

## EUROMAT to tackle European issues head on during Summit



**Jason Frost,**  
President, EUROMAT

The European Gaming and Amusement Federation's (EUROMAT) annual summit will take place June 4-6, in Monaco at the Monte Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort. As the body representing the views of the low-stakes gaming and amusements industries to European institutions, EUROMAT has designed the new-format summit to enable operators, regulators and manufacturers to exchange information in a relaxed and informal setting.



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**Appearing on a multitude of panel sessions at the forthcoming EUROMAT Summit in Monte-Carlo in June, EUROMAT President Jason Frost speaks to G3 ahead of the conference about the relevance of the organisation, the future for the amusement and gaming industry in Europe and what's next for the trade body in 2018**

### How do you describe EUROMAT?

The European Gaming and Amusement Federation is the voice of land-based gaming entertainment industry in Europe. We are a collaboration of European trade associations, which two years ago agreed to open its membership to corporate members, as prior to that only trade associations were eligible to join. I also want to stress that as a European association, our members extends beyond the European Union to the entire geography of Europe and act as a lobbying body and hub to share information across the entire continent.

EUROMAT offers support for amusement and gaming products in countries in which it is legal to operate those machines, which includes the sharing of information, research and lobbying on behalf of our members. We have a legal tracker, which is a specialised team that monitors the legal implications for gaming and amusements in both Europe and individual member states, which is sent to all members. I see EUROMAT as a forum for members to share best practices irrespective of the differences we face country-by-country. Every market is dictated by its own gaming law - what EUROMAT is able to do is influence at a different level.

We can take a universal view of issues such as social responsibility and how it affects the industry as a whole. Independent of national issues, EUROMAT gives assistance to regulators, acting as a conduit between regulators and member states in regards to national and international issues. In the manufacturing sector, we are seeking to address concerns such as homologation and testing, seeking to make headway on behalf of our members to distinguish between hardware and software testing, to make the process more efficient and cost-effective going forward.

I've recently attended national trade association meetings in Spain, Germany, Romania, Italy and Serbia. Not only is this useful to raise the profile of EUROMAT at the individual country level, but when you see country's such as Italy, in which 130,000 machines are to be removed from bars and cafes, we have to make members aware that EUROMAT can lend a shoulder to their lobbying process. Members need to understand the muscle that we can bring to their issues at not only at the European level, but at the local ground floor level too.

**What are the boundaries of EUROMAT in terms of its members, locations, machines - what's its remit?**

Historically, EUROMAT's boundaries have encompassed Europe and all its multiple geographies. However, having started with an operator-only focus, when we extended membership beyond gaming machine operations to include manufacturers, we have to consider that our remit has expanded. Products made for the European market are sourced in the US and China, and European manufacturers export to destinations around the world. The question for our membership is should we be encouraging those manufacturers to join too?

My view is that EUROMAT will always be fluid and will have to be to keep up with the changes in the industry. Online is an example of a disruptive element that has split the views of the industry from the outset. Many were hostile to online in the beginning, but as time has moved on and we've seen a generational change in both the marketplace and membership, many of our members are offering online as well as land-based products.

In terms of EUROMAT's machine remit, having recently toured Dutch AGCs, it's plain that the lines between casinos, electronic slot halls and AGCs have blurred over the last decade. There are associations such as the European Casino Association (ECA), which does a fantastic job of representing the casino sector, but there are sub-sectors that fall through the gaps and don't have representation they need. There are sectors that rely on machine income, such as the bingo

industry, which again do not have Europe-wide representation and do not have a voice at the table to lobby on their behalf. Amusement is such an important sector and it's vital that we focus just as much attention on amusements as gaming. We recognise the massive growth of redemption around the world and seek, where legal, to propel forward that sector and assist operators and manufactures in whichever way possible. We give support and help to member states to lobby to change their laws for the benefit of the operators, manufacturers and players. We gather support from adjacent industries, case-studies, working models and research conducted in other countries by both EUROMAT and our members to assist regulators and law-makers to make the right decisions for the future of the industry.

### What's the relevance of EUROMAT?

I think it's best to explain through example. One of the topics EUROMAT is currently championing is alternative payment methods linked to social responsibly. It's a subject that we will be covering in great detail at the forthcoming EUROMAT Summit in June. The changing tastes of society and a generational change in the use of cash, means that both gaming and amusement machines face an uncertain future if we don't adapt to the shifting environment around us.

In addition to TiTo, manufacturers have created

solutions that allow players to play directly from their bank account and pay winnings directly back into their bank account from the gaming machine. From a regulators point of view, Europe as a whole has welcomed the initiative. Direct play by card lets customers set their own spending limits, time limits, and significantly enhances security for the player. Not only does it empower the consumer, but as operators facing the prospect of a cashless future, contactless payment technology has to be addressed, otherwise the gaming and amusement sector will be left behind.

EUROMAT would like to see the adoption of a European code of conduct that sets forth the parameters for the introduction of alternative payment methods. I use the term 'alternative' because this addresses not only card and contactless options, but the use of eWallets/vWallets via Apps and the ability to scan QR codes using smartphone devices. Whether this is as a replacement to cash, or sits side-by-side with cash within the operating environment, all options need to be considered and the research and case-studies need to be discussed at all levels. When AMLD4 was introduced, it was EUROMAT that attended every meeting in Brussels and lobbied heavily for an exemption for high street gaming. Alternative Payment Methods is another critical issue for the industry and one that is being championed by the association.

### What are your goals and expectations for the EUROMAT Summit in June?

The EUROMAT Summit should be the must-attend event for amusement and gaming operators, manufacturers and distributors in the European marketplace. We are bringing together academics to talk about social responsibility, we showcase innovation in both products and legislation and bring together investors and industry stakeholders to discuss opportunities at all levels. We want to encourage discussion, promote the truth about the industry, underline its social responsibility and long-term agenda.

EUROMAT is an association for the journeymen in this industry. We are not the quick-profit PLCs, looking for loop-holes in regulation and fast exploitation of customers. We are in this for the long-term and the long-journey ahead. We want to stimulate dialogue between the regulators, academics and lawyers, share best practice, and create a great networking event at the same time. During those meetings and evening discussions, information is cross-pollinated across multiple jurisdictions. I also want to stress that the EUROMAT Summit this year is a very different concept from those of the past. For the first time this is a two-day event that's open to everyone. We want the high level industry stakeholders to bring their employees, bring their floor managers, their social responsibility managers and embrace the first of a new style event that we hope will grow year on year.