



Introduction - Bertrand Bélinguier – EPMA Chairman

En qualité de Président de l'Association des Paris Mutuels Européens, j'ai le grand plaisir d'ouvrir cette conférence sur le Pari Mutuel, modèle de financement des courses de chevaux et du sport.

Notre Association a publié un Livre Blanc dont le thème est : « Le financement durable du secteur des courses hippiques européens par le pari mutuel » et dans la mesure où de nombreuses questions se posent aujourd'hui quant au financement du sport en général, il nous a paru utile d'organiser une journée d'étude afin d'apporter notre contribution au débat.

Nous souhaitons que notre contribution soit un apport pour un dialogue constructif entre les décideurs politiques et les organisateurs de jeu.

Je tiens à remercier tous ceux qui ont bien voulu participer à cette réunion :

Les Ministres et Parlementaires :

MM. TOUBON
DURIEUX
MEALE

Les Ambassadeurs et Parlementaires Européens :

M. FROYSNES
Mme SCHALDEMOSE

Les Présidents, Conseillers, Professeurs, Membres du Comité Olympique :

MM. KRATZER
NIEMINEN
MOCHON
MASSEGLIA
Mme GIRARD-ZAPELLI
Dr. FOREST
NYREN

et vous tous pour votre participation.

Racing is a very significant economic activity in Europe:

80000 races,

500 race courses

200000 people directly employed by the sport.

This activity relies on a long historical tradition, recognized by European Authorities. As early as 1990, a directive has stated that breeding of horses and specifically racing horses is included in agricultural activities and represents a source of revenues for a part of the agricultural population.

Racing is based on long term involvement: breeding by nature is a long term activity. It has a strong regional impact.

To a very large extent racing is financed by betting and also by its actors, the professionals and to a lower range by sponsoring.

In betting on horse races, the pari mutuel system is by far the most important form of betting, accounting for about 80% of betting in the world.

What is the European situation regarding gaming?

The European Commission after having decided that each Member State would organise this sector with its own rules, has decided in the absence of a specific directive, to control that these national regulations are not in contradiction with European principles.

It is in this context that we the pari mutuel operators have created the European Pari Mutuel Association.

The EPMA created 2 years ago brings together leading horseracing gambling operators from 10 countries, representing for 2008 more than € 14 billion. The Association was created to promote the Pari Mutuel model of betting. The White Paper published this autumn demonstrates how € 1,5 billion is reinvested in the European horse industry.

Compared with other sports, horseracing mainly relies on betting revenue, which has proved to be extremely beneficial specifically for the countries where Pari Mutuel operators are set up and controlled by Racing Authorities.

The two topics of the day, **Funding and Integrity** are closely linked inside all the activities of the Pari Mutuel operators. We define our responsibility in a large sense, **towards racing** (by the sustainable funding of the overall horse sector and the banning of certain types of betting), **towards consumers** (by a controlled offer, the implementation of responsible gaming tools and the support of treatment and preventive research programmes), **and towards society** by the strict respect of regulation and taxes.

However, because of today's new dimension of gambling, both issues of funding and integrity have been seen differently and are facing growing concerns.

In today's new dimension, some issues remain locally driven such as the number and type of operators, others have to be discussed at a more global level such as the control of illegal betting. In order to respect integrity and to maintain the benefits of funding models we must work towards a clear and effective set of principles.

For EPMA, these principles should mean:

- First, that funding is essential for the sustainable development of racing and sport,
- Second, that strict regulation must be maintained at national level to take into account local specificities and coherent taxation,
- Third, that the European Union should strive for a high level of consumer protection and sport integrity.

On behalf of EPMA, I would like to thank the Members of the European Parliament, representatives of Member States, Racing Authorities, sport Federations and gambling operators for participating today. I hope that our discussion will contribute to the ongoing debate.

I wish you a very positive day and now I give the floor to our morning moderator, Mr Jacques Toubon, Member of the European Parliament, who has been fully involved in the debate of gambling and has hosted the conference of European Racing Federations last March, to introduce the topic of **Funding**.