

# Tote trade bodies set up huge worldwide merger

By Howard Wright

MERGERS between betting operations have become commonplace in recent years and now the two bodies representing international horseracing pool operators – the European Pari Mutuel Association (EPMA) and Asian-African Tote Association (AATA) – have got together.

The merger to create the World Tote Association (WoTA) was completed last week through a founding extraordinary general assembly arranged online.

Board members, including UK Tote Group chief executive Alex Frost, agreed that Paul Cross, general manager for international at Tabcorp in Australia, and Richard Cheung, executive director for customer and international business development at the Hong Kong Jockey Club, should jointly chair WoTA for the first two years, with Hans Lord Skarploth, chief executive of Swedish operator ATG, as vice chairman.

A total of 20 operators, representing all continents and accounting for annual turnover of €20 billion, make up WoTA, whose headquarters will be in Brussels, with EPMA secretary Florence Gras maintaining the position in the new set-up.

Cross said: “We have created a body to represent tote operators globally and show people that the association is not there to talk a lot but to do a lot.”

Cheung added: “WoTA is an association to promote interest for tote business and push prosperity.”

The chief objectives of the new association include to agree common rules for the sound development of pari-mutuel betting and protection of customers and to assist with the development of large international pools.

WoTA’s published mission also says: “Beyond legal obligations, our members are committed to maintaining a balance between their commercial objectives and social responsibility.”

