



## PRESS RELEASE

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012

### Gaming Parlours Licensed by the Lotteries and Gaming Authority

Following various reports in the media, the Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LGA) would like to clarify that only gaming parlours that are approved and granted a license by the LGA are allowed to operate gaming devices, albeit, under very strict conditions.

To date, the LGA issued 27 Gaming Parlour licenses, allowing such parlours to commence operations from 11am to 11pm. Such licenses were awarded following the coming into force of the Gaming Devices Regulations as on 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2011.

In order to be granted a license, an operator needs to pass through a very detailed licensing process, including the requirement to hold a valid MEPA development permit. The LGA would like to re-iterate what it stated in public in the past, that the mere fact that an operator holds a MEPA development permit does not result in an automatic granting of a gaming license. In fact, a number of applications have been refused on the grounds of non-compliance with the Regulations falling under the Lotteries and Other Games Act or the Location of Gaming Parlours Directive. In order for the LGA to grant a license (which is valid for 12 months), Gaming Parlours have to be at least 75 meters away from certain premises listed in the Directive, including schools, places of worship (such as Churches, Mosques, etc.) and playgrounds. Furthermore, throughout the licensing period, the licensees have to adhere to a number of requirements such as a minimum payout percentage to players of 85%, maximum bets and low maximum winnings and provide their customers detailed reports on the payout percentages of each machine, the money and time spent playing by the requesting player and the odds of the games.

The LGA would like to inform the general public that licensed gaming parlours are mandated to adhere to numerous player protection requirements, and adhere to social considerations as per law, such as the requirement to offer customers the option to self-exclude themselves for a period of either 6 or 12 months from all gaming establishments, including Casinos and Bingo Halls. Such high standards of player protection and regulatory supervision make a clear distinction between what is licensed today (in the public interest) as opposed to having illegal gaming devices in any establishment without any form of restrictions or direct supervision.



A gaming parlour can easily be identified whether it is licensed by the LGA or not, as the operator is mandated to clearly display the LGA license certificate at their reception desk, players need to formally register to enter the gaming parlour, whilst each gaming device clearly tagged by the LGA and therefore easily identifiable from illegal devices.

**The LGA insists that customers should make sure that they do not play on unauthorised gaming machines or modified computers in bars and other outlets as they may be prosecuted and if found guilty may be fined for up to €235,000 and imprisoned for up to 5 years. Such fines also apply to whoever makes available for use, hosts or operates such illegal gaming devices. The LGA calls on the public, NGO's and Local Councils to assist the LGA in its enforcement efforts against illegal gaming by reporting such illegal activity.**

For any inquiries, please visit the LGA website <http://www.lga.org.mt> or contact the LGA on [info@lga.org.mt](mailto:info@lga.org.mt).

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