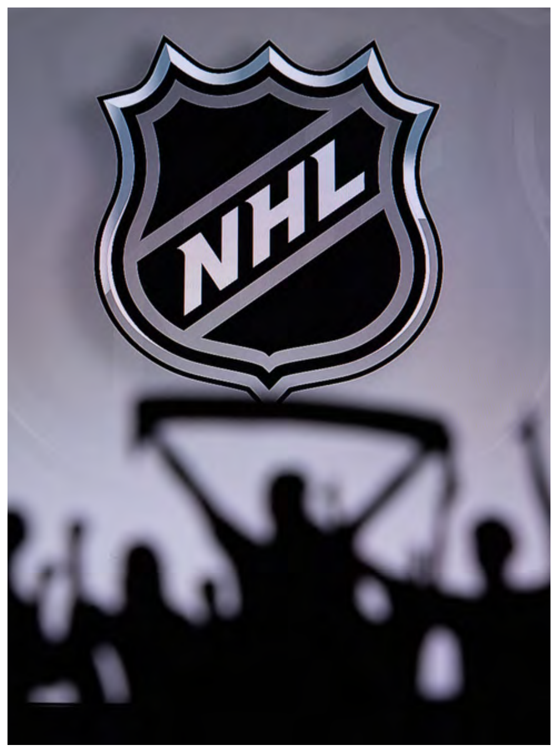
Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka plans to go live with its Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) by June next year, with the authority overseeing both land-based and online gambling, ensuring compliance with international standards.
Dr. Harsha de Silva, Chairman of the Committee on Public Finance, confirms that although legislation for the GRA is in place, the next step involves drafting necessary regulations, saying: "What we now need are the detailed regulations that will make it operational."
The GRA aims to regulate licensing procedures, penalties and consumer protection, while safeguarding government tax revenue. The iGaming sector, a significant challenge, currently operates in a legal grey area, with online platforms, mostly overseas-based, account for 60% to 70% of Sri Lanka's gambling activity despite being illegal.
Dr. de Silva adds: "This legal vacuum poses both financial and social risks."
International expertise will guide the development of the regulatory framework, with Sri Lanka consulting global experts and referencing Singapore's successful model. This framework will address legal aspects and compliance requirements, including anti-money laundering efforts.
The local gambling industry has attracted foreign investment, with the City of Dreams Sri Lanka, a $1.2bn integrated resort, opening in Colombo Port City in 2024.
Lawrence Ho, Chairman of Melco Resorts, believes that the resort could position Sri Lanka as a regional gambling hub, saying: "Sri Lanka can be to India what Macau is to China."
The Casino Business (Regulation) Act, initially passed in 2010, lacked implementing regulations until 2022, paving the way for the GRA. The GRA Board will include key officials like the Commissioner General of Inland Revenue and the Inspector General of Police.
The Minister of Finance will appoint three additional members, setting the stage for the authority to oversee the gambling industry.

NHL Partners with Polymarket and Kalshi

USA

The National Hockey League (NHL) has announced new partnerships with Polymarket and Kalshi, marking its first official agreements with prediction market platforms in the US.
These multi-year deals will grant the companies access to NHL's proprietary data and allow them to use its official marks, logos and designations.
Polymarket and Kalshi will also benefit from on-screen exposure during NHL broadcasts. This includes digitally enhanced dasher boards and virtual signage around the blue line during national games, Stanley Cup Playoffs and major outdoor events such as the Winter Classic and Stadium Series.
This exposure aims to boost recognition and engagement among fans.
Keith Wachtel, President of NHL Business, says: "As prediction markets continue to evolve at a rapid pace, partnering with the two market leaders, Kalshi and Polymarket, provides a tremendous opportunity for the broadest fan engagement during the NHL season.
"Polymarket and Kalshi are ideal partners as this category continues to grow and expand."
Shayne Coplan, Founder & CEO of Polymarket, adds: "We appreciate the support of the NHL in recognising that the future of fan experiences benefits from engagement with prediction markets."
Tarek Mansour, Kalshi's CEO, described the deal as a significant moment for both the company and the sector, reinforcing that prediction markets are here to stay, adding that by embracing Kalshi, the NHL has "validated the integrity, safety and trust with consumers" that Kalshi has developed over the years while pioneering this asset class.



UK

Led by Co-Founder & CEO, Nick Wright, Midnite is a dynamic and disruptive presence in the UK betting and gaming market, is challenging traditional giants with its innovative approach.
Midnite is positioning itself as the Monzo of betting, targeting digital natives with a mobile-first mindset and cutting-edge in-house products.
Monzo is a British app-based challenger bank, heavily favoured by the younger demographic.
Founded in 2015, Midnite has quickly emerged as a formidable force in the betting industry.
Wright attributes this success to an obsession with developing products that cater to modern customers, drawing inspiration from fintech disruptors like Monzo and Revolut, aiming to meet mobile-first customer expectations.
"Customer expectations today are mobile-first, they want native products that just work," he says, emphasizing the industry's need to adapt to digital native demands.
Midnite's strategy focuses on courting 21st-century digital natives, with the goal of ascending to the top tier of UK operators alongside names like Betfred and William Hill. Wright stresses the importance of brand visibility, adding: "Our ambition is to be tier-1, and you have to be famous as a brand in order to reach that status."
To achieve this, Midnite launched a huge media marketing campaign across television and streaming platforms, complemented by sports sponsorships like deals with TalkSport Radio and with Southampton FC.
Nick Wright is confident in the brand's approach, saying: "We are definitely seeing the results across user acquisition and an uptick in where customers are coming from."
Midnite's ability to adapt to shifting market dynamics is crucial. By owning product development, Midnite aims to maintain flexibility and capitalize on opportunities.
Looking ahead, Midnite plans to expand its offerings and strengthen its position in the UK casino market. With significant investments, including a $10m Series B funding round and a $100m credit facility, we await the next steps with intertest.

Tribal leaders attack prediction markets in angry G2E session

USA

At the G2E 2025, US tribal leaders discussed the growing challenges facing their gaming operations, particularly the rise of prediction markets.
Victor Rocha, publisher of pechanga.net, highlighted the need for vigilance against threats that were previously unnoticed, warning of the risks posed by these emerging markets.
The session, titled Sustaining Success: Tribal Leaders Talk Gaming, Growth and Challenges, saw panellists express concerns over the impact of prediction markets and sweepstakes gaming. These markets, which were not a significant concern a year ago, have now become a major issue.
Rocha criticized the influx of social gaming operators like Chumba into tribal territories, describing them as "vampiric" entities.
James Siva, President of the California Nations Indian Gaming Association, noted that sweepstakes operators took advantage of a sports betting electoral dispute to gain a foothold.
He mentioned a Bill, currently awaiting Governor Gavin Newsom's approval, aiming to ban such activities as just the beginning of regulatory actions against these operators.
Sara Dutschke, Chair of the Lone Band of Miwok Indians, expressed frustration over federal oversight allowing grey-market operators into their regions. Dutschke stressed the need for economic development through gaming, highlighting its importance for tribes like hers, where many members live below the poverty line.
Rocha described the tribal gaming industry as a $50 billion-a-year sector that provides justice according to its financial means. However, he lamented the lack of action from state regulators, forcing tribes to independently address challenges.
He also criticized daily fantasy sports, which he argued, monetize a casual activity, posing threats to tribal gaming operations.
David Z. Bean, Acting Chairman of the Indian Gaming Association (pictured), stressed the importance of unity among tribes in facing both illegal and legal gambling threats. He warned about the risks to tribal assets and customer bases posed by these unregulated markets.
The session concluded with a call for increased awareness and action against prediction markets, framing the issue as a significant threat to tribal sovereignty and economic stability.

La Madre di Tutti la Conferenze

To be honest, I wish I had thought of that tagline myself because The Mother of All Conferences, in the native tongue of the host nation, is the boldest of statements of intent for what is actually a debut event.

However, as we know, Eman Pulis, SiGMA Group Founder, does not do things by halves and, as he told Global Gambling News: "Expanding our primary European event into Rome is a monumental step for both the SiGMA World group and the broader industry.

"After 10 fantastic years in Malta, we felt it was time to elevate our European flagship to a truly continental level. Rome offers us the scale with 100,000sqm of exhibition space and the symbolism of being Europe's eternal capital, a hub of ideas, culture and innovation.

"For SiGMA World, this move represents our brand's maturity and for the industry, it is a bold statement that iGaming deserves a world-class platform akin to any major tech sector."

A New Chapter

SiGMA Central Europe certainly represents a new chapter in global gaming events. With 30,000 delegates, 1,200+ sponsors and exhibitors, 550 expert speakers, four conference stages, two Startup Pitch Competitions, two prestigious industry awards ceremonies, a charity auction and numerous networking events, tournaments, competitions and dinners, things are undoubtedly being elevated to an entire new level.

All Roads Lead to Rome

From the Roman Empire to the Renaissance, the eternal city has long been a nexus for innovation and entrepreneurship. And Italy's trajectory is hugely exciting. Still home to some of the greatest academics, scientists and artists, the country has all the makings to become Europe's next gaming hub.

Rome has also emerged as a top European city for digital entrepreneurship and startup growth. Italy, the continent's fastest-growing country in venture capital investment, has seen funding soar. Initiatives like the Houses of Emerging Technologies underscore the nation's commitment to fostering groundbreaking ideas, making Rome a prime destination for financial and technological advancement

As Eman explains, choosing Rome as the new home for SiGMA Central Europe was a natural decision: "Its central location in Europe, excellent connectivity, dynamic local market and forward-thinking regulatory environment make it ideal.

"Italy is one of Europe's most vibrant gaming markets, and hosting our event here provides both local and international operators with a neutral, accessible hub. Beyond business, Rome offers a unique heritage, style and experience where every interaction feels monumental.

The Fiera Roma

Fiera Roma is one of Europe's largest and most important exhibition centres, renowned for its futuristic design by architect Tommaso Valle.

Situated within a multifunctional business district, it features 10 state-of-the-art, pillar-free pavilions spanning 150,000sqm of indoor space and 40,000sqm outdoors. The Conference Centre includes 13 meeting rooms accommodating up to 3,000 attendees, while the entire venue hosts up to 60,000 participants. In addition, the venue can also accommodate 7,000 parking spaces.

All Roads Lead to Rome

Connected & Central

Hosting SiGMA Central Europe in Rome also offers the advantage of easy accessibility, thanks to its two airports; the Leonardo da Vinci International Airport, better known to travellers as Fiumicino, and Ciampino.

Fiumicino Airport is connected to Rome via the Leonardo Express and is just eight minutes away from the Fiera Roma venue, itself an easy 30 minutes from the city centre by taxi.

The Tuscolana, Tiburtina and Ostiense train stations run directly to the Fiera Roma, stopping right in front of the venue, with tickets costing just €1.50.

Europe's Rising Star

SiGMA Central Europe will be positioned in one of Europe's most promising gaming markets. Italy represents the largest untapped iGaming market in Europe, with total gambling revenue reaching €16 billion. Currently, only 25% of this market operates online, leaving €12 billion in offline revenue waiting to be unlocked.

As player preferences continue to shift online, Italy presents a rare opportunity for operators ready to expand in a high-potential, lucrative market.

SiGMA Central Europe is at the beating heart of this transformation, driving industry innovation and fostering essential connections for businesses eager to explore new opportunities.

Italy's iGaming industry achieved a revenue of almost €2.9bn in 2024, reflecting a robust growth trend. According to Statista, iGaming in Italy also has an anticipated annual growth rate of 5.52% from 2024-29, reaching an anticipated €3.78bn by the end of the forecast period.

Eman Pulis explains: "SiGMA Central Europe in the Italian capital will set it apart by redefining what a gaming expo can be.

"Our efforts to bring regulators and government agencies under one roof and our efforts to bring the frontier tech community closer to iGaming are all paying off beautifully."

Growing Startup Ecosystem

Italy is rapidly cementing its position as a leader in Europe's venture capital landscape, earning a spot among the Top 10 countries for VC investment.

While much of Europe has faced stagnation or decline in venture funding, Italy defied the trend, experiencing a doubling in investment to €2.3bn between 2021 and 2022. This momentum has continued, with €1.195bn raised in the first three quarters of 2024, signalling an ever-growing confidence in the Italian startup ecosystem.

The cumulative value of Italy's startups over the past decade is now $60 billion. This growth reflects the emergence of a new generation of tech founders driving innovation in diverse fields. The top-performing sectors last year included deep tech, focusing on transformative areas such as generative AI and space technology.

This wave of progress positions Italy as a beacon of technological innovation and a hub for ambitious startups, showcasing its potential to lead Europe's next generation of high-impact industries.

And SiGMA intends to play a leading role in this leadership journey: "We are integrating iGaming with emerging technologies like AI, blockchain and esports," says Eman Pulis. "At the same time, we offer a full cultural experience, with high-level Summits, world-class entertainment and Michelin-star networking.

"The SiGMA World ecosystem ensures that every stakeholder, from regulators to affiliates, finds real value. SiGMA Central Europe is not simply an expo, but an industry festival where deals are made, partnerships are formed and ideas come to life."

New Kids on The Block

SiGMA has long been committed to championing emerging startups, providing a dynamic platform that connects businesses with investors and seasoned mentors through the Startup Village.

Promising startups will gain exclusive access to the lounge during the event, offering valuable opportunities to partner with VCs and accelerators.

Following a highly successful previous edition, the SiGMA Pitch also returns. The top six startups, selected by an expert panel of judges, advance to the final Live Pitch Competition on the Main Stage, competing for the chance to secure invaluable equity investment.

SiGMA B2B & B2C Awards

A night of brilliance, groundbreaking achievements and meaningful philanthropy, the SiGMA Central Europe Awards celebrate the visionaries driving progress and positive change across the region.

This prestigious Gala Celebration includes a sumptuous dinner, a spectacular entertainment line-up, fantastic charity auctions in support of superb and deserving causes and represents an invaluable opportunity to network with key industry executives and thought leaders in the most incredible setting.

