

## Experts in gambling harm prevention unite in support of markers of harm standardisation

*Developing a European standard on markers of harm would help improve existing efforts to identify and subsequently prevent problem gambling behaviour in Europe.*

[Joint statement from academics, professionals and organisations working to prevent gambling harm in Europe in support of a European Standardisation Committee \(CEN\) proposal to develop a European standard on markers of harm.](#)

**13 December 2022**

As experts and organisations working to prevent gambling harm in Europe, reliable markers of harm are critical to helping us identify problem gambling behaviour and understand how it leads to gambling-related harm. Early detection of risky or problematic gambling behaviour is therefore key to harm prevention and effective consumer protection.

When examined and analysed in combination, certain gambling behaviours can indicate that an individual is developing, or has already developed, risky or problem gambling behaviour. These behaviours are typically referred to as "markers of harm," and an illustrative list of examples can be found below in Annex 1. Markers of harm can be tracked and identified by gambling operators, using objective data of actual player behaviour, which is more reliable than the use of self-reported data of problematic gambling behaviour, which tend to be more subjective.

The types of gambling behaviours which are classified as markers of harm can vary across operators, harm prevention organisations and countries, which may mean that some prevention approaches are sub-optimal. A well informed and shared list of markers of harm, incorporating best practices and the latest available research, would provide a trustworthy and reliable benchmark for accurately detecting risky behaviour across all game types and player contexts. The creation of a standard would support a more efficient and quicker detection of risky gambling behaviour and with it help to achieve the policy objectives of national gambling authorities to protect their citizens from gambling harm.

**We, therefore, encourage national standardisation bodies and their associated mirror committees to support the proposal for a European standard on markers of harm** (CEN/TC 456 NWIP on markers of harm) in the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). CEN already has a technical committee on gambling standardisation (TC/456) which could work to develop this essential standard. As experts and organisations working to prevent gambling harm, we support this proposal and would look forward to actively engaging in the development of such a standard.

Creating a standard on markers of harm will require significant collaboration between the research community, harm prevention and health organisations, gambling regulators and operators. This collaboration will provide an important opportunity to take stock of the current research available and to further this research to improve the understanding of problem gambling and support existing harm-prevention policies in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

**Emily Arden-Close**

Principal Academic in Psychology  
Gambling Research Group, Bournemouth University  
<https://staffprofiles.bournemouth.ac.uk/display/eardenclose>  
United Kingdom

**Dr. Michael Auer**

Director  
neccton  
[www.neccton.com](http://www.neccton.com)  
Austria

**Dr. Elvira Bolat**

Associate Professor in Digital Marketing  
Gambling Research Group, Bournemouth University  
[www.bournemouth.ac.uk](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk)  
United Kingdom

**Ben Davies**

Head of Safer Gambling and Partnerships  
Betknowmore  
<https://www.betknowmoreuk.org/>  
United Kingdom

**Claire Donegan**

Founder and CEO  
THRIVE Recovery  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/claire-donegan-502b36b9/>  
Ireland

**Professor Sally Gainsbury**

Professor, The University of Sydney  
Director, Gambling Treatment & Research Centre  
Chief Investigator, Technology Addiction Team  
Science, Brain and Mind Centre & School of Psychology  
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/science/about/our-people/academic-staff/sally-gainsbury.html>  
Australia

**Dr. Mark Griffiths**

Distinguished Professor of Behavioural Addiction  
Nottingham Trent University  
<https://www.ntu.ac.uk/staff-profiles/social-sciences/mark-griffiths>  
United Kingdom

**Andy Iddon**

Director  
AnonyMind Ltd  
[www.AnonyMind.com](http://www.AnonyMind.com)  
United Kingdom

**Professor John McAlaney**

Professor in Psychology  
Gambling Research Group, Bournemouth University  
[www.bournemouth.ac.uk](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk)  
United Kingdom

**Roman Neshold**

President  
Institut Glücksspiel & Abhängigkeit  
[www.spielerschutz.eu](http://www.spielerschutz.eu)  
Austria

**Professor Xavier Noël**

Research Associate F.R.S./FNRS  
Faculty of Medicine, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)  
[www.ulb.be](http://www.ulb.be)  
Belgium

**Kevin O'Neill**

General Manager  
Responsible Gaming Foundation  
[www.rgf.org.mt](http://www.rgf.org.mt)  
Malta

**Dr. Jonathan Parke**

Director  
Sophro  
[www.sophro.uk.com](http://www.sophro.uk.com)  
United Kingdom

**Adrian Sladdin**

Director  
Seventh Wave Corporate Training Ltd  
[www.seventhwavetraining.co.uk](http://www.seventhwavetraining.co.uk)  
United Kingdom

**Ruijie Wang**

Lecturer in Psychology  
Gambling Research Group, Bournemouth University  
<https://staffprofiles.bournemouth.ac.uk/display/rwang3>  
United Kingdom

### **Annex 1 – Examples of markers of harm**

- Levels of stakes (spend that goes beyond an established norm for that customer).
- Speed of play (frequency of play, time spent gambling, session periods, unusual erratic high-speed wagering).
- Deposits, frequency of deposits, in session deposits, use of multiple payment methods.
- Withdrawals (changes in withdrawal amounts and reverse of withdrawals which might indicate loss chasing).
- Customer initiated contact (increased complaints, bonus requests, aggressive comments in live chat, frequent interactions etc).
- Time of play.
- Changes in product use.
- Use of player management tools (deposit limits, time outs, self-exclusion etc).

### **REFERENCES**

- Ferris, J., & Wynne, H. (2001, 19 February). The Canadian Problem Gambling Index: Final report. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.
- Evidence provided by the American Psychiatric Association, S. Dragicevic et al: “Analysis of casino online gambling data in relation to behavioural risk markers for high-risk gambling and player protection”, *International Gambling Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, December 2011.
- Griffiths, M. D. (2012). Internet gambling, player protection, and social responsibility. In R. Williams, R. Wood, & J. Parke (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of internet gambling* (pp. 227–249).
- Maris Catania, Mark D. Griffiths, “Applying the DSM-5 Criteria for Gambling Disorder to Online Gambling Account-Based Tracking Data: An Empirical Study Utilizing Cluster Analysis”, 22 September 2021, *Journal of Gambling Studies*.
- Haefeli, J., Lischer, S., & Schwarz, J. (2011). Early detection items and responsible gambling features for online gambling. *International Gambling Studies*.
- Braverman, J., & Shaffer, H.J. (2010). How do gamblers start gambling: Identifying behavioural markers for high-risk internet gambling. *European Journal of Public Health*.
- American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994; Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002; Cummins, Nadorff, & Kelly, 2009; Ferris & Wynne, 2001; Johansson, Grant, Kim, Odlaug, & Gotestam, 2009.
- Dragicevic, S., Percy, C., Kudic, A., & Parke, J. (2015). A descriptive analysis of demographic and behavioural data from Internet gamblers and those who self-exclude from online gambling platforms. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 31(1), 105–132.