

CODE OF ETHICS ON RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION IN GAMBLING

Version 1.0

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1. Preamble

This code of ethics creates the framework meant to ensure a responsible commercial communication in gambling, related to the need of protecting minors and other vulnerable persons from being exposed to messages that promote gambling. Gambling organizers, all those involved in this field, will show a constructive attitude regarding the approach of the gambling regulator, the **National Office for Gambling – NOG**.

This **set of rules** is constituted as a **set of self-regulatory norms regarding the commercial communication in the field of gambling**, on the basis of which gambling organizers will adapt their practices so as they make sure that these practices are in accordance with the criteria established in these rules of conduct.

The rules on commercial communication are based on:

- **EUROPEAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION** of 14 July 2014 on principles for the protection of consumers and players of online gambling services and for the prevention of minors from gambling online 2014/478/UE
- **European norm of 11 November 2016** on advertising and publicity in gambling

and they take into account:

- The rules comprised in the **Code of Practice in Commercial Communication** adopted by the Romanian Advertising Council, on 26.08.2016.

The set of rules was developed starting from the need to observe the principles established in GEO no. 77/2009 on the organization and operation of games of chance.

Within the meaning of this set of rules, **communication** means any message, advertising, information, through which the following, without being limited to this list, are communicated: the existence of games of chance, the way they are played, the chances of success, the place where this kind of activities is undertaken or the virtual addresses where they can be accessed, the way to access them or to participate in them.

2. Basic principles

Commercial communication in gambling must:	Commercial communication in gambling must not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be legal, decent, honest and real; • ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable persons; • address to an adult audience, in a responsible and adequate way; • respect the principles of fair competition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack ethics; • violate the general standards of decency and common sense; • question human integrity and dignity.

3. Responsible placement

- 3.1. Communication is addressed only to persons who are over 18 years of age;
- 3.2. Communication that is made on channels owned by gambling organizers, such as internet pages of brands' websites, downloadable content, direct mailing, own events etc. must be made so that it indicates, without any doubt, that it is addressed only to persons who are over 18 years of age;
- 3.3. Communication made through media that do not belong to gambling organizers, regardless of the channel used, will be made by being placed – through the organizers' diligence – in the areas, pages, real or virtual, during hourly intervals for which, in the case of that particular communication channel, assurances can be given that at least 90% of the audience is over 18 years of age or that the channel is intended exclusively for this age group;
- 3.4. For communication placed in digital media, through the gambling organizers' diligence, an active system of age verification shall be implemented; this system will appear on the start page of brands' (operators'/organizers') websites or their partners (affiliates), regardless of the form of the agreement that forms the basis of their partnership. The content and free advertisements that can be downloaded must have a set of

instructions included, for those that use those materials, regarding the fact that they are not allowed to distribute those materials to persons who are under 18 years of age;

- 3.5. Communication placed in written media, regardless of the form or presentation, will not be incorporated in formats that address minors or in pages that are addressed to minors;
- 3.6. Communication will not be made on the premises, or in the proximity of cultural, health, art, social, religious and other such settlements;
- 3.7. Communication, in any printed form, is not distributed/displayed in events addressed to minors or to which the participation of minors is allowed.

4. Responsible content

4.1. Responsible gambling

- 4.1.1. The message regarding responsible gambling, for instance, in the form of a web page that contains information for the player, must be included in the promotional materials, including advertorials in printed media, marketing materials, digital media, such as the organizers' websites, promotional or sponsored events. This message will include the way in which information regarding the concept of responsible gambling (address/location/information point) can be obtained;
- 4.1.2. Commercial communication in gambling must encourage responsible gambling. Example: *"Gambling is a leisure time activity. Be careful in maintaining control over it."*
- 4.1.3. Communication must **be clear**, must not be based on vague terms that may mislead or deceive players. Example of ad: *"Cash back x%"* – published without the necessary explanation for understanding exactly what it entails.
- 4.1.4. Communication **must not** contain deceptive acts or omissions.
- 4.1.5. Communication must not encourage or drive to practicing gambling in a manner that leads to an obsessive behavior, indicating, for instance, that by playing daily/weekly the chances of winning increase (or may increase), including the chances of winning a jackpot. Example: *"Effort bears fruit after a person refuses to stop"* or *"You won, keep playing! You lost, keep playing!"*

- 4.1.6. Communication must respect each person's decision not to play and must not portray in a negative light the abstention from playing or playing moderately;
- 4.1.7. Communication must avoid any association or allusion to drinks that contain alcohol.