Travel back to the marble halls of Ancient Rome with an Awards Evening set in cinematic splendour. The Cinecitta Studios on Rome's Via Tuscolana has been the setting for a number of award-winning films, including Fellini's La Dolce Vita, the Audrey Hepburn classic, Roman Holiday, Anthony Minghella's The English Patient, Martin Scorsese's Gangs of New York, Wes Anderson's The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou (2004) and Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ.

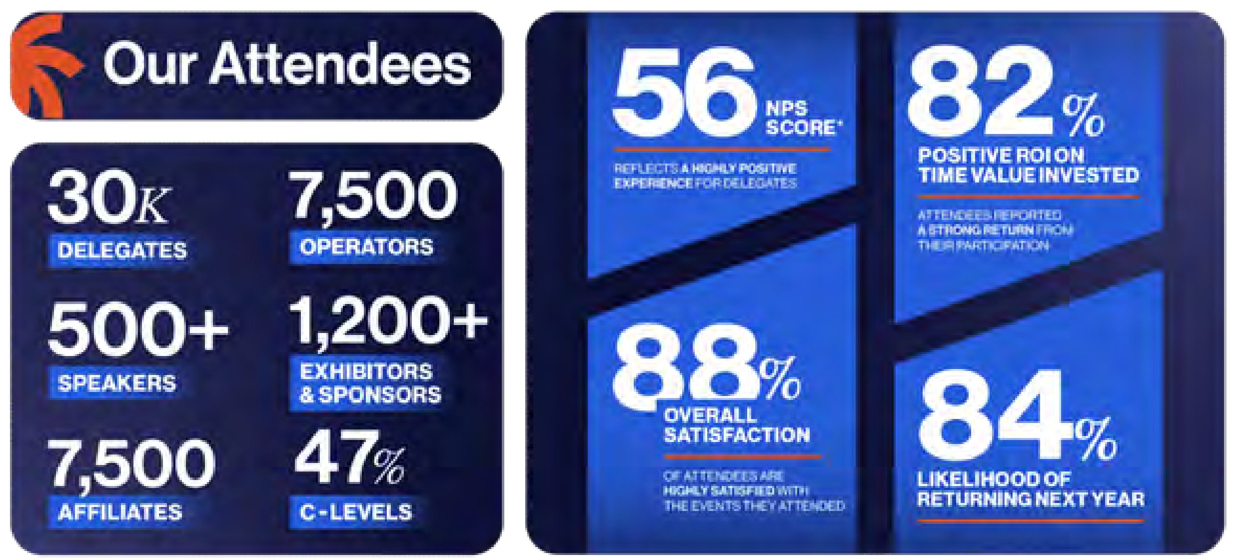
The Industry Response

The one question that I wanted to end by asking Eman was whether he believes that the response to SiGMA Central Europe from both exhibitors and visitor registrations has convinced him that this event can now be rightly considered to be a 'World' event?

His answer may be predictable to a point, but the twist in the tail is something that has become quite unique to the SiGMA World philosophy: "The response to SiGMA Central Europe has been phenomenal, with over 30,000 delegates, record booth sales and a waiting list of sponsors.

"What sets us apart is our diversity, bringing together Africa, Asia, LatAm and North America under one roof. We connect global ecosystems, and while we stand shoulder to shoulder with the other largest events, in some respects, we have managed to offer an experience that is global but also deeply personal."

And it doesn't get much more personal than "The Mother of All Conferences". Mamma Mia!



EUROPE
iGaming Powerhouse

Centre of the global ecosystem

Europe remains the core of the global iGaming economy. Its suppliers, from platform innovators and content studios to data, fintech and AI specialists, continue to define the standards of technology, compliance and creativity shaping international markets.

Europe remains the core of the global iGaming economy. Its suppliers, from platform innovators and content studios to data, fintech and AI specialists, continue to define the standards of technology, compliance and creativity shaping international markets.

As thousands of professionals gather at SiGMA Central Europe, the conversation centres on one truth: Europe still drives the global gambling ecosystem. From London and Vienna to Limassol, Sofia and Tbilisi, the continent produces the platforms, content and infrastructure that power global iGaming.

On the show floor, Europe's B2B giants such as BetConstruct, Digitain, EveryMatrix, Fazi, Merkur Group and SOFTSWISS stand beside new innovators like BGaming, Endorphina, GR8 Tech, SmartSoft and SPRIBE.

Infrastructure leaders Continent 8 Technologies and Internet Vikings keep the industry's digital backbone running, while data and trading experts such as BETER, DATA.BET and GGBet showcase Europe's dominance in integrity and engagement.

Among this vast ecosystem sits 1xBet, one of Europe's most recognisable global operators. Founded in Europe and active across dozens of markets, 1xBet symbolises the continent's ability to scale beyond borders. Its partnerships with leading B2B providers, from sportsbook engines to live dealer studios, reflect the interconnected ecosystem that makes Europe unique.

More than 70% of the world's leading iGaming suppliers are headquartered in Europe, serving operators on every continent. From sportsbook engines and PAM systems to live casino studios and cloud hosting, the technology that powers global iGaming remains overwhelmingly Made in Europe.

Strength in Diversity

Europe's strength lies in its diversity. Established groups such as BetConstruct, EveryMatrix and SOFTSWISS have built vast modular ecosystems capable of meeting any regulatory demand, while Belatra, CT Gaming, EGT, EvenBet and GR8 Tech continue to expand Europe's export reach. Greentube and Merkur bridge the land-based and online worlds with decades of engineering expertise.

Across the Caucasus and Baltics, studios like SmartSoft and SPRIBE are reinventing content with game genres that have reshaped player behaviour worldwide. Supporting them is a network of infrastructure and data providers that make European compliance scalable abroad. Companies such as BETER, Continent 8, DATA.BET and Internet Vikings ensure cross-jurisdictional connectivity and integrity. Systems built for European regulation now underpin emerging markets from Ontario to Brazil, where 1xBet and other European-born operators continue to expand.

Together, these firms show how Europe has evolved from a fragmented marketplace into a borderless technology ecosystem. They compete fiercely yet collectively export one defining value: trust - built on decades of regulatory adaptation and compliance leadership from bodies such as the UKGC, MGA and Germany's GGL.

Culture forged by Complexity

Europe's gaming ecosystem is defined not by geography but by regulation; a dense web of national frameworks that has, over two decades, forced suppliers and operators to build smarter and more adaptive technology. Where other regions chase growth through volume, Europe has learned to grow through compliance-driven innovation.

The continent's regulatory mosaic, from the UK's Gambling Commission and Malta's MGA to Italy's ADM, Sweden's Spelinspektionen and Germany's GGL, has been a laboratory for evolution. Each new rule or AML directive has compelled developers to refine code, enhance player protection and hard-wire transparency into every process.

EUROPE

iGaming Powerhouse

BetConstruct turned this complexity into a design philosophy. Its modular, multi-licence architecture enables operators to deploy compliant solutions in multiple territories without rebuilding infrastructure. What began as a necessity for navigating Europe's patchwork has become a global export model.

EveryMatrix followed a similar path. Its Regulatory Hub and jurisdiction-ready APIs allow a single integration to meet divergent technical standards worldwide, turning compliance into commercial advantage.

For SOFTSWISS, regulatory pressure spurred innovation in digital assets. Its crypto-to-fiat systems and real-time fraud analytics were built under EU financial directives, enabling clients to explore blockchain payments within mainstream compliance frameworks. As regulators from Brazil to the Philippines define crypto gaming rules, SOFTSWISS's model offers a ready-made benchmark.

Born from Regulation, Built for the World

GR8 Tech represents the next generation of this mindset. Emerging from Parimatch Tech, it was designed for scalability across regulated and emerging markets, combining sportsbook, casino and marketing modules in a single data-driven infrastructure.

Further east, Belatra, CT Gaming and EGT Interactive have turned years of land-based experience into online reliability, adhering to certified RNG and technical testing standards.

Even operators have evolved under this regulatory pressure. 1xBet, active in more than 60 jurisdictions, shows how compliance can become a competitive advantage. By integrating European KYC, data security and responsible-gaming standards, it enters new markets ahead of competitors still learning those lessons.

Innovation through Obligation

Europe's greatest strength is its cycle of regulation, adaptation and innovation. Rules once seen as obstacles now fuel progress, creating frameworks for fraud detection, transaction monitoring and safer-gaming algorithms that underpin global trust.

Continent 8 Technologies and Internet Vikings extend European-grade hosting and cybersecurity worldwide, while data firms like BETER and DATA.BET embed integrity feeds into esports and live betting.

Every safeguard and audit trail conceived in Europe strengthens the legitimacy of online gaming globally.

Europe's suppliers didn't just survive regulation, they mastered it, turning compliance into an innovation engine. As the rest of the world moves toward formal licensing, European standards are becoming the universal language of trust.

Architecture of Agility

Modern iGaming runs on invisible infrastructure, PAM systems, sportsbook engines and compliance modules, and almost all are European built.

Operators now demand speed, reliability and regulatory flexibility. Europe's suppliers were the first to deliver it, building plug-and-play platforms that scale across jurisdictions.

BetConstruct, operating from Armenia and Cyprus, connects over 300 partners through an ecosystem spanning sportsbook, casino, virtuals, CRM and affiliate tools. Its philosophy of 'Freedom of Configuration' emerged from Europe's regulatory diversity, letting operators like 1xBet and MelBet customise their business entirely within one environment.

EveryMatrix's CasinoEngine and GamMatrix PAM remove integration chaos, combining wallet, regulatory hub and API suite to launch in multiple markets seamlessly.

Where BetConstruct offers breadth, EveryMatrix offers precision - both hallmarks of European engineering.

Next-Gen Enterprise Platforms

GR8 Tech exemplifies Europe's new era of enterprise engineering. Its scalable sportsbook, marketing automation and BI modules support large multi-brand groups expanding into newly regulated markets such as Brazil and Ontario. The transformation from an internal operator tech arm to a global B2B provider shows how Europe continually reinvents itself.

SOFTSWISS, headquartered in Malta with teams across Europe, has evolved from white-label pioneer to full-suite technology partner, covering crypto integration, data warehousing and AI-driven analytics.

Its transparency, data integrity and multilingual UX define the sophistication of modern European platforms.

Altenar and Digitain lead in sportsbook performance. Altenar's hybrid model offers managed and turnkey solutions, while Digitain's API and risk-management modules serve dozens of markets. Both embody Europe's balance between compliance and creativity.

Soft2Bet, based in Cyprus and Malta, merges compliance with conversion through gamification and localized design.

EvenBet, Europe's poker specialist, delivers omnichannel engines licensed in 20+ jurisdictions, proving that traditional formats can still evolve.

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Invisible Network
Europe's iGaming suppliers form an unseen but essential digital network connecting casinos in Manila, sportsbooks in Lagos and affiliate portals in Mexico City. Reliability and auditability demanded by Europe's regulators have produced systems trusted globally.
In a market where speed and compliance determine survival, this European engineering DNA enables brands like 1xBet, Betano, MelBet and SuperBet to operate confidently across continents. Platforms built in Europe power not just games but the entire iGaming economy.

Content & Creativity
If platforms are iGaming's brain, content is its soul, and Europe remains its creative capital. From Germany and Austria's legacy slot manufacturers to new studios across the Baltics and Caucasus, European developers supply the experiences that define player engagement worldwide.
CT Gaming, EGT Digital, Merkur Group and Greentube transformed decades of land-based expertise into digital entertainment, ensuring their classic brands remained relevant online. Titles like EGT's 20 Super Hot, Greentube's Book of Ra and Merkur's Eye of Horus anchor the modern casino.
These veterans now pioneer RGS frameworks and cross-platform delivery that meet global licensing standards. Alongside them, new studios have rewritten the rules: Georgia's SmartSoft introduced hit titles like Jet X and Cappadocia, while SPRIBE's Aviator created the crash-game phenomenon, generating hundreds of millions of monthly rounds.
Independent studios including Belatra, CT Interactive, Endorphina and Fazi combine mathematics, art and localization to reach audiences in LatAm, Africa and Asia.
Ivan Savic, Marketing Director at Fazi, says: **"Localization isn't just about translation, it's about understanding player behaviour, culture and preferences.**
"When local creativity meets global standards, everybody wins."

Data-Driven Storytelling
Modern content creation now depends as much on analytics as artistry. BetConstruct's CreedRoomz, EveryMatrix's Armadillo Studios and SOFTSWISS Games use telemetry data to refine design and retention, adjusting volatility and pacing for regional audiences.
Esports data providers like BETER and DATA.BET extend this ecosystem, merging sport and entertainment through live betting content. Europe's content revolution now spans everything from classic slots to esports streams; all delivered through compliant European infrastructure.

Live & Instant Evolution
Western Europe remains the centre of live and instant-win innovation. Evolution leads global live dealer entertainment with multi-language studios, while Pragmatic Play, Stakelogic, LuckyStreak and Hacksaw Gaming blur the lines between RNG and live formats for mobile-first play.
These studios have shifted from game provision to experience design - immersive, audience-driven entertainment built on certified fairness and responsible gaming. Europe's regulatory standards have, paradoxically, liberated creativity by forcing transparency into innovation.

Continental Creative Economy
Together, these studios form a creative economy exporting both product and philosophy. Whether a crash game coded in Tbilisi or a live table streamed from Riga, each carries European hallmarks: regulation-ready design, artistic integrity and player-centric innovation.
As markets in Brazil, Kenya and beyond mature, demand for certified European content continues to grow. For operators such as 1xBet and Betano, European studios remain the trusted source of entertainment that balances excitement with compliance. Creativity and responsibility are not opposites here, they are partners, refined through technology and regulation.

Infrastructure, Data & Integrity
Behind every platform and game lies the infrastructure that keeps iGaming connected, compliant and secure. Europe's infrastructure, data and fintech specialists define the trust underpinning this global industry.

