

Summary of eCOGRA's benchmarking study

BACKGROUND

The CEN Workshop Agreements, which was published in February 2011, are self-regulatory agreements that should function as effective complements to existing national regulation and also EU regulation. The agreement (the CWA) has been undertaken by a wide range of stakeholders and experts that are involved in different aspects of online gambling. The CWA defines 9 control objectives that aim to ensure the proper protection of the customer on as many levels of gambling as possible. The 9 control objectives are: the protection of vulnerable customers, the prevention of underage gambling, combating fraudulent and criminal behaviour, protection of customer privacy and safeguarding of information, prompt and accurate customer payments, fair gaming, responsible marketing, commitment to customer satisfaction and support and secure, safe and reliable operating environment.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

According to an agreement, eCOGRA (eGaming Compliance Services Limited) was appointed by Branschföreningen för Onlinespel to perform a benchmarking study of Swedish responsible gambling requirements against the CEN workshop agreement 16259:2011 for responsible remote gambling measures (the "CWA"). The Workshop Agreement "Responsible Remote Gambling Measures" includes 134 practical measures on how to safeguard a high level of consumer protection and to ensure that remote gambling operators behave responsibly in the European Union. The objective of the benchmarking study was to determine if the Swedish requirements:

Fully addressed the requirements of the CWA;

Partially addressed the requirements of the CWA;

Do not address the requirements of the CWA; or

Identify Responsible Gambling policies and procedures in the Swedish requirement that are not contained in the CWA.

The purpose of this study has been to compare the CWA measures against the Swedish requirements, making this study an empirical exercise that attempts to provide fact based evidence about the levels of consumer protection offered by private EU regulated operators and the Swedish regulated operator.

FINDINGS

The results of the benchmarking study illustrate that the current Swedish Requirements only address and partially address 56 percent of the CWA's measures. In the absence of pan-European regulation, self-regulation standards (which build on industry best practice) are the most effective means of consistently creating and maintaining a safe environment for consumers. Regulators like Denmark have used the CWA when creating their regulations and others, including the Netherlands, are discussing whether there is common ground between them and the CWA that can supplement that process.