

# Operating issues in focus at ECS 2003

Casino executives from all across Europe and beyond are currently preparing to converge in Thessaloniki, Greece for what organisers of ECS 2003 are describing as „the most operator-focussed forum to date“.

Top of many personal agendas will be the opportunity to profit from first-hand accounts of operating issues and practices in some of Europe's casino hot spots, including Switzerland, Lithuania, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, the United Kingdom and Greece.

Looking at growth markets, Tim Cullimore, general manager of Casino de Crans Montana, will reveal how the Swiss market has developed since the introduction of higher stakes and bigger jackpots on Les Grands Jeux. Kazys Paulikas, proprietor of Nese Casino and president of Lithuania's national gambling and gaming business association, will explain how entrepreneurs in his jurisdiction have embraced gaming opportunities, in terms of both casinos and slot parlours, and will also look at future scenarios following Lithuania's entry into the European Union. As well as making a presentation at the conference, Mr Paulikas will be keeping a keen eye on other developments at ECS: „I will be looking to make new contacts and gain more information on producers and technologies,“ he said, „Not to mention new ideas on marketing, management knowledge, and some useful tips on planning and design.“

Turning towards more mature gaming markets, Lutz Wiedieng, general manager of Westspiel Casinos will describe how German operators are surviving a down turn in the economy and pressures of high tax rates. Marco Fiore, marketing manager at Casino de la Vallée, will show what Italian operators are

doing in efforts to bring players back to the tables.

Further operations-based briefs will examine country-specific cases covering Spain, by Heliodoro Giner Lopez, secretary general of the Spanish Asociacion de Casinos De Juego; Austria, by Paul Herzfeld, chief executive of Casinos Austria International; the United Kingdom, by Maria Slater, head of UK marketing at London Clubs International; and Greece, by Geoff Taylor, general manager, and Evi Lazou, director of marketing for Regency Casino.

ECS delegates will also gain a unique insight into how and why the Racino effect has dominated in North America. Ron Barbaro, chairman and chief executive officer of the Ontario Lottery & Gaming Corporation, says: „There is no other government programme in the free world that equals Ontario's exciting project.“ He will deliver an outline of the concept at ECS and be in a position to detail the profit sharing programme for racetracks and their host cities.

In addition to individual market issues, ECS 2003 will offer focussed sessions covering marketing strategies, regulatory updates, brand protection, layout and design, social responsibility developments, product testing, payment systems, slot games and strategies.

For further information on ECS 2003, visit [www.ATEOnline.co.uk/conferences](http://www.ATEOnline.co.uk/conferences) or telephone +44 (0) 20 7713 0302.