Hosting the Industry
Few outside the sector appreciate how dependent iGaming is on specialist hosting. Generic cloud services rarely meet the industry's regulatory and latency demands, so Europe's infrastructure leaders have filled the gap.
Continent 8 Technologies runs one of the world's largest private networks for iGaming, linking over 100 licensed jurisdictions across Europe, North America and LatAm. Its low-latency backbone allows operators to host data locally while staying globally compliant.
Jeremie Kanter, Director of Regulatory Affairs at Continent 8, explains: **"Regulatory trust is the cornerstone of the iGaming industry, and it is built on more than just compliance; it is built on infrastructure.**
"Providers like Continent 8 deliver secure, resilient environments that meet jurisdictional requirements. Regulation differs significantly from market to market, and navigating this complexity demands infrastructure that is adaptable and deeply informed."
Working in tandem is Internet Vikings, specialists in SEO hosting, domain management and dedicated server environments for regulated markets. Their expertise supports European giants like 1xBet, BetConstruct and EveryMatrix, ensuring seamless continuity as data residency rules tighten worldwide.

Data Drives the Market
Europe also leads in analytics and trading. BETER and DATA.BET have emerged as dynamic data providers, delivering live odds, integrity monitoring and esports content that power one of iGaming's fastest-growing sectors. Their partnerships

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across Europe, Africa and LatAm highlight how European data intelligence drives global wagering.
Legacy giants Genius Sports and Sportradar, both European-founded, continue to supply operators and regulators with official feeds and analytics that underpin match-fixing prevention and risk management.

Financial Spine

Payments and verification form iGaming's financial backbone, and Europe leads here too. Fintech innovators such as Paysafe, Transact365 and Trustly have made instant, cross-border payments a regulated reality.
Compliance firms including IDnow and Sumsub have redefined onboarding with AI-driven KYC and AML automation. Their systems, now required by many European regulators, are embedded into platforms like EveryMatrix's GamMatrix and GR8 Tech's transaction monitoring. SOFTSWISS integrates multi-currency and crypto payment gateways with automated fraud controls, ensuring that every transaction is recorded and traceable.

Integrity as an Export

Europe's greatest export isn't just technology, it is accountability. Certified hosting, audited data and transparent payments have become global benchmarks. When regulators in Brazil, Kenya or the Philippines seek guidance, it is often European infrastructure providers they consult. Europe's invisible backbone embodies the values of transparency and player protection that the world increasingly demands.
From the regulatory halls of Brussels to the studios of Tbilisi, European technology and credibility now power new markets across Latin America, Africa and Asia. This expansion isn't just ambition; it's the replication of trust.

LatAm: Europe's Second Act

Brazil's regulation has triggered one of the largest migrations of European expertise in gaming history. BetConstruct, EveryMatrix, GR8 Tech and SOFTSWISS already supply turnkey platforms and compliance support to operators preparing for licensing.
European studios such as Endorphina, Pragmatic Play, SmartSoft and SPRIBE have localized portfolios for Latin American players, adapting volatility and themes for mobile-first networks.
Operators of European origin, including 1xBet and MelBet, now count LatAm among their fastest-growing regions. Their familiarity with KYC, payments and affiliate standards gives them an edge over local rivals.
At the top tier, Kaizen Gaming's Betano has become a flagship success, blending Greek engineering with South American flavour, proof that European design can evolve into regional leadership.

Africa: Mobile First, Europe Enabled

Across Africa, the same pattern plays out. Markets such as Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa are adopting European technology as their foundation.
BetKing, Betway and Hollywoodbets rely on back-office systems built under European compliance frameworks. BetConstruct, Digitain and GR8 Tech provide turnkey infrastructure, while Continent 8 and Internet Vikings deliver the hosting that makes localization possible.
European content travels seamlessly: slots from EGT, Fazi and Merkur, crash titles from SmartSoft and SPRIBE, and table games from Evolution now dominate African portfolios.
Yevhen Krazhan, CSO at GR8 Tech, says: **"Scalability isn't about where you operate; it's about how you build. Each market has its own rhythm - some need ultra-light frontends for older devices, others demand API integration for local innovation.**
"What matters is performance that feels native to the market."

Asia & Beyond

In Asia, Europe's influence is more selective but equally strategic. EveryMatrix and SOFTSWISS serve regulated sectors such as India's skill-gaming and the Philippines' licensed online markets, while EvenBet has built a foothold in poker-focused communities across Southeast Asia.
European technology also underpins projects from Japan to Australia through long-term integrations. Wherever new markets open, they look to Europe for systems that guarantee legitimacy and responsible operation.

Exporting Trust

Europe's global expansion isn't about dominance but partnership. Europe provides the framework; local operators add cultural traction. Emerging markets, in turn, supply the scale and dynamism that drive further European innovation.
Whether a wager is placed in Rome, Rio or Nairobi, it likely runs on European code, checked by European data protocols and processed through European-built payment logic. This ubiquity is the result of two decades of regulatory discipline transformed into opportunity. Europe has exported trust as infrastructure - the one commodity every new market needs most.

The Next Frontier

As global iGaming surpasses €100 billion in annual GGR, the challenge is no longer processing volume but understanding the player. Artificial intelligence, automation and real-time personalization now define the industry's next phase, and once again, Europe leads.

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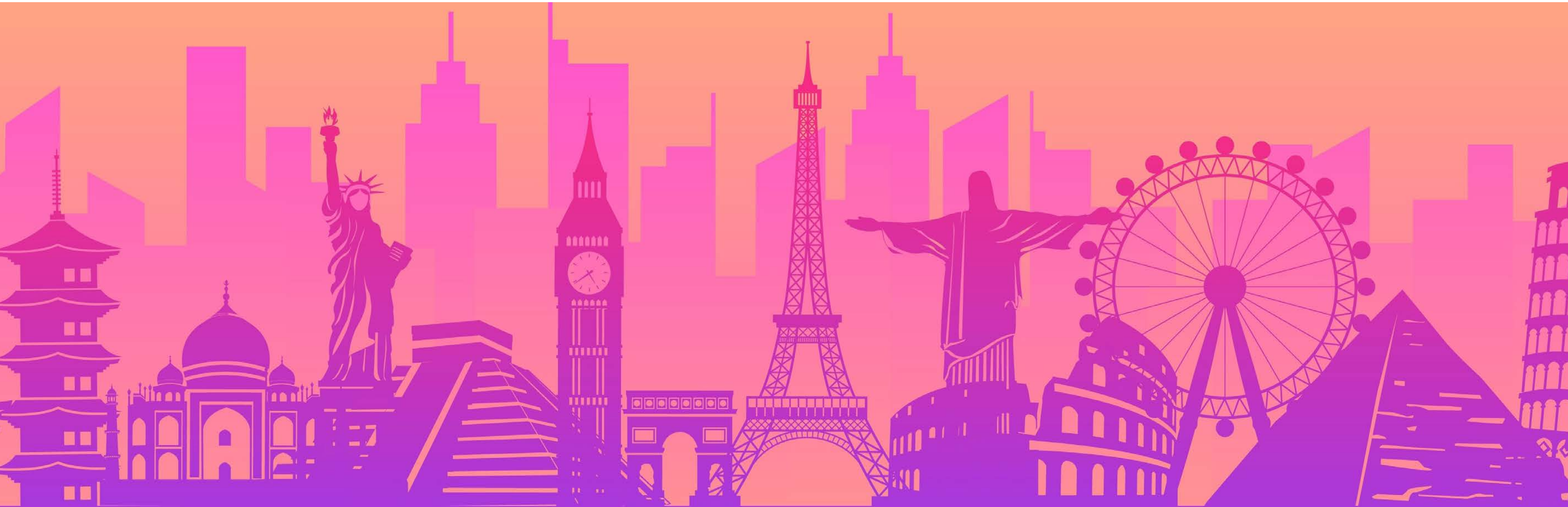


AI-Driven Innovation

European engineering has always been data-centric. What began with automated odds and CRM triggers has evolved into predictive systems that anticipate player needs.

BetConstruct's AI assistant Hoory analyses play patterns and interacts via natural language, powering predictive engagement that recommends content or responsible-gaming reminders. GR8 Tech's AI Performance Module processes millions of transactions daily to optimize marketing, risk and segmentation - tools designed not only for efficiency but for sustainability.

Edward Smyshliaiev, CTO at GR8 Tech, says: **"Technology should always be treated as technology, not hype. Our automation permeates all parts of the platform, from CRM to risk management. "The results speak for themselves - higher engagement, minimal manual workload and stronger fraud detection."**

EveryMatrix and SOFTSWISS have embedded personalization directly into their PAM frameworks. EveryMatrix's Smart Lobby adjusts game visibility according to player history and compliance rules, while SOFTSWISS's Game Aggregator feeds real-time engagement data back to studios for design refinement. This feedback loop between player, operator and supplier is Europe's competitive edge.

AI with Accountability

Europe's approach to AI is shaped by regulation. The forthcoming EU AI Act and existing GDPR provisions require transparency and explainable algorithms.

For data firms like BETER and DATA.BET, this means embedding audit trails and bias-mitigation into machine-learning pipelines. IDnow and Sumsub apply the same principles to biometric verification and affordability checks, ensuring every decision is traceable.

Content studios including Fazi, SmartSoft and SPRIBE use AI to fine-tune volatility and animation pacing while maintaining certified fairness. Europe's insistence on testing and certification ensures every AI-driven feature is released under human oversight.

The Experience Economy

Automation alone doesn't build loyalty. European suppliers are now merging behavioural science with design.

BetConstruct and EveryMatrix are experimenting with adaptive interfaces that adjust layout and colour to player context. EvenBet uses AI-assisted matchmaking for balanced poker tables, while Soft2Bet's gamification engine transforms retention into storytelling, rewarding engagement rather than spend.

This convergence of AI, psychology and compliance defines Europe's next frontier: personalisation within protection. The continent that wrote the rulebook on responsible gaming is now writing the code for responsible automation.

For Europe's suppliers, AI reinforces rather than replaces human oversight. True innovation lies in aligning predictive technology with regulatory ethics, a balance Europe has mastered years ahead of its rivals.

GGN Opinion

From compliance foundations to AI frontiers, Europe has built an iGaming ecosystem defined by accountability and innovation. Its companies form a connected community of excellence where technology, regulation and creativity move together.

As globalisation reshapes the market, Europe's leadership may appear different, but it remains unchallenged. Success here is measured not by scale alone but by sustainability, ethics and influence.

Even as AI, automation and immersive experiences shape the next decade, Europe's approach ensures progress remains credible. In a world where technology evolves at the pace of imagination, Europe's iGaming industry retains one decisive advantage – credibility - forged through regulation, refined by competition and sustained by collaboration among operators, suppliers and regulators.

The iGaming world may have many markets, but there is only one benchmark - Europe.

Taking Transformative Steps

The Merkur Group has taken transformative steps in recent months, reaching significant milestones. We spoke with Dominik Raasch, Management Board Member, Merkur Games, about this evolution, and what it means for the future of one of the world's leading gaming groups.

And where better to begin than Las Vegas, and how the Group's new approach was demonstrated before this key audience.

G2E Las Vegas 2025

For Merkur, G2E Las Vegas is one of the major events of any year, and never more so than now.

"With our re-entry into North America, the show gains even greater significance, providing the perfect opportunity to engage with North American partners and customers, while also allowing us to meet many Latin American clients whom we rarely see in person due to the geographical distances.

"This year, Gaming Arts, the newest member of the Merkur family, launched 14 new game titles, including highlights such as Glory of Giza and Starbust. Equally important were the linked progressive jackpot systems presented by Merkur Gaming.

"One of the highlights was the debut of Link Palace, which has demonstrated strong appeal in initial field trials. Link Overdrive also drew significant attention. The title made a strong impression at ICE in Barcelona, and data confirms it is fast becoming a player favourite, particularly in Latin America."

In terms of the messages that Dominik Raasch hopes visitors took away from Las Vegas, he is clear: "Merkur stands for variety, and this was clearly showcased at our Merkur booth, which brought together a wide range of Merkur subsidiaries. "Leveraging the Group's extensive expertise, we presented a broad spectrum of products, including slot machines, electronic roulette, cash management solutions, online gaming and more; all from a single source."

Dual-Role Advantage

Within what is an increasingly competitive arena, differentiation becomes ever-more important. And Dominik Raasch is quick to clarify what makes Merkur stand out.

"The Merkur Group is not only highly successful as a manufacturer of first-class gaming systems and slot machines, but also as an operator. This dual role means we always know, quickly and precisely, what players want, how our products are being received and where we may need to fine-tune.

"This rapid feedback gives us a decisive edge and enables us to continuously optimize our products."

The Player is King

There is one key factor that drives product development, "The player," confirms Dominik Raasch.

"Our goal is to deliver an attractive and exclusive gaming experience that entertains, excites and ultimately satisfies. This is why we develop very closely in line with player preferences, and it is therefore essential to keep our ear close to the end-user."

With this priority in mind, as younger audiences seek a narrative structure to their content, development is now being shaped to deliver increased player participation and engagement.

"We increasingly focus on compelling storytelling within our titles; content that captures players, but without distracting them from core gameplay.

"Strong graphics combined with carefully balanced story elements allow players to immerse themselves deeply in each game. The Merkur Group subsidiary, Blueprint Gaming, excels at engaging players with new editions of popular titles, taking them on an ongoing journey of adventure and excitement, and the best example of this is Fishin' Frenzy.

"In my view, these are the key points to engaging the younger generation."

Adapting to Trends

With this in mind, Dominik Raasch outlines trends that he sees standing out at present, and which may have the brightest future.

"Players gravitate toward experiences that blend the familiarity of classic gameplay with the excitement of fresh mechanics. Traditional reel-style games remain strong, but we are also seeing a significant rise in concepts such as cash-on-reels and perceived persistence features, which add a tangible sense of anticipation and reward.

"These mechanics give players a clearer feeling of progress, enhancing engagement without complicating the play experience.

