

## InfoStat Autumn Meeting – Minutes

10th November 2017, 10:00 – 16:00

Kindly hosted by the Netherlands Gaming Authority at their offices in The Hague.

### Participants:

- Co-Chair Flóra Felso – Netherlands Gaming Authority
- Co-Chair Michael Herborn – Danish Gambling Authority
- Clément Martin-Saint-Leon, ARJEL, France
- Dina Isand – Ministry of Finance, Estonia
- James Green, Gambling Commission, Great Britain
- Marta Ziarko, Ministry of Finance, Poland
- Signe Birne – Lotteries and Gambling Supervisory Inspection, Latvia

Flóra opened the meeting. Her colleagues Marja Appelman, Director of the Netherlands Gaming Authority, and Erik Chömpff, joined for parts of our discussions in the morning.

### Topics

- Status in member states
- The French data-sharing agreement
- GREF Surveys
- Appointment of new Co-Chair
- Data sources used by the Netherlands
- New InfoStat sub-group

### Minutes

1. **Status in member states:** The meeting started with participants reporting some of the latest market developments from their home countries.
  - a. **France** led with information on a 28 percent increase in stakes and 25 percent increase in GGR for betting. A growth area is the development of a new form of betting, where winning tickets give entry into a form of winners' lottery, where big payouts are available from small stakes. The game is regulated as betting, with the lottery classed as increased odds. Lotteries remain as a state lottery operated by FDJ, though plans are afoot to privatise the monopoly operator in line with the Macron government's manifesto, though discussions still underway for what market model should be adopted post-liberalisation. Poker operators' liquidity is also an area regulators are currently paying close attention to. Gambling addiction is also a priority area for ARJEL, with new research on red-flags identifying problem gamblers soon to be published. The system works through analysing data for individual players against approximately 100 parameters to produce a score for individual gamblers according to the Canadian Problem Gambling Index. More information will be released later this year, while the specifics surrounding how to deploy this are still under consideration.

- b. **Poland** has seen significant growth in the white market for betting following the new law (website blocking and payments blocking). Poland has instituted a blacklist of websites (not companies), with payment blocking for transactions through these sites, backed up by fines against financial institutions. At this point in time, Marta is keen to find information about the impact of liberalisation upon taxation revenues, and would be keen to hear from other members of the InfoStat working group about their experiences in this area.
  - c. **Great Britain** will be publishing their next half-yearly statistics on November 30<sup>th</sup>. One challenge with producing statistics in GB is the absence of a Vault system, meaning that statistics are compiled from individual reports from over 3,500 operators. The GB Gambling Commission is also about to launch a new corporate strategy (13<sup>th</sup> November), with an inquiry underway on the operation of fixed odds betting terminals which account for nearly 50 percent of GGR in land-based betting shops. The national lottery licence is soon to go out for renewal, with Camelot's performance in redistribution to good causes a key factor in renewal discussions.
  - d. **The Netherlands** anticipates that the online market will be gambling market will be liberalised by the end of 2018, early 2019, with an initial six-month window for licence applications. However, this is still subject to a political timetable and parliamentary approval.
  - e. **Latvia** has also seen strong growth in the gambling sector in the recent year, with GGR up by 47 percent for online gambling. IP blocking has been a key tool in securing the market, with approximately 2000 domains blacklisted.
  - f. The market has been relatively stable in **Estonia** with no significant market developments to report at this time. Estonia applies website blocking and a self-exclusion scheme. One needs to identify himself/herself in order to be able to by a scratch card. It does not seem to be a problem at the counter.
  - g. **Denmark** has been relatively stable, with online casinos the only significant growth area. The markets for horse racing and online bingo are set to be liberalised, pending parliamentary approval, from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018.
2. **The French data-sharing agreement:** Clément was asked to present the data-sharing scheme that ARJEL participates in in conjunction with Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Germany (whose participation is still in its infancy). Given the similarity of the data collection system in France, Italy, and Spain (where data is collected through a *vault* system), the respective agencies are able to share information on a variety of different parameters and do so on a half-yearly basis.
- In principle, ARJEL is willing to discuss participation in the scheme with other regulatory agencies, though participation would of course be subject to group approval. For more information about the scope of the data-sharing scheme, please contact Clément.
3. **Appointment of new Co-Chair:** Michael Herborn (Denmark) was appointed as new co-chair of Infostat, taking up the position vacated by Joel Kitti-Junros.
4. **GREF Surveys:** It was agreed that InfoStat will carry out, as per usual, a GREF Figures survey. The survey will follow an almost identical format to last year's survey, though with an extra question inviting participants to join the InfoStat working group. The survey will be worked on by the group co-chairs in the coming weeks, with a draft version created in time for the next meeting at ICE on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

A further point raised in relation to the figures survey was to show development from year to year. Figures from 2015 will be used to benchmark the development of the market in the 2016 (2018) Figures Survey.

It was also agreed to draft proposals for a second special issue survey on definitions. Two key areas were put forward: player bonuses and regulation in response to new technological developments in gambling such as skin betting, loot boxes, and potentially blockchain. Flóra will take the lead on the technological developments element of the survey, whilst Michael will lead on the bonuses element of the survey.

For the definitions survey, the guiding idea is to ask whether each jurisdiction has a formal definition and/or official position on the area in question. If not, respondents may provide his/her own personal thoughts or analyses on the issue. We will then make sure that these personal answers will be distributed anonymously, with the chief aim of eliciting discussions on these topics. The concepts and draft questionnaire will also be discussed at our next working group meeting.

5. **Data sources used by the Netherlands:** Flóra presented information on various commercial data-sources applied by the Netherlands Gaming Authority to analyse the gambling market. These included use of app-tracking and website tracking data to determine traffic flows for online gambling activity (App Annie and Similar Web respectively). The Netherlands Gaming Authority has also a subscription at media research company Nielsen and AdFact for data on gambling advertising.
6. **New InfoStat sub-group:** Michael briefly presented his idea for a new communications sub-group of InfoStat, comprised of people working with the communications elements of gambling regulation. Different communication techniques – such as creating viral videos, nudge, social media and so on – have the potential to deliver solid regulatory results. The group would share experiences on the use of such techniques, as well as ways to promote the sharing of information between GREF members. Such a group would fall within the “Info” remit of InfoStat, though may be best served as a separate group. Michael will work more with the idea and bring it up again at the next working group meeting.