4.2. Minors

- 4.2.1. The content of advertisements and marketing materials that promote gambling must be conceived in such a manner as to not attract young people under 18 years of age; for instance, it must not contain elements that portray children, objects, images, impressions, symbols, music, characters – real or fictitious – cartoons, celebrities such as sports champions, that could represent an attraction for persons under the age of 18;
- 4.2.2. The advertising must not undermine the authority of parents or legal guardians. Example: *"You are mature/old enough to do what you like"*.
- 4.2.3. Gambling must not be promoted in a manner that suggests a link between practicing a game of chance and proving maturity, or as being a rite of passage to maturity. Example: *"Only grown-ups take part in gambling"*.
- 4.2.4. Communication must not be made through famous persons such as famous models, actors, athletes – by using their presence or image;
- 4.2.5. No symbol of any kind of a gambling organizer, that is part of brand identity, such as logos, trademark or name, must be associated with articles of clothing, toys, games or gaming equipment or any other objects that are or may be addressed to persons under the age of 18;
- 4.2.6. Communication must not exploit the susceptibilities, aspirations, credulousness, lack of experience or lack of knowledge of minors and it must not associate gambling with the specific activities and concerns of this age group.

4.3. Health and education

- 4.3.1. Communication must contain at least a warning that transmits the idea of social responsibility, in the sense that practicing games of chance is a

way to spend leisure time, possibly associated with the idea of spending an amount of money;

- 4.3.2. Communication must not affect players' will to stop playing, by setting any kind of obstacles in the form of time conditioning (duration of play), minimum amount of money wagered/played etc.
- 4.3.3. Communication must not suggest that gambling could be a solution to financial problems, a way to earn money, a form of enrichment or a form of financial investment;
- 4.3.4. Communication must not induce the idea that excessive losses in gambling do not have negative consequences;
- 4.3.5. Communication must not provide misleading information with respect to the possibility (chances) of winning, and/or to determine players to believe that, if they repeat the game, their chances of winning will increase;
- 4.3.6. Communication must not suggest that the abilities or experience of the player will eliminate (or diminish) the chance (random) factor on which the winning depends;
- 4.3.7. Communication must not suggest the need to persevere in gambling or the contempt for the idea of abstinence from the game;
- 4.3.8. Communication must not present messages in which working or studying are devalued, or in which gambling is presented as a more attractive alternative;
- 4.3.9. Communication must not suggest tolerance for practicing gambling at work;
- 4.3.10. Communication must not suggest that gambling may improve personal skills or social recognition;
- 4.3.11. Communication must not have a sexual content or seduction games and must not associate the idea of gambling with the idea of sexual success or enhanced physical attraction;
- 4.3.12. Communication must not promote activities with an antisocial behavior.

5. Accountability

This code of ethics is intended to be a set of norms to which all those involved in gambling **adhere freely**, being aware that promoting moral values is a component of

social responsibility and, at the same time, it ensures a positive perception of society, with beneficial effects on their economic activity as well.

The rules set out in this document are **complementary** to the norms set out at a national level in the field of commercial communication, as well as in relation to the provisions of the Regulatory Code for Audiovisual Content developed by the National Audiovisual Council.

Any natural or legal person may inform the NOG, at the **Department for Public Relations**, in any of the ways provided for on the NOG's website, if they notice that a communication deviates from this set of rules.

This set of rules regarding responsible commercial communication in gambling is a document that is subject to **development and permanent adaptation** to the evolution of gambling, of new communication methods and channels. In this regard, the NOG is open to any improvement proposals and suggestions, both from the gambling industry, from players, from other institutions, as well as from the audience, the representatives of mass-media, of NGOs or other organizations interested in responsible communication in gambling.