"Looking ahead, mechanics that allow players to feel an ongoing sense of progress or visible potential on the reels are proving especially effective, as they enhance excitement and keep players emotionally invested in the game.

"Ultimately, the most successful land-based slots will be those that combine innovation with the timeless appeal of classic play. Games that are easy to understand, entertaining to watch and rewarding to experience will continue to stand out on gaming floors around the world."

Partnership Participation

Merkur's commitment to its operator partners is unwavering, with flexibility a key element of this philosophy.

"We recognize that every market has its own dynamics, preferences and regulations. Our teams collaborate closely with partners around the world to adapt products, game concepts and cabinet configurations to meet regional requirements and player expectations.

"This ensures that our solutions are not only technically and operationally sound, but also culturally and commercially relevant in each market we serve.

"Whether it is a matter of design, functionality or content focus, we always strive to deliver products that reflect the individual character of the market and the needs of our customers."

Regulation & Technology

In terms of challenges, Dominik Raasch outlines what he sees as the main hurdles going forwards: "Regulatory environments can be a huge challenge. In many cases, restrictions are disproportionate and unnecessarily strict, acting as a real brake on the entire industry. This not only impacts business but also employment and, in many regions, municipal budgets.

"On the other hand, technological progress is both a challenge and an enormous opportunity. Keeping pace with innovation is demanding, but it can make a decisive difference. Companies that remain persistent, particularly in areas such as AI, stand a very good chance of positioning themselves as market leaders."

So what's Next?

As attention switches to ICE in Barcelona, we wrap up by asking Dominik Raasch what's next for Merkur?

"Our development teams are working intensively on new game systems that promise an even more powerful gaming experience than players have come to expect from Merkur, and we will unveil these innovations as the start of our new Merkur Initiative at ICE 2026.

"This new initiative is underscored by two key personnel appointments. We are delighted to welcome Marcel Heutmekers as SVP Merkur Games International, and Günter Blümel, responsible for building a globally-oriented product organisation within the Merkur Games division, to the Merkur family.

"With our new product developments and the addition of these two proven professionals, I am confident that we will further strengthen our position in the international gaming markets."

Proximity to Potential

The Balkan Entertainment & Gaming Expo (BEGE) at the Inter Expo Center, Sofia, is one of the most significant broad-based gaming events in Europe, featuring around 90 exhibiting companies from all sectors of the industry, showcasing their latest products, services and solutions to the vital and hugely significant audience of the Balkans, Central & Eastern Europe, Asia and beyond.
BEGE is the largest gathering of gaming professionals in the region, and includes manufacturers and suppliers, land-based and online operators, affiliates, payment service providers, media and trade associations.
Delivering first-hand access to new products, BEGE caters for everything from traditional casino needs to iGaming, sports betting and non-gaming amenities.
BEGE consistently delivers quality to exhibitors and unique networking opportunities for visitors from across Europe and abroad. The show proves the perfect platform for local businesses to further penetrate local and wider markets, for global businesses to present their products at the forefront of the European gaming industry's decision makers and to all visitors to align with the latest industry trends.

Ease of Access
Sofia Airport provides daily flights from and to the main European cities and offers all additional services concerning travel. Inter Expo Center is situated just 3km from the airport and subway line M4 connects the airport with the city centre and the exhibition complex area.

Gaming StartUP Challenge 7.0
The 16th edition of BEGE features the return of the Gaming StartUP Challenge. This exciting entrepreneurial competition offers startups a unique platform to showcase their innovations to industry leaders and investors.
The challenge is open to startups developing innovative solutions related to the gaming industry. The competition also welcomes pioneering work in the field of virtual reality, esports and live streaming, as well as responsible gaming technologies. Essentially, any technology that improves or revolutionizes gaming or the gambling experience fits into the spirit of this challenge.
Finalists have the exclusive opportunity to present their startup live on the EEGS stage, gaining invaluable visibility during the two-day BEGE exhibition. Behind the scenes, this event provides a vibrant networking environment to connect with potential partners, investors and key stakeholders across the gaming ecosystem.

Eastern European Gaming Summit (EEGS)
Alongside BEGE is EEGS, the annual gaming conference, keeping you on track with the latest regulatory and technological developments from the gaming and entertainment industry in European region. The event gathers over 400 industry representatives from more than 25 countries, with top-level expert speakers across the key disciplines. EEGS the right place to enhance competences and get updates on the emerging European region opportunities and challenges, strengthen regional business connections and establishing new ones during interactive training, discussions and networking events.

Affiliate Conference 2025
On November 26th, this exclusive affiliate conference will bring together leading affiliate marketers, industry operators and innovators, providing a unique opportunity to hear from top experts, explore cutting-edge strategies and discover innovative ideas shaping the future of affiliate marketing in gaming.
Affiliates will have the opportunity to connect with influential operators, major suppliers and industry pioneers from gaming and entertainment sectors.
Access to the Eastern European Gaming Summit (EEGS) is included, where you can deepen your understanding of the latest regulatory developments, technological advancements and market trends directly from industry leaders.

Global Gaming Women
EEGS, together with Global Gaming Women (GGW), is hosting a special event for women in the international gaming industry. GGW's mission is to support the development and success of women in all sectors of gaming through education, mentorship and networking opportunities. The initiative provides female gaming professionals with the opportunity to create lasting connections and learn from one another, as well as endorses emerging female leaders throughout their professional path in the industry.

BEGE Awards 2025
The annual BEGE Awards Ceremony for outstanding achievements in the gaming and entertainment industry takes place at Black & White, part of the Palms Royale Sofia complex in the Grand Hotel Millennium.
The event brings together leaders from the industry who are honoured for their successes and innovations over the past year by a jury made up of internationally recognised experts.
In five categories - Online B2B, Online B2C, Land-based B2B, Land Based B2C and General Industry - a total of 31 awards is given to companies, organisations and individuals who have made the greatest contribution to the development of the industry are awarded.

The Perfect Opportunity
BEGE 2025 is a truly multi-faceted event, combining a trade exhibition, two conferences and an Awards Ceremony covering all areas related to land-based and online gaming, sports betting and affiliate marketing.
Welcoming almost 7,000 visitors from around 70 countries, it is the perfect the opportunity to get acquainted with all the latest trends in the gaming and entertainment industry.

MMA star Mark ‘Mugen’ Striegl signs with 1XBet

Winning his first 12 professional fights in dominant style, with 10 wins by submission and just two by decision, Filipino-American Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) star, Mark ‘Mugen’ Striegl, boasts an impressive MMA career.

And Mark recently signed an Ambassador deal with international betting brand 1xBet, a role he takes just as seriously as his time in the Octagon, as the company’s values align with his own beliefs.

Although now semi-retired from active competition, Mark Striegl continues to train but focuses more on teaching and mentoring young athletes, taking part in entertainment projects and spending time with family. But how did the career of this top fighter start? Which fight was the most memorable, and what does he plan to do in the near future?

Image credits: Sports Bytes Philippines and Alchetron

First steps towards stardom

Mark Striegl was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, where his parents taught at international schools. From childhood, Mark was interested in sports and tried many, from cross-country running to baseball. However, the influence of Japanese martial arts proved stronger than his love for more traditional sports, and following his older brother, Mark joined a school wrestling club at age 10.

The young fighter quickly realized that martial arts were exactly what he was looking for. Hard work in training and natural talent soon paid off, bringing his first victories.

Professional MMA career

At 18, Mark had his first amateur MMA fight. The match took place at Pancrase MMA stadium in Tokyo, with a large group of friends cheering from the stands. Despite the pressure from the crowd, he stayed calm and won his debut fight, kicking off his MMA career with a victory.
Having begun his career as a wrestler, he gradually developed his style around grappling. Most of his MMA wins came from chokes and joint locks, including his signature Scarf Hold Armlock and Rear-Naked Choke. In combat sambo, Mark also honed his striking skills, allowing him to catch MMA opponents off guard with a powerful boxing knockout.

Most memorable fight

According to Mark, the most memorable fight of his career was against Korean Champion, Do Gyeom Lee, for the URCC (Universal Reality Combat Championship) title at Araneta Coliseum in Manila, Philippines. Tensions ran high before the fight, as his opponent acted overly confident and rude, insulting Mark and his team.
But once they faced off in the Octagon, everything fell into place: in the first round, Mark choked out his arrogant opponent with a Standing Guillotine Choke, leaving him completely unconscious.

Move into coaching

Over his career, Mark has trained with top coaches and fighters, including Dominick Cruz, Benson Henderson, Norifumi Yamamoto, Brandon Vera, Bryce Meredith, George Castro and many more. He plans to move into coaching himself over the next five years. Already, Mark actively shares his knowledge with young athletes during training with the Philippine national Sambo team.

Talented actor and devoted father

Despite being semi-retired from active competition, Mark Striegl maintains amazing physical condition. Years of daily training and a proper diet have become his way of life. He sees himself not just as an athlete, but as a martial arts master, like the legendary fighters of the past. Regular training, he says, also brings him peace of mind and balance.
Mark’s hobbies include fishing, cooking and entertainment projects. He has a personal YouTube channel with 500,000 subscribers, where he posts funny videos about martial arts and fitness. And
he recently appeared in the film Keys to the Heart as a villainous fighter. Mark is open to taking part in other entertainment projects, including TV series, movies and reality shows.
Although he is a fierce fighter in the ring, at home he becomes a loving father of two who loves spending time with his family. He believes it is important for his children to stay active and develop both body and mind. His six-year-old son is already training in jiu-jitsu.

Collaboration with 1xBet and 1xPartners

Commenting on his Ambassador Partnership with 1xBet and the 1xPartners Affiliate Program, Mark Striegel says: “1xBet is a global brand with huge potential that focuses heavily on sports, and I believe my own values - determination drive, and hard work - align with 1xBet’s values.
“Together, we have created initiatives that celebrate athletic excellence and bring fans closer to the best sporting events.
“After all, I am a martial artist and an athlete, and I am proud that companies like 1xBet appreciate and support sports.”
The 1xBet brand is widely recognised by sports fans worldwide. It is a leader in the betting and gaming industry, partnering with many famous clubs and sports organisations, including Paris Saint-Germain, FC Barcelona, Italy’s Serie A, FIBA and Volleyball World.
The 1xPartners Affiliate Program, however, is best known to those interested in making money online. Over nine years of successful operation, 1xPartners has brought together more than 500,000 participants from 150 countries. The program adapts to the needs of each region, providing partners with over 250 withdrawal options, including major international platforms and widely used local services.
Members especially value lifetime commissions of up to 50% for referred players, a registration-to-deposit conversion rate of 70% and exclusive VIP offers for the most active participants.
By joining the affiliate program, partners gain access to unique opportunities for maximum earnings in both sports and esports.

> “After all, I am a martial artist and an athlete, and I am proud that companies like 1xBet appreciate and support sports.”

Public Protection or Underground Market Rise?

On October 1st, a law banning real-money gambling came into effect in India, with the country now facing a crossroads of economic and social interests. The Indian authorities justify this decision as necessary to protect citizens from gambling addiction, fraud and money laundering. However, the financial consequences of this approach could be significantly larger, ranging from lost investments in the sports industry to the growth of the shadow market.

Sports Economy without Partners:
Who Loses Most?
India's sports industry, especially cricket, has long been a magnet for private capital. However, the new law has effectively cut off access to investments from local and international gambling brands, traditional sponsors of leagues, teams clubs and individual athletes.
Prior to the ban, India hosted around 400 real-money gaming companies, generating nearly US$2.3bn in taxes each year and supporting over 200,000 jobs. Dream11, India's largest fantasy sports platform, became the main sponsor of the national cricket team for three years in July 2023. My11Circle, valued at $2.5bn, was a partner of the Indian Premier League. Both companies have stopped operating.
At global level, international betting brands invest in sports development through both sponsorship deals and social programs. Among these is 1xBet, known for its partnerships with football and cricket clubs, as well as its support for Indian para-athletes and charitable initiatives promoting inclusion in sports. Betting companies are currently unable to collaborate with Indian clubs or sports organisations, with Indian sport missing out on investments that could support infrastructure, youth programmes and athlete development.
1xBet is a clear example of this, actively supporting cricket outside India, including the Durban Super Giants and the European Cricket Network, investing in the promotion of the game and development of the cricket ecosystem.

Tax Losses & Regulated Market Potential
According to analysis by SCCG Management entitled Cricket, Cards and Cash: How India's Digital Betting Market is Shaping Global Gaming, legalised betting could bring billions of dollars to the government each year, creating not only a tax base but also thousands of jobs.
And researchers at IJFMR estimate that full legalisation could add 0.4-0.6% to India's GDP in the first three years of a regulated sector.
In contrast, current tax policies and unclear regulations discourage investors. The 28% GST on player deposits is high, with most jurisdictions worldwide only taxing GGR. These conditions push businesses underground and lead users to play through offshore sites, and the government loses not only tax revenue but also control over financial flows.
It would be more economically beneficial to adopt a 'controlled legalisation' model with moderate tax rates and auditing. Following examples from the UK or the Philippines, such a system could balance government interests with the market's commercial appeal.

Responsible Gambling and the Role of Government
India's main problem is the lack of government institutions that can both control the market and support social programmes. Regulation is not just about taxes; it should include addiction prevention, support for gamblers and educational initiatives.
In developed jurisdictions, agencies such as the UK Gambling Commission not only issue licences but also fund support programmes, research and training initiatives for operators. India lacks such structures. Setting up a dedicated commission could be the first step towards proper regulation. Its functions could include issuing licences, auditing algorithms, monitoring transactions, detecting suspicious activity and funding psychological support centres.

Ban as Risk: Economic Consequences
A ban on real-money games threatens a multi-billion-dollar industry. Platforms are already challenging the law in courts, and investors are freezing deals, fearing capital losses due to legal uncertainty.
The ban does not eliminate gambling, it moves it offshore. Players continue to use international sites outside Indian jurisdiction that do not pay taxes and, most importantly, do not follow safety standards. As Yahoo Finance notes, this could lead to a 'brain drain', with top game development specialists and analysts moving to more liberal jurisdictions.
In the long term, economic losses could be significant. Instead of developing the tech sector, India risks the growth of an illegal market that creates no jobs, pays no taxes and is beyond government control.

