GLOBALIZATION OF GAMBLING ORGANIZATIONS

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This Seminar will be integrated with the PhD research project of Natalia Zborowska. (Msc)

Since the 1990s gambling markets, including slot machines, lotteries and casinos, in many regions have been liberalised and expanded significantly. This expansion wave is a virtually global phenomenon (Reith, 2002; McMillen 1996; Eadington 1997; Kingma 2002; Collins 2003; Miers 2004). There are clear cultural, economic and technological pressures on national governments to treat gambling as a free market in the entertainment economy. These pressures and developments, however, are in contrast with and contradict traditional gambling policies. The organisation and regulation of gambling is traditionally characterised by strong national interests and (legal) frameworks, in which gambling markets are tightly regulated by the state. Direct market competition was discouraged because of the moral controversies over gambling and the association of gambling with risks concerning addiction and crime. This also means that national gambling organisations were protected from competition from abroad and are usually not allowed to expand their activities beyond national borders. Consequently, across the globe there exist huge differences in gambling organizations, markets and policies.

The global level relates in roughly two ways to the contradictions between on the one hand the national regulation and protection of gambling markets, and on the other hand processes of liberalisation, internationalisation and trans-nationalisation. First, most nation states are confronted with, and have to deal with, similar market pressures towards liberalisation. This may in time possibly lead to the convergence of national gambling organisations and policies - or reversely to conflicts and divergence. Second, increasing tensions between adjacent gambling regimes give cause to new regional levels of governance in the field of gambling, with which national governments and gambling organisations increasingly have to reckon with, like for instance within the European Union (Kingma and Van Lier, 2005).

Currently (0909) there is room for an MA thesis project dealing with “Malta as an online gambling haven”.