

Clear rules to prepare for the future

Jason Frost, Euromat's President, emphasizes that regulators must collaborate with the industry to create a regulatory framework that fosters players and companies

by Carlo Cammarella

Technology, cooperation, fight against illegal gaming but, above all, sharing experiences. These are just some of the topics embracing the gaming universe, a constantly evolving market that often acts as a pioneer for many other sectors. And now that 2024 is about to end, the time has come to take stock of what has been, to better understand what the next paths to take will be. We talk about it with Jason Frost, president of the European gaming and amusement federation (Euromat), who begins in this way: "Generally, 2024 has been another good year for the industry albeit some countries have experienced regulatory pressure particularly related to the location of gambling venues. As online is legalized, many operators lean into convergence through omni-channel offerings. Another trend is the rapid evolution of new payment systems. Western Europe is innovating in cashless payments as cash circulation declines. However, regulations in many countries need modernization to match consumer trends. In Eastern Europe, cash remains prevalent, though authorities increasingly favour restricting its use. The industry has an opportunity to lead by introducing cashless options that enhance player experience without mandating their use, ensuring technology adds value".

We often talk about the importance of setting common rules that can standardize the law at a European level. On this topic, the President adds that "the June 2024 European elections have



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created political momentum around enhancing European competitiveness, with a focus on full single market implementation. In this context, the Eu Services Directive, which aimed at breaking down barriers to cross-border trade in services making it easier for service providers to operate cross-border is up for review. Gambling services are not currently in scope of the law and we'll have to be engaged on those discussions to see how that evolves".

Responsible gaming is among the most important topics, which also involves staff training. In this regard, Frost underlines how "social responsibility remains a core concern. Collaboration between industry, government, and stakeholders is essential to balance customer, community, and employee needs. While regulators often propose restrictive measures, a nuanced approach is vital. Blanket player tracking systems, for instance, risk alienating players and driving them to unregulated markets. Euromat is addressing these challenges by highlighting best practices in sustainability and player protection, raising awareness about problematic behaviours, and sharing effective solutions. Emerging Eu legislation on digital consumer protection seeking to regulate how consumers interact with businesses online, will impact omnichannel operators, particularly in areas like addictive designs and online marketing tactics".

As regards the fight against illegal gaming, the President highlights that we are still talking about a "challenging task. Legislative inconsistency fuels the black market, making it hard for legal operators to invest and adapt, while unregulated platforms thrive on these gaps. Clear, proportionate rules are essential for transparency and compliance. Regulators must work with the industry to create frameworks that benefit both players and businesses. Black market operators exploit customers without protections, underscoring the need for legal operators to offer safer, more attractive alternatives. Technologies like Ai and Ip blocking provide promising tools for combating illegal gaming. Collaboration between regulators and the industry is key to developing an environment that safeguards players, supports legal operators, and curtails the appeal of unregulated platforms", he ends. 