Conclusion
A complete ban on betting in India is an attempt to solve a social problem through administrative measures. From an economic perspective, this is a strategic mistake. By losing investment in sport, technology and startups, the government misses the chance to create a controlled, transparent and socially responsible market.
If India establishes a legal licensing system for operators and a regulated gambling market, investments from global companies such as 1xBet could flow directly into the economy - into sports infrastructure, educational projects, training centres and programmes for gambling addiction prevention.
The government would gain tax revenue, strengthen its position in the global digital economy, and cricket would remain not just a game but a tool for development.

GR8 Tech's Heavyweight Rulebook lands at SiGMA Central Europe

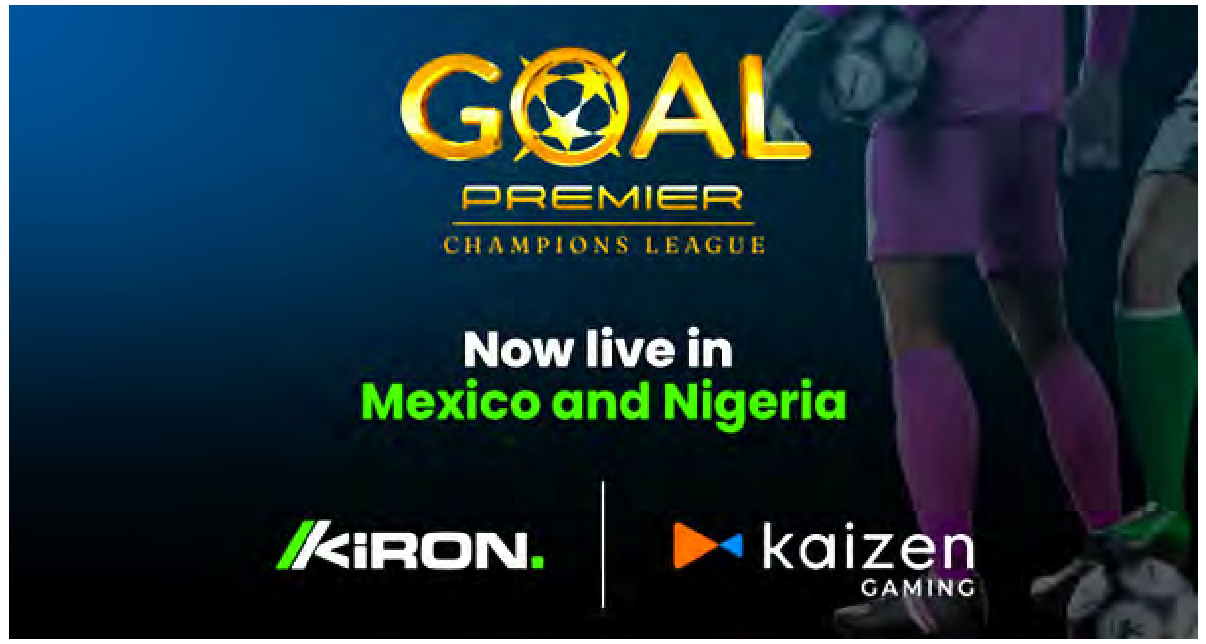
GR8 Tech is stepping into SiGMA Central Europe 2025 with a new playbook for iGaming leadership: The Heavyweight Rulebook.
Built on the Code of Champions, the Rulebook defines the discipline, consistency and relentless drive it takes to dominate the toughest arenas in iGaming.
To create it, GR8 Tech gathered insights directly from iGaming's top performers - the industry's real heavyweights - turning their winning principles into a set of Champions' Rules.
From November 3rd to 6th, in Rome, operators will find GR8 Tech at Booth 5028-2, ready to share the rules and the technology that makes champions.
Heavyweight Results, Proven Standards
Attendees will see Heavyweight rules in action through demos, experiences and conversations designed for operators who refuse to settle for average.
Every Champion's Rule translates into measurable business results with GR8 Tech.
Champions don't wait, they launch first, and it shows. ULTIM8 Sportsbook can go live in as little as seven days via iFrame integration.
Technology is the Champion's Armour. Strong tools deliver strong results, +30% engagement uplift powered by AI-driven personalization, and +50% GGR uplift with advanced sportsbook features and cross-vertical engagement tools.
Success belongs to the Consistent. Resilience is built in with 99.99% uptime across global markets and the biggest world events, ensuring performance under pressure.
Partnership multiplies Strength. With a revenue-share alignment model, GR8 Tech's success is directly tied to that of its clients.
Yevhen Krazhan, CSO at GR8 Tech, says: "In an industry as volatile as ours, nobody wins alone. Champions don't let one crisis consume everything; they keep moving, adapting and performing under pressure.
"At GR8 Tech, we see partnership as the ultimate rule of the game: it multiplies strength, resilience

and results. This is how real Champions are made, and this is exactly what we are bringing to SiGMA this year."
At the centre of GR8 Tech's SiGMA Central Europe showcase is the ULTIM8 Sportsbook, a high-performance solution designed to help operators rule new markets and dominate existing ones. In Rome, attendees will see the dual power of its integration modes: iFrame, for lightning-fast launches with customizable branding, getting partners to market in days without compromising speed or margin; and API, a new addition for operators who want to build their own Champion's frontend, unlocking maximum flexibility with GR8 Tech's rock-solid trading, risk and data systems.
Meet GR8 Tech at booth 5028-2 at SiGMA Central Europe and discover how the Heavyweight Rulebook can help you scale, localize and dominate with confidence.

> "At GR8 Tech, we see partnership as the ultimate rule of the game: it multiplies strength, resilience and results. This is how real Champions are made, and this is exactly what we are bringing to SiGMA this year."

Kiron expands Kaizen partnership with GOAL Premier launch

Kiron has expanded its partnership with Kaizen Gaming, owner of the Betano online betting and gaming brand, launching its flagship virtual football title, GOAL Premier, in Mexico, Nigeria and Chile.
The rollout introduces LatAm Single and Champions Single formats to Betano's players in these three markets, strengthening their virtual football offering with content aligned to local fan preferences.
GOAL Premier delivers fast-paced, cinematic football action in just over two minutes per match. Built for mobile, both formats match how today's fans watch and engage with football - short-form, visual, and always on.
Steven Spartinos, Co-CEO of Kiron Interactive, says: "We are excited to kick off this partnership with Kaizen Gaming by launching GOAL Premier in three markets where football has unmatched popularity.
Kaizen has a sharp understanding of their players and a clear focus on delivering high-quality entertainment. With GOAL Premier, they are bringing their audiences a proven, high-frequency football experience that resonates with how fans follow the game today".
Stavros Tsiafakis, Product Manager, Virtuals & Lotto at Kaizen Gaming, adds: "We are always on the lookout to add new games to the Betano platform that resonate with our audience and meet the expectations we have set for top-tier content.
"In this respect, GOAL Premier is a strong new entry for our players in Mexico, Nigeria and Chile, addressing their love for football in a highly-engaging way, while adding greater depth to our growing virtual sports portfolio."



Internet Vikings expands with NetGaming, adding New Jersey and Michigan

Internet Vikings, licensed hosting provider for the European and US iGaming and online sports betting industry, is expanding its partnership with NetGaming, provider of gaming solutions to leading online gaming and casino operators to include New Jersey and Michigan markets.
This follows NetGaming's successful Ontario launch in 2024 powered by Internet Vikings' hosting infrastructure and enables Internet Vikings to support NetGaming's delivery of proprietary gaming technology and unique game engine across three major North American markets, leveraging Internet Vikings' advanced hosting infrastructure and fully licensed in-state capabilities.
Pallavi Deshmukh, CEO of NetGaming, says: "Their technical advantage combined with their custom approach makes expanding into New Jersey and Michigan a natural next step. They understand our business needs and consistently deliver the reliability we require to serve our players."
Rickard Vikström, Founder & CEO of Internet Vikings, adds: "We are proud that NetGaming chose Internet Vikings not only for our advanced data centre operations and infrastructure stability, but also for our people and approach.
"Our positive culture and values align with NetGaming's, and our flexibility allows us to find the right solutions for our clients."
The partnership supports NetGaming's continued growth across North American markets, with Internet Vikings providing the infrastructure needed for successful operations in multiple jurisdictions.

> "Our positive culture and values align with NetGaming's, and our flexibility allows us to find the right solutions for our clients."

Supplier Focus

EvenBet Trends Report highlights regulation and marketing for 2026

EvenBet Gaming, a leading developer of online poker software and solutions, has published its latest annual industry research report, iGaming Future 2026: Core Trends and Challenges, revealing regulatory headwinds across emerging and mature markets as the main barrier for business growth.

Research from over 700 iGaming professionals sheds light on industry-wide challenges and trends, with EvenBet's findings citing turbulent regulatory frameworks, including wagering and bonus restrictions in the UK, tax hikes in the Netherlands and Brazil, sweepstakes uncertainty in the US and reforms across key Asian markets as standout areas for concern.

As a result, organisations are dedicating greater resources to ensuring that tailored solutions comply with regional laws.

Competition once again ranked as the second most prevalent issue, fuelled by the race to acquire market share in the newly regulated Brazilian iGaming market and in burgeoning African jurisdictions such as Nigeria.

Despite Brazil's constantly evolving regulations, it remains a market with long-term growth potential due to its population and sporting culture, while Nigeria has been pinpointed as a promising market due to its improving technological infrastructure, including mobile and 5G penetration.

The report also highlights the growing importance of marketing in commercial strategies. Marketing activity emerged as the top business priority in 2025, climbing from fifth place in 2024 and surpassing last year's focus on expansion. This reflects the continued surge of social media, driven by rich audio-visual content, audience segmentation potential and the heightened impact of influencers, allowing companies to cater to a generation of mobile-first consumers.

The supplier's detailed report also delves into the latest priorities shaping product innovation, the preferred marketing channels of iGaming professionals and the factors influencing successful talent acquisition.

Personalisation dominated product development strategies, with advertising restrictions and soaring acquisition costs shifting emphasis to retention through AI-powered gamification engines. Abd social media stood out as the primary channel for company marketing and monitoring industry updates, ahead of conferences and trade media. LinkedIn dominated as the most popular platform in Europe, particularly with CEOs, while Facebook was preferred in Asia.

A dynamic and expanding business ranked as the most important factor for attracting talent, followed by a professional and supportive team and an established brand. The importance of high salaries declined year-on-year, dropping from second to fourth, showcasing that employees increasingly judge workplace value beyond compensation.

Dmitry Starostenkov, CEO at EvenBet Gaming, says: "This year's survey featured twice as many respondents as in 2024, offering a broader and more detailed overview of the challenges facing the global iGaming sector.

"The diverse range of participants ensured strong representation, with insight garnered from multiple verticals, job roles and operational markets, delivering unparalleled insight into global industry trends.

"This annual report emphasises EvenBet's drive to highlight the most pressing issues facing the sector, empowering companies to make informed strategic decisions in the year ahead."

To download the e-book: CLICK HERE

SmartSoft

Where innovation meets imagination

At the start of this month, the Italian capital becomes the heartbeat of the global iGaming world, and one of the industry's most innovative voices will be welcoming visitors to the spectacular Fiera Roma to lead the conversation.

SmartSoft is exhibiting at Booth 4060 at SiGMA Central Europe 2025 in Rome, the debut for an event that has already been recognised as one of the industry's most influential gatherings, uniting leading gaming innovators from across the world.

More than exhibition space

SmartSoft is set to display its latest next-level casino games and bold creative vision, showcasing a new direction for iGaming. Booth 4060 will not just be an exhibition space; it will be a destination. Partners and visitors are invited to step into the creative world behind the games, experience the process firsthand, and see how bold ideas turn into industry-shaping innovations.

Next-level games provider

As a next-level casino games provider, SmartSoft continues to bridge the worlds of gaming and gambling, crafting digital experiences that engage and inspire players worldwide. Its portfolio is distinguished by inventive mechanics, exceptional design and strong interactive elements tailored to global audiences.

Iconic titles and new releases

During SiGMA Central Europe 2025, visitors will have the opportunity to experience SmartSoft's most iconic titles - JetX, Balloon, PlinkoX - among several brand-new releases premiering at the event.

