

## PRESS RELEASE

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### MALTA RECOGNISES ECOGRA STANDARDS AND TESTING

#### *Player protection the common goal as major online gaming regulator and independent standards authority agree to cooperate*

**LONDON**, April 12, 2006: The Lotteries and Gaming Authority of Malta (LGA) and independent standards organisation eCommerce and Online Gaming Regulation and Assurance (eCOGRA) have agreed to closer cooperation in pursuit of player protection measures.

Subject to certain conditions, the LGA has agreed that operators using software supplied by eCOGRA members, and that is subject to eCOGRA's principles and testing methodologies, will not be required to submit to further review and monitoring processes required for the award of a Malta online gaming licence. The LGA will continue to use its own methodologies in conducting due diligence investigations on all applicants to decide on their suitability as licensees and to review other appropriate areas addressing player protection and responsible operator conduct.

The discussions follow investigations by the LGA in a search for optimum testing and operational systems. Malta is a full member of the European Union.

The agreement will potentially apply to a wide range of online casinos and poker rooms, comprising a significant proportion of the available business. Malta numbers 71 online gambling sites as licensees, and there are 76 major Internet venues carrying the eCOGRA "Play It Safe" seal.

There will also be more cooperation between the two bodies on player disputes to ensure that these are heard fairly, independently and within a reasonable timeframe. The LGA has its own compliance and disputes officer and eCOGRA offers a dedicated dispute mediation service through its Fair Gaming Advocate.

Further discussions will now detail the finer points of cooperation and consistency between the requirements of the two bodies, based on an acceptance of common principles of honesty and efficiency in the interests of player protection.

**Mario Galeo**, the chief executive responsible for Malta licensing says that he is pleased with the agreement reached with eCOGRA and looks forward to close cooperation and communication in the interest of creating better conditions in the online gambling industry.

"We share a common purpose in seeking to ensure that the player is given fair gaming and efficient, courteous service by casinos and poker rooms that are licensed and regulated by our respective bodies," he said. "We look forward to a closer working relationship that benefits both the players and the industry in the years ahead."

The CEO of eCOGRA, **Andrew Beveridge** said he was delighted that the LGA had approved the testing procedures and operating standards that his organisation had introduced for the "Play It Safe" seal operations.

"eCOGRA is keen to interact with any jurisdiction that shares our values and we regard this closer relationship with the LGA as a significant step toward consistent global regulation for safe online gambling," he said.

The agreement follows a similar collaborative arrangement with the Kahnawake licensing jurisdiction in Canada, which was signed late last year by the directors of the **Kahnawake Gaming Commission** and eCOGRA.

eCOGRA has announced that the growing interaction between major regulatory and standards authorities is broadly aimed at achieving wider consistency across geographical borders in regard to requirements and standards concerning online casino and poker room relations with the player community.

#### **About eCOGRA**

eCOGRA, the independent standards authority for the online gaming industry, is committed to protecting online casino and poker players around the world. The non-profit organization addresses the most important issues to players: fast payouts, fair gaming, responsive and efficient service and responsible operator conduct.

eCOGRA provides an international framework of best operational and player practice requirements enforced through inspections, reviews, and continuous monitoring by independent global audit companies. To date, 76 sites comply with these requirements and have been awarded the coveted "Play It Safe" Seal that identifies to players the safest online gaming sites on the Web. For more information on how eCOGRA is constantly improving standards in online gaming for players everywhere, go to [www.ecogra.org](http://www.ecogra.org).

For all media queries or to arrange a briefing, please contact:

Stuart Hehir  
Chameleon PR  
[stuart@chameleonpr.com](mailto:stuart@chameleonpr.com)

Susan Lindner  
Lotus Public Relations  
[susan.lindner@lotus-pr.com](mailto:susan.lindner@lotus-pr.com)