

NEC super-casino bid chief to quit

The man spearheading the National Exhibition Centre's GBP 250 million fight to win Britain's first super-casino is quitting.

NEC chief executive Andrew Morris said he was stepping down for „family reasons“ after just 18 months in the job. He said living away from his London-based family five days a week had become too much to bear.

„Some people can work away from home and for them it works,“ said 53-year-old Mr Morris. „But, for me, it has been a great strain. I am a family man, I love my wife very deeply and I want to come back to my family every night.“

The announcement was made days after the NEC was confirmed as one of 27 contenders in the race to win the right to build the super-casino, which will introduce Las Vegas-style 24-hour gambling and £1 million slot machines to the UK.

But Mr Morris said he remained committed to the centre's bid, which was made in association with the MGM Mirage gambling chain and is being considered by a Government panel.

„It was a personal mission of mine and it will continue to be a personal mission,“ he said. „I have made a commitment and I am passionate about winning because I believe the NEC has a good case.“

Mr Morris, a former chief executive of London's Olympia and Earls Court, will stay in his job until a replacement is found, a process which could take several months.

An NEC Group statement said board members appreciated the work he had done.