100 million global players

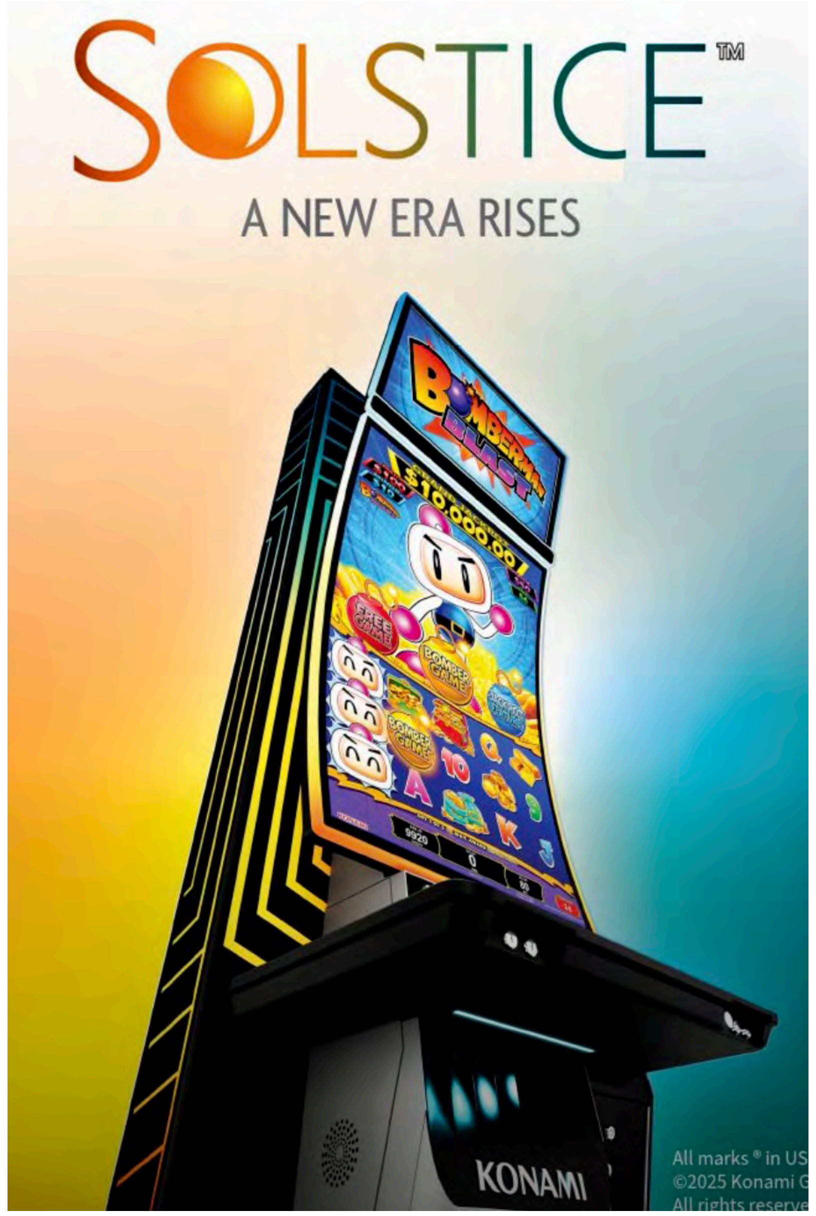
Among its standout successes, JetX has reached over 100 million players globally, establishing itself as a cultural touchstone within the iGaming community.

SmartSoft invites all attendees to visit Booth 4060 at SiGMA Europe 2025 in Rome - where innovation truly will meet imagination.

Konami's Solstice makes world debut at G2E 2025

Konami Gaming's world premiere of the industry's newest casino machine, Solstice, took place at G2E Las Vegas, with attendees being the first to experience the new Solstice hardware, with showcase games including All Aboard Diamond, Red Fortune Rail and a slot series based on the iconic Konami BOMBERMAN video game.

G2E 2025 also marked the world debut of Konami Online Interactive, to mark the establishment of iGaming as the third pillar in Konami Gaming's business mix alongside land-based casino games and systems.



Steve Sutherland, CEO of Konami Gaming, says: "Encompassing the latest technologies available, Solstice was designed to provide the utmost entertainment experience for casino patrons worldwide.

"At the same time, our iGaming team is celebrating a landmark year of growth and opportunity, launching Konami Online Interactive as a new brand dedicated to driving innovation and expanding our future market reach."

Solstice hardware is characterized by first-of-its-kind lighting elements stretching from the height of the topper to below the button deck, which interact with in-game features across a dynamic colour spectrum. This advanced lighting system delivers real-time visual feedback that reacts to every spin, win and bonus round.

Konami marked the debut of this new cabinet line with Solstice 49C, a core for-sale machine featuring float-mounted, 49-inch C-curve display in 4K Ultra High-definition (UHD).

Gerard Crosby, SVP & Chief Games Product Officer, says: "Solstice is industry's latest in enhanced graphics, game power and total attraction on the casino floor.

"The machine's total innovation and quality, combined with standout titles from BOMBERMAN to All Aboard Diamond, firmly establish Solstice as a must-have for casino operators worldwide."

All Aboard Diamond is the first-ever brand extension on Konami's world-famous All Aboard slot games, which ranked in Eilers & Krejcik's list of Top 25 Grossing Parent Games - Premium Leased & WAP every month for more than four years. It is joined by an original new creation called Red Fortune Rail, a train game with a unique Golden Fortune Rail bonus.

A popular icon of consumer video games over a 40-year period, Konami Digital Entertainment's BOMBERMAN, also arrives to the casino gaming industry for the first time on the all-new Solstice hardware. BOMBERMAN is also among the G2E featured games for Konami Online Interactive, arriving soon for omni-channel launch both in-person and online.

John Eary, VP of Marketing, adds: "Konami Online Interactive is reaching dramatically more global markets, with more games than ever, and the new brand presence for this segment of our business is testament to this.

"New and long-time iGaming partners have a large library of Konami hits to choose from, energized by upcoming omni-channel content like BOMBERMAN slots."

Konami also featured live demos of the latest SYNKROS systems technology, with streamlined employee mobile tools and a time-saving beverage ordering system to efficiently and effectively provide enhanced customer service; frictionless cashless funding at both slots and table via the casino's chosen payment processor; and fully-customizable, system-delivered progressives.

What Keeps me Awake III:

The Weight of Responsibility

Ady Totah,
Founder & CEO, LuckyStreak

Some nights, I close my eyes, and I see numbers. Endless rows of numbers, flashing by like a slot machine stuck in hyper-speed. Billions of transactions… Bets, wins, losses, bonuses, adjustments. Most of them fly past without a problem. But in my dream, one of them stops. An anomaly. A glitch. A fraud pattern hiding in plain sight. And suddenly, it's all on me…

That is the nightmare: not a bug in the code, not a late report, but the sheer weight of responsibility that comes with being a provider in this industry. Because when you zoom out, the scale is staggering.

As a live dealer provider and aggregator we don't hold wallets. We don't manage player bank accounts. We don't run the casinos themselves. And yet, we are responsible for billions flowing through our systems.

Think about that.

Invisible pipelines for billions

There are plenty of companies in this industry that are not multi-million-dollar. Plenty of founders who are not millionaires. And yet their systems - their infrastructures - are the invisible pipelines for billions. And if something goes wrong, it is their name on the line and neck on the block.

This is what people outside our space often never see. They see games, jackpots, tables and dealers. But behind it is a constant, grinding responsibility:

- Fraud: Detecting, flagging, escalating suspicious activity - even when you see only a partial picture.
- Integrity: Ensuring every spin, every card, every roll of the dice is transparent, auditable and untouchable.
- Anomalies: Sorting, documenting, and investigating the outliers, no matter how small.
- Compliance: Storing, archiving and being ready to defend your integrity - sometimes years later.

It is easy to forget all of this when everything runs smoothly. When volumes are stable, clients are happy, and providers trust you. But when you have been in the industry long enough, you know it is not if something will go wrong, it is when. And when it does, the weight of accountability is crushing.

The intensity of Live Dealer Gaming

Live dealer makes this even more intense. For our relative size as a company, our headcount is enormous. We employ hundreds of people because live games demand it. Human beings running tables, supporting systems, ensuring fairness.

Compared to revenue per headcount, live dealers are some of the biggest employers in iGaming. Which means the responsibility isn't just numbers , it is people. Real people, depending on you to keep the lights on.

Responsibility never sleeps

The dual nightmare of being an iGaming CEO is that on the one hand, there are the numbers, billions of transactions, flowing through a system that has to be flawless. And on the other, there are the faces, hundreds of employees, careers and families depending on you to get it right.

Technology you can fix. Regulation you can adapt to. But responsibility? That never sleeps.

And this is what keeps me awake at night.

Hub88 & Live88 receive UAE gaming-related vendor licences

Hub88 and Live88 have officially secured gaming-related vendor licences from the UAE's federal General Commercial Gaming Regulatory Authority (GCGRA), an independent entity of the UAE Federal Government with exclusive jurisdiction to regulate, licence and supervise all commercial gaming activities.

These approvals mark their pivotal entry into the newly regulated UAE market and a strategic milestone for two of Yolo Group's B2B brands.

The licences permit Hub88 to supply aggregation services and Live88 to offer live casino to licensed operators across the UAE, a breakthrough that accelerates their growth in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

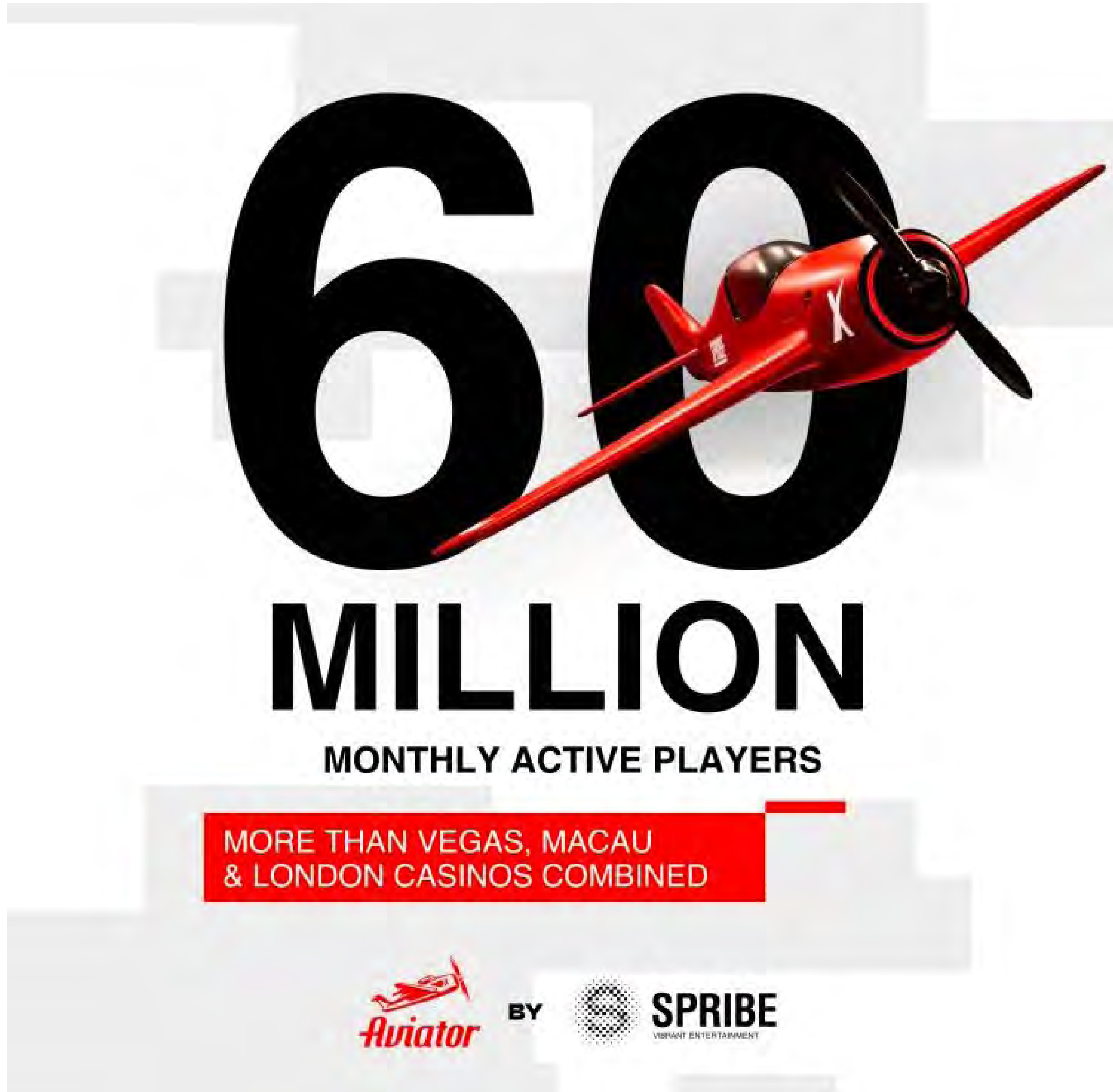
Obtaining these key licences solidifies Hub88 and Live88's position as leading B2B iGaming technology suppliers within one of the most dynamic and forward-looking regulated markets in the world.

Live88 is also set to become the first online live casino studio to be licensed in the UAE, pioneering a new era of locally regulated live gaming experiences across seven Emirates, including Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Lara Falzon, CEO of Yolo's B2B brands, says: "Securing these licences represents a strong vote of confidence from the UAE's regulatory body in our brands, our technology and our commitment to operating to the highest standards of integrity and innovation.

"This development reassures our clients and partners of our long-term vision to operate exclusively in regulated markets."

Aviator: Flying higher than the world's biggest casinos... combined!



In a world of quite remarkable statistics, SPRIBE, developer and provider of the world's No.1 crash game, Aviator, has released… a quite remarkable set of statistics.

The iconic Aviator game, one that truly belongs in the listing of all-time industry greats due to its combination of brilliant simplicity, superb B2C marketing and truly global appeal, now has more players and takes more bets than all of the Las Vegas, Macau and London land-based casinos combined.

The numbers involved truly are mesmerising… Each month, Aviator is played by 60,000,000 (sixty million) active players, with 17.4 billion individual bets placed.

This represents 13 (thirteen) times more players than visit all of the casinos in the cities above (4.5m), placing double the total number of wagers.

It is fair to suggest that a new era of gaming really has officially taken off!

IBIA launches Mission 2030: A global strategy to safeguard sports betting

The International Betting Integrity Association (IBIA) has launched Mission 2030, a new five-year strategy to strengthen its role as the global standard for sports betting integrity.

IBIA has also unveiled a refreshed brand identity, reflecting its growing international reach and commitment to collaboration in an evolving regulatory and sporting landscape.

Khalid Ali, CEO of IBIA, says: "As IBIA marks its 20th anniversary, we are not only reflecting on the past, but we are also looking ahead to the future. Our new strategic roadmap charts how we will continue to deliver best in class integrity services to our members, deepen collaboration with our partners, and successfully confront the challenges and opportunities reshaping our industry.

"IBIA is evolving to ensure that whatever new trends emerge, we remain ready to safeguard sports, consumers and regulated betting markets."

Mission 2030 focuses on three core objectives:

- Strengthening IBIA's Global Monitoring & Alert Platform (Global MAP) to detect suspicious betting and support investigations
- Expanding collaboration by deepening and broadening our partnerships across the global sports integrity ecosystem; and
- Advancing prevention through better regulation, effective policy engagement and player education initiatives.

