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Paul van Leeuwen Wins European Dealer Championship for the Second Time

Top dealers from 19 European countries demonstrated their skills at the Blackjack and American Roulette tables in the finals of the ECA's 2010 European Dealer Championship at Olympic Casino Vilnius.

Brussels, 14 May 2010 --- From 11-12 May 2010, 33 top dealers and many representatives of the European casino industry gathered at the Olympic Casino Vilnius in Lithuania for the finals of the European Casino Association's (ECA) prestigious annual European Dealer Championship.

In a competitive yet friendly exhibition of their skills and craftsmanship at the Blackjack and American Roulette tables, the winners of the national heats in 19 European countries offered a clear demonstration of the superior levels of dealer professionalism in Europe's casinos. The competition remained captivating right to the end, with Paul van Leeuwen from Holland Casino in the Netherlands finally emerging the winner in an intense final round and taking home the top prize of a trip to Las Vegas. This was the second title for van Leeuwen, who also won the first European Dealer Championship back in 2007. Runner-up in 2010 was David Tran (Casino Copenhagen, Denmark), followed by Matti Kankainen (Casino Helsinki, Finland) in third place. The three remaining finalists were Liisa Rennstein (Olympic Casino Estonia), Eirini Zacharatou (Regency Casino Mont Parnes, Greece) and Nadia Olsen (Casino Copenhagen, Denmark).

In addition to the competition proper, the participants also impressed spectators with their expertise in a number of lighter side contests, which all also served to illustrate the essential skills needed by a proficient dealer. The winners of these events were:

"Best Chipper" and "Best in Cutting Chips" – Aleksander Kokovinets (Olympic Casino Estonia)

"Best Card Handler" – Carmen de Lange (Holland Casino Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

"Best in Calculations" – Leonidas Pozatzidis (Regency Casino Mont Parnes, Greece)

"Best in Pushing Stacks" – Tibor Bencsics (Casino Sopron, Hungary)

"We are extremely proud of the quality of Europe's dealers," said ECA Chairman Ron Goudsmit. "As this competition shows, it really takes a lot to deal a game properly, and European dealers are among the best in the world. Ours is a hospitality industry, and dealers not only need good communication and technical skills, they also have to entertain their customers. Our aim with this event is to celebrate the craftsmanship needed for this profession. The skills and expertise shown by all the finalists are a superb reflection of the professionalism in European casinos. We would like to congratulate Paul van Leeuwen on winning the title for the second time. We would also like to thank and

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praise the team at Olympic Casino for the perfect organisation of this event."

"We were highly honoured that our casino was chosen to host this key event," said Saulius Petravicius, CEO of Olympic Casino in Lithuania. "Vilnius is a beautiful city, and we were delighted to have this opportunity to show off our location to the European gaming world. "

Launched in 2007, the ECA's annual European Dealer Championship is now a key event in the European gaming calendar. Participating dealers are judged in a range of categories, including hospitality and communication skills, technical expertise, discretion and control of the game. The venue for the 2011 event will be announced in the near future.

The ECA and its members understand and recognize that high quality training is crucial to learning the skills needed to become a good and qualified dealer. The ECA actively promotes such training and supports its members in their ongoing efforts to improve professionalism in Europe's casinos. The European Dealer Championship underlines this policy and also provides members with an ideal opportunity to get together, exchange information and expand their networks.

The 2010 European Dealer Championship was sponsored by Shufflemaster, the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers, CTC, ICS Europe and GPI.

The ECA represents the interests of around 1,000 casinos and some 80,000 employees in 22 countries across Europe. Founded in the early 1990s as the European Casino Forum, the ECA has grown steadily over the years and today includes members from the majority of the EU's member states, Switzerland and Serbia.

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