Mission 2030 serves as a strategic roadmap, setting direction and priorities while allowing flexibility to meet emerging trends, such as AI, crypto, esports and new market openings that are reshaping the betting and integrity landscape at an unprecedented pace.

Detailed actions and tactical initiatives will be developed and delivered in partnership with IBIA's members, ensuring the association remains flexible, innovative and proactive.

To mark this next chapter, IBIA has also unveiled a new brand identity. The redesigned logo, with six interwoven segments, represents the stakeholders vital to protecting betting integrity: operators, sports, regulators, law enforcement, athletes and institutions.

Together, they form the foundation of IBIA's work. The new strapline, Safeguarding Sports Betting, captures the essence of IBIA's mission.

BETER receives Vendor Minor License in Colorado

BETER has secured a Vendor Minor Licence from the Colorado Division of Gaming, allowing the company to deliver its live data and live streams to licensed operators in the state. The license covers BETER's flagship ESportsBattle tournaments (featuring eFootball and eBasketball among the first disciplines) and Setka Cup table tennis series, both of which are now live on the Colorado domain of tier-one sportsbook bet365, a long-standing BETER partner operating in multiple US states. This launch marks the first time US players can experience ESportsBattle tournaments.

Colorado becomes the second US state where BETER has received regulatory approval, following the Vendor Registration granted by the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE) in April.

BETER delivers 24/7 live streaming, real-time data and hyper-accurate odds for approximately 700,000 fast-paced events each year across a range of esports and sports disciplines, offering up to 50 betting markets per event, with an average operator margin exceeding 7.5%.

Gal Ehrlich, CEO of BETER, says: "This is another milestone moment for BETER as we continue to expand our presence across the US, a market where we see huge demand for our next-gen products.

"The US is considered one of the most tightly regulated markets in the world, so securing approval in Colorado is a testament to the dedication of our legal team and the outstanding quality of our products, especially in terms of integrity and adherence to the rules of fair play.

"It is an honour to launch in Colorado with bet365, an esteemed partner of ours and one of the top brands in the US market, making its Colorado players the first in the country to access ESportsBattle tournaments."

Valeriia Tarchynska, Chief Legal Officer at BETER, adds: "It is an important step for BETER, and it aligns with our wider strategy of securing approvals and launching our exclusive products for bettors across all key regulated US states.

"As always, I would like to thank our trusted partner, the law firm Blank Rome, for supporting our licensing efforts in Colorado and for their continued work with us as we actively pursue licenses in other US jurisdictions, including North Carolina, Arizona, Indiana and others."

> "It is an honour to launch in Colorado with bet365, an esteemed partner of ours and one of the top brands in the US market, making its Colorado players the first in the country to access ESportsBattle tournaments."

Digitain launches podcast hosted by Luis Figo

October 15th saw the launch of the very first Digitain podcast, hosted and moderated by none other than the company's own Brand Ambassador, legendary Portuguese footballer, Luis Figo.

The first episode had Luis and his guests delving deep into the Digitain and Winmasters partnership, and featured Digitain CSO, Ani Mkrtchyan, as well as Winmasters representatives, Christos Protopapas, COO, and Thanos Karakostas, Head of Product & Marketing.

Be sure to tune in for insights, stories and a behind-the-scenes look at how great partnerships are built.

Watch the podcast **HERE**

BGaming introduces new game classifications and strengthens in Italy

BGaming has solidified its position in Italy with a refreshed game classification system and a new local social initiative.

As part of its growing commitment to the Italian market, BGaming has made a significant financial contribution to San Patrignano, a local non-profit organisation supporting people struggling with gambling and other addictions, further enforcing the company's focus on responsible gaming and customer well-being.

This initiative follows BGaming's recent acquisition of a licence in Italy in March 2025, highlighting the company's ongoing efforts to build a sustainable and socially responsible presence in the region.

San Patrignano's long-standing rehabilitation programme helps individuals rebuild their lives through professional guidance, education and strong community support for participants and their families.

BGaming has also introduced a new classification of its gaming portfolio, reflecting the studio's diverse and player-oriented approach.

The Casual category features fast, easy-to-play titles that typically provide shorter playing sessions and high engagement rates, such as Aviamasters, Plinko, Plinko 2, Balloon Mania, Golden Piñata Hold & Win and Winter Fishing Club.

The Classic category includes more traditional slot games, featuring classic gameplay mechanics and low to medium volatility such as Burning Chilli X, Hot Chilli Bells, Lady Wolf Moon and Fruit Million.

Finally, the Entertainment category features high-volatility games characterised by advanced gameplay features, bonus buy options and strong appeal to streamers. Headliners in this category include Snoop Dogg Dollars, Merge Up, Bonanza Billion, Aztec Cluster, Wild West Trueways and the iconic Elvis Frog series.

Olga Levshina, CCO at BGaming, says, "Italy is an incredibly important market for us, and we are proud to strengthen our presence here not only through innovative content but also through meaningful action.

"Our partnership with San Patrignano reflects BGaming's belief that entertainment and responsibility must go hand in hand. And, at the same time, the refreshed game classification provides both our partners and our players with more clarity on what to expect from each game.

"We are excited to showcase the diversity of BGaming products and meet potential partners at SiGMA Central Europe in Rome, from November 3rd to 6th. Please feel free to visit us at Booth 2049."

NOVOMATIC delivers high-impact showcase at G2E 2025

NOVOMATIC drew record crowds at G2E 2025 with its innovative booth and captivating presentations. Highlighting their Play Like you Own the Block theme, NOVOMATIC showcased cutting-edge products, including the US premiere of the DIAMOND X 1.55J Quattro, demonstrating their commitment to creativity and forward-thinking. NOVOMATIC created an immersive experience with large LED video walls and street art-inspired visuals, capturing the vibrant spirit of Las Vegas. The DIAMOND X 1.55J Quattro, a new flagship cabinet in the DIAMOND X series, was a standout, reflecting the company's engineering excellence. Additionally, the V.I.P. X cabinet line showcased NOVOMATIC's reliability.

The company unveiled a powerful portfolio of gaming content designed to excite players at all levels. The ULTRA BOOST 3 Treasures jackpot series premiered with three engaging titles that combine proven mechanics with stunning audiovisual effects. The XTENSION LINK Evolution, part of NOVOMATIC's acclaimed jackpot series, introduced fresh game concepts and enhanced dynamics, promising an even more engaging player experience.

RISING TREASURES - Sizzling Hot Treasure Inferno expanded the popular franchise with new fiery features. The De la Isla! Wide Area Progressive, developed for the Puerto Rican market, highlighted the company's focus on localized content and tailored design.

Advanced system solutions on display, included the NOVO Unity Pro and NOVOVISION casino management system, redefining efficiency and player experience, and setting new standards for transparency, security and data-driven decision-making in modern casinos.

Interactive attractions like the Street Smart-themed photo wall and claw machine promotions added to the booth's appeal. Daily Beat the Champ table soccer challenges with 11-time World Champion Chris Marks further engaged visitors.

Sabine Stoppel and Jakob Rothwangl, Managing Directors of NOVOMATIC Americas, emphasized the synergy of strong teams and bold ideas, while Thomas Schmalzer, VP Global Sales & Product Management, acknowledged the trust and collaboration of customers and partners, saying: "G2E once again confirmed the global relevance of NOVOMATIC's innovations. "From cabinet design to game performance, our products inspire confidence and deliver results."

Looking ahead, NOVOMATIC plans to expand in key US markets like Puerto Rico and Georgia, with the next phase of the Street Smart 2.0 campaign strengthening operator partnerships and driving performance across all product segments.

CreedRoomz and Betano announce partnership

CreedRoomz, forward-thinking provider of live casino games and solutions, has announced a new strategic partnership with Betano, a leading global online sports betting and gaming operator part of Kaizen Gaming.

The extensive CreedRoomz portfolio of high-quality live casino games will be integrated into Betano, making them available to its wide and engaged player base, giving their customers access to a dynamic and engaging suite of live games, includes classic favourites such as Blackjack, Roulette and Baccarat, as well as unique titles like Richie Wheel, Richie Fruits Roulette and more.

For CreedRoomz, this partnership represents an opportunity to expand its reach through one of the industry's most respected and fastest-growing operators.

And for Betano, the addition of CreedRoomz's content further strengthens its live casino offering, reinforcing its commitment to providing players with the most diverse and premium content available.

The Head of Live Casino at Creedroomz says: "Partnering with a brand of Betano's calibre is a testament to the quality and appeal of our live casino offering.

"This collaboration is a key step in our continued European expansion, and we are particularly excited to enhance our footprint in key markets, especially Denmark.

"We share a common vision for delivering exceptional entertainment experiences to players and are confident that our games will resonate strongly with the Betano audience."

The integration process is underway, and games are expected to go live for Betano players in the coming weeks.

N1 Partners launches new N1 Bet Promo

N1 Partners has launched a new campaign for its flagship brand, N1 Bet. Until the end of November, partners can boost their payouts by up to +7% when driving traffic to two key Tier-1 GEOs - Australia and Germany.

The full promo period is October 16th to November 30th, and traffic sources can include Facebook, In-App, UAC, Email, SMS, PPC, ASO and more.

The mechanics of the promo are simple - the more FTDs (first-time deposits) secured by affiliates, the higher the bonus for their CPA. 500-899 FTDs will be rewarded with an additional 5% payout, rising to 7% for 900+ FTDs.

Results for Australia and Germany will be combined, as well as all accounts of one participating team within the affiliate network.

Why Germany and Australia?

- Germany produces consistent, high-quality traffic with strong evening activity and players who prefer dynamic slot mechanics.
- Australia delivers solid conversion on slot-focused content and a loyal base of engaged users.

Joining this promo will also boost progress in the N1 Puzzle Promo, the massive campaign featuring luxury prizes and the ultimate reward: a Robinson R22 Beta II helicopter.

The more traffic sent to N1 Bet, the closer affiliates get to the top of this unique leaderboard.

N1 Bet is a part of a leading iGaming Affiliate Program and is one of N1 Partners strongest and most consistent brands, offering solid conversion, flexible promos, and smart analytics. With an updated design and an optimized retention funnel, the brand performs equally well across online affiliate programs (slots & live) and sports betting segments.

For questions or assistance, reach out to your Affiliate Manager or our LeadGen Manager, Christina, at Krystina.ladzik@n1affiliates.com and be No.1 with N1!

Galaxsys partners with Wild Wild Apps to strengthen B2C expansion

Galaxsys, award-winning fast and slot games provider, has announced a new strategic partnership with Wild Wild Apps (WWA), a leading global app rental service recognised for its innovation, stability and scalability.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in Galaxsys' ongoing expansion into the B2C market segment, further highlighting the company's ambition to deliver engaging gaming experiences to players through reliable and high-performance platforms.

Wild Wild Apps has built a reputation worldwide with its portfolio of verified iOS, Android and PWA apps, offering constant updates, rich designs and reliable traffic flow. In 2025 alone, the company developed over 750 apps, achieved more than 40 million installs, maintained 60 active apps and attracted over 10,000 new clients and partners.

Teni Grigoryan, Galaxsys' Chief Sales & Partner Management Officer, says: "Our collaboration with Wild Wild Apps is a natural next step in our continued expansion into the B2C space. "WWA's technological flexibility and proven record in traffic flow optimization perfectly align with our vision to bring Galaxsys games to new markets and audiences with greater accessibility and engagement."

Kate Krukava, Head of Sales at Wild Wild Apps, adds: "We are proud to support Galaxsys' B2C expansion strategy through our app rental ecosystem, ensuring their games reach users swiftly and seamlessly.

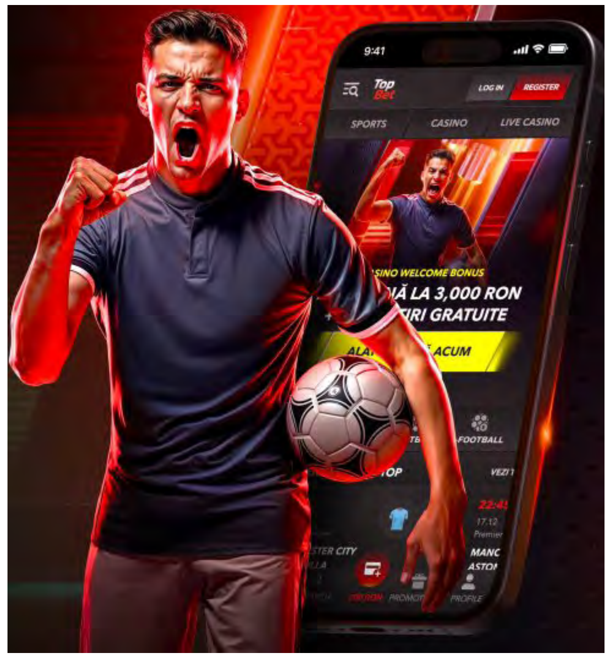
"At Wild Wild Apps, we don't just build apps, we create growth tools. Every product we launch is designed for efficiency, scale and impact."

This collaboration highlights Galaxsys' commitment to growth and innovation, supported by Wild Wild Apps' platform to drive efficiency, scale and continued excellence across its gaming portfolio.

> "At Wild Wild Apps, we don't just build apps, we create growth tools. Every product we launch is designed for efficiency, scale and impact."

Soft2Bet releases TopBet.ro in Romania

Soft2Bet has launched TopBet.ro, a Romanian sportsbook catering to local habits and preferences. Built with a focus on motorsport and match-day culture, the brand combines competitive odds and fast mobile journeys with an auto-themed identity that resonates with local fans.
TopBet.ro is tuned to the way Romanians follow sport. Football and motorsport are front and centre, with timely markets, match-day boosts and content that reflects supporters' weekly rituals.
Romania's proximity to major European circuits and easy short-haul travel make it a natural home for motorsport fans, and TopBet.ro responds with creative campaigns, themed missions and seasonal offers built around grand prix weekends. This same care is evident throughout the interface: clear navigation, quick bet placement and a clean, mobile-first design.
Yoel Zuckerberg, CPO at Soft2Bet, says: "With TopBet.ro, we set out to create a brand that feels Romanian from the first tap, then added MEGA missions and challenges that turn derby days and grand prix weekends into journeys people return to.
"What we prove on our own brands becomes the toolkit we offer partners, combining culturally tuned products with measurable engagement and the ability to scale with minimal integration effort."
A TopBet.ro representative adds: "TopBet.ro is designed for Romanian fans who want more from every match. Together with Soft2Bet, we built a platform that connects sport, competition and rewards in a way that feels natural and exciting.
"Our goal is to give every player the chance to experience the game like a champion."



Alongside sports, TopBet.ro offers a comprehensive casino lobby for quick breaks or a change of pace, featuring popular slots, live dealer tables and sports-themed titles, all delivered in a mobile-first format with clear navigation and quick load times.
The experience is powered by Soft2Bet's performance-first platform, which delivers speed, stability and smooth gameplay, along with responsible play tools tailored to local requirements.
A key part of this is MEGA (Motivational Engineering Gaming Application), the engagement engine that turns play into progress through missions, challenges and quests that unlock rewards and keep sessions fresh. By turning everyday actions into clear milestones and rewards, MEGA lifts session depth and repeat visits, helping first-time players become long-term customers.

BETBY partners with Broadway Platform

BETBY has signed a partnership agreement with Broadway Platform, an operator managing over 30 online brands and delivering B2B services worldwide, with Broadway integrating BETBY's sportsbook solutions, Betby Games esports feed and AI Labs technology across its digital properties.
The BETBY Sportsbook offers extensive sports coverage including traditional sports, esports and in-house virtual sports simulations.
The deal includes Betby Games, an esports content feed providing continuous live action across 25 sports simulations, alongside AI Labs - a suite of tools designed to support real-time insights, personalisation and risk management for operators.
This agreement strengthens Broadway's position in global markets, particularly Asia, where the company has been adapting products to align with regional preferences.
Broadway Platform receives additional support from SPRIBE, underscoring the strategic ambition behind the partnership, connecting established sportsbook capabilities with next-generation online gaming experiences.
Stefanos Karakidis, Business Development Director at BETBY, says: "We are delighted to partner with Broadway Platform, a company with an outstanding reputation in both B2C and B2B operations.
"By integrating our sportsbook, Betby Games and AI Labs, Broadway is set to improve its offering and deliver a next-level experience to its customers.
"This partnership reflects our shared vision of growth, innovation, and market leadership."
Giorgi Tsutskiridze, CCO at Broadway Platform, adds: "Working with BETBY marks an important step for us as we extend our global footprint.
"Their technology, depth of content and AI-driven tools provide us with the flexibility and scale needed to deliver a top-tier betting experience. We are confident this collaboration will create significant opportunities for growth."

SOFTSWISS iGaming Trends Marathon at SiGMA Central Europe

SOFTSWISS is set to deliver four hours of insights on the future of iGaming at the SiGMA Central Europe Summit on November 5th.
The 2026 iGaming Trends Marathon takes place from 12:00 to 16:00 on the People, Partners & Performance Stage, featuring keynotes and panels with global industry leaders.
For the first time, the 2026 iGaming Trends Report will be unveiled live – exclusively at this event.
The Marathon opens with a keynote by Ivan Montik, Founder of SOFTSWISS, followed by a high-level panel featuring Heathcliff Farrugia, COO of SiGMA, and Pierre Lindh, CEO of Next.io. In this session, experts will deliver The Ultimate Forecast Duel, analysing what drives results in 2025 and revealing the disruptive moves set to reshape growth in 2026.
Across four hours, the program will address the industry's most pressing challenges and opportunities. Here is the full agenda:
With contributions from SOFTSWISS experts alongside global executives, regulators and innovators, the 2026 iGaming Trends Marathon promises to spark debate and deliver practical insights for every corner of the ecosystem.
Valentina Bagniya, CMO at SOFTSWISS, says: "After publishing the iGaming Trends Report for four consecutive years, we asked ourselves: how can we go further?
"The Marathon is the perfect metaphor – strong players in this industry know it is not about short-term wins but about sustainable strategy. iGaming has matured, and meaningful results come from long-distance vision.
"At the final major industry event of the year, not only launch the report but also debate the insights live, helping us all to shape the strategy for 2026."
To be among the first to access the full 2026 iGaming Trends Report, interested professionals can receive the publication as soon as it is released by joining the waitlist HERE

iGaming Club Conference Cancun 2025

From November 24th to 26th, iGaming Club is hosting its new Conference Cancun, powered by Caliente.mx, a two-day iGaming networking conference bringing together over 400 industry professionals for focused networking, insightful panel discussions and exclusive speed-dating sessions.

The attendee breakdown is approximately 44% Operators and 39% Affiliates.

Designed for iGaming affiliates, operators and B2B providers, iGaming Club Conference Cancun will feature two full days of high-level panel discussions, branded booths, open booths and exclusive networking.

Speakers include senior representatives from Betcris, EvenBet Gaming, Evoplay, Google, Media24, Nordic.Partners and Play'nGO, with high profile partners and sponsors also including the likes of Alea, Betsson, EveryMatrix, GR8 Tech, Payhound, Roobet and many more.

And on the final night, industry excellence is celebrated at the prestigious AffPapa LatAm Awards Ceremony.

The Cancun Center is the perfect home for the first ever iGaming Club Conference in Latin America, a spectacular purpose-built convention venue, located right in the heart of Cancun's vibrant Hotel Zone.

Plus, it is just steps from Cancun's famous beaches and nightlife. You can easily blend work and downtime during the best season to visit.

Gaming in Germany confirms new speakers and breakout program

The Gaming in Germany Conference, which takes place November 11th in Berlin, has added new speakers to its already impressive agenda.

Sebastian Buchholz, Head of Licensing & Market Supervision, Gemeinsame Glücksspielbehörde der Länder (GGL), will deliver the event's keynote address.

The operator's perspective will be well represented at this year's Gaming in Germany Conference, with Christian Heins, Director iGaming Tipico; Alex Green, Vice President - Games, ZEAL Network; and Ewout Keuleers, former General Counsel, Kindred Group all confirmed to appear at the event.

Attendees will also hear from both German and European trade associations, with Dr. Dirk Quermann, President, Deutscher Online Casinoverband (DOCV); Mathias Dahms, President, Deutscher Sportwettenverband (DSWV); and Maarten Haijer, Secretary General of the European Gaming & Betting Association (EGBA) contributing.

Willem van Oort, Founder of Gaming in Germany, says: "I am extremely pleased with this year's speaker line-up. It speaks of the relevance of our event, and the key topics that we are highlighting this year: the threat of the black market and evaluation of the 2021 State Gambling Treaty.

"Licensed operators are highly committed to making the German iGaming market more sustainable and competitive and I am very happy that we are trusted to play a role in promoting fruitful discussion and debate on these topics."

In addition to its main program, Gaming in Germany will also feature several highly practical breakout sessions on data compliance, game certification, RG, live casino, esports and much more.

The full agenda, including breakout program, is available **HERE**

In addition to a loaded program, Gaming in Germany also offers plenty of networking opportunities during pre-conference dinner, coffee breaks, lunch and concluding networking drinks.

The 2025 Gaming in Germany Conference takes place Tuesday, November 11th, 2025, at the DoubleTree Hilton Ku'damm in Berlin, just 100m from the magnificent Kurfürstendamm.

Registration for the 2025 Gaming in Germany Conference is open **HERE**

European Casino Association to host Awards at ICE 2026

The European Casino Association (ECA) will host the inaugural ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards at ICE Barcelona 2026, recognising outstanding teamwork, individual contributions and rising stars in slot floor operations.

Following the successful introduction of the Slot Team of the Year Award at the European Dealer Championship in Bregenz, Austria, the ECA is expanding its recognition efforts.

The Casino de Monte-Carlo team was the first to receive this accolade, setting a high standard for future awards.

The ECA aims to celebrate the industry's hospitality, professionalism and team spirit through these new awards.

The ceremony, held in partnership with Clarion Gaming, will take place on Day 2 of ICE Barcelona at 5:00pm on the Enterprise Stage at Fira Barcelona Gran Via. Award categories include Outstanding Slot Team of the Year, Slot Floor Employee of the Year and Slot Floor Rising Star of the Year.

Each category highlights various aspects of excellence in slot operations, from teamwork and customer service to individual leadership and potential.

An independent panel, including ECA representatives and leading global slot manufacturers, will judge the entries. Under the supervision of ECA Honorary President Ron Goudsmit, the finalists will be announced in December, leading up to the live awards ceremony.

Nomination details can be found at the ECA website, available until the end of October.

Erwin van Lambaart, ECA CEO, says: "Excellence in slot operations depends above all else on the human qualities of the individuals and teams on the slot floor of casinos, whose professionalism, technical skill and world-class hospitality are the foundation stones of the European casino experience.

“I am delighted that the ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards will be presented at ICE Barcelona together with our partner Clarion Gaming; the perfect showcase event for our members and a brand that shares our commitment to excellence.”

Margaret Dunn, ICE Portfolio Director, adds: “ICE has enjoyed a long and successful relationship with the European Casino Association, whose members have made a significant contribution to the success of what has grown to be the world’s leading gaming industry event.

“The ECA Slot Floor Excellence Awards sit perfectly with our values, and it is an honour to host them.”

Five new experiences that will redefine ICE 2026

Every year, ICE goes above and beyond to Grow the Power of Play through new gaming technology, innovation and connections, and 2026 will be no exception.

In 2026, five new experiences will redefine this world-leading event, starting with expansion into an additional new Hall. At the South Entrance (previously home to iGB Affiliate), 8,000sqm of space is being added. Hall 1 will feature new exhibitors such as Casino Platform, InOut, Kendoo, Smartbet and Vegangster, alongside top-tier brands relocating here, including EGT Digital, Hub88, PIN-UP Global, Pronet, SA Gaming, SOFTSWISS, SPRIBE and Uplatform.

Secondly, innovation in safer gambling is being accelerated through the ICE Innovators Challenge in partnership with Microsoft. Operators and partners are invited to submit AI-driven ideas that enhance responsible play, with finalists presenting live on stage at ICE 2026.

The winning team will receive expert support from Microsoft and £15,000 worth of consultancy to help bring their solution to market.

Thirdly, as the world's leading stage for unveiling cutting-edge technology and breakthrough products, an estimated 10,000 products will be launched at ICE 2026. Visitors will see the latest innovations and tech, making it the ultimate showcase for the future of the industry. With more exhibitors and an ever-expanding show floor in 2026, the scale and significance of product launches at ICE continue to reach new heights.

Fourthly, it is difficult to know where to begin to describe additional new features and initiatives, such as the Barcelona Beer Festival, sponsored by Uplatform, La Avenida, the Enterprise Stage, Casa Brasil, ICE Start Ups Accelerator and so much more.

And finally, the ICE World Gaming Forum is the largest gathering of leaders from across the global gaming ecosystem, this year introducing the Sport Leaders Conference and the exciting Cybercrime & Fraud Workshop.

Plus, who knew that 45% of ICE attendees are first-timers? This means thousands of new senior gaming professionals ready to connect and create business opportunities.

ICE 2026 takes place at the Fira Gran Via, Barcelona, from January 19th to 21st, 2026. Connect with more than 65,000 global gaming professionals and shape the future of gaming.

Leaders in LatAm head to SBC Summit Rio

Next March, SBC Summit Rio returns bigger than ever, bringing together 15,000+ industry leaders, 25% senior executives and the entire Brazilian gaming ecosystem under one roof.

In just its second year, SBC Summit Rio became the go-to meeting place for Brazil's betting and iGaming ecosystem. Attendance tripled in 2025; company representation grew by 59% and delegates arrived from 90 countries.

Quality kept pace with scale, with one in four attendees at senior executive level. On the buyer side, operators increased by 32%; on the growth side, affiliate participation surged by 224%.

The international reach also continued to expand. The Summit added 17 new countries and welcomed a wave of newcomers, with 86% first-time attendees.

Companies are investing more in the trip as well, with average delegation size up 26%. Brazil alone contributed nearly 2,000 additional participants.

What people valued most came through clearly in the post-event survey - high-value networking and access to senior decision-makers, a well-organised environment that makes it easy to meet the right people, the scale and variety of the expo floor and a balanced mix of serious business, strong content and relationship-building.

Timing is everything. While most major events happen later in the year, SBC Summit Rio takes place on 3-5 March, giving you the chance to act early and set the pace for 2026.

Waiting until Q2 or Q3 means playing catch-up. Key partnerships may already be locked in, the most attractive deals taken and competitors well on their way with first-to-market campaigns.

At SBC Summit Rio, you get to be first to explore 2026 trends, regulations and market shifts; and first to initiate partnerships at a time when strategies are still being shaped, not finalised.

This will be the third edition of the event, and the 2025 figures highlight an impressive growth trajectory in operator and affiliate participation: operators increased by 32%, while affiliate attendance more than tripled, surging by 224%.

In the conference halls, there are six highlight sessions that are particularly worth checking out - Brazilian Leaders: Building Betting Brands Brazilians Can Believe In, Engineering the Next Generation of Casino Hits, Affiliate Reality Check: What Works, What's Overhyped, Regulatory Watch: Too Much Too Soon?, SPA's Vision for a Sustainable Market and Why Are Brazilians So Good at Advertising?

Operators and affiliates qualify for FREE VIP passes to SBC Summit Rio. This is an immediate saving of R$3,000, all while enjoying a truly all-inclusive experience.

From early access to 2026 business opportunities and first-mover advantages, to unmatched networking, education, and an all-inclusive conference experience, SBC Summit Rio 2026 is where partnerships are born, and the industry grows.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