

The Success of Chance:

European Lotteries Congress
May 26th to 29th, 2019
Hosted by the Belgian National Lottery
Queen Elisabeth Hall in Antwerp

www.el2019antwerp.be

In 2019, the Belgian National Lottery will host the 10th edition of the “European Lotteries Congress”. During this congress members exchange their expertise and best practices, discuss case studies and demonstrate how lotteries can be innovative in a rapidly changing environment. Besides a major trade show, the three-day event, will also include panel discussions and the keynote speakers around the central theme of the event “The Success of Chance”.

Jannie Haek, CEO of the Belgian National Lottery: *“Lotteries have been about chance and luck for centuries. We not only create winners, we also help to create new chances and support new opportunities. Chance is a part of Lotteries. Chance is a part of Success. Chance is also a part of Life. When working hard, preparing well, being organised, looking for opportunities, ... chance plays an essential role in life. When succeeding, people often tend to deny the importance of chance, coincidence, and luck. In case of misfortune, one counts on understanding, support, and new chances.”*

During the congress, the Belgian National Lottery wants to discuss how chance affects the world, success, our life and the lotteries, but the concept of chance shall also be placed at the centre of different themes like sport, genetics, random generators and artificial intelligence. Several keynote speakers will be invited to explain each and every one from their field of expertise how chance has had a decisive influence on important evolutions in the past, and how it can influence our lives and our successes in the future.

One of the key note speakers is Nassim Nicholas Taleb who spent 21 years as a risk taker (quantitative trader) before becoming a researcher in philosophical, mathematical and (mostly) practical problems with probability. He is the author of a multivolume essay, the *Incerto* (*The Black Swan*, *Foiled*



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by Randomness, Antifragile, and Skin in the Game) covering broad facets of uncertainty. His book *The Black Swan* focuses on the extreme impact of rare and unpredictable outlier events — and the human tendency to find simplistic explanations for these events, retrospectively. Taleb calls this the Black Swan theory. *“A black swan is an outlier, an event that lies beyond the realm of normal expectations. Most people expect all swans to be white because that’s what their experience tells them; a black swan is by definition a surprise. [...] The focus [...] should not be on how to avoid any specific black swan, for we don’t know where the next one is coming from. The focus should be on what general lessons can be learned from them. And the most important lesson may be that we should reward people, not ridicule them, for thinking the impossible.”* Nassim Taleb in *The New York Times*, April 8, 2004

Another key speaker is Brett Hennig, who is a director and co-founder of the Sortition Foundation whose aim is to promote ideas about direct citizen participation and institute the use of stratified, random selection (also called sortition) in government. Before co-founding the Sortition Foundation, Brett was a taxi driver, a software engineer, a social justice activist, a

mathematics tutor, and the primary carer of four boys. He has a PhD in astrophysics. Brett Hennig is the author of *The End Of Politicians: Time for a Real Democracy*, in which he explains that citizens don’t need politicians to govern them while groups of randomly selected, ordinary people can and do make balanced, informed and trusted decisions. Brett Hennig will first give an overview of the results of the European elections that coincide with the opening of the congress, and then go deeper into possible alternatives to the election of politicians through direct citizen participation based on randomness.

The congress will provide more than ever an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with the most innovative developments in the lottery sector, thanks to an extensive trade show and a series of interesting panel discussions with qualified experts.

The venue that was chosen for this edition is the magnificent historical Elizabeth Center that is right in the center of Antwerp. This center, recently completely renovated, harbors top notch meeting and plenary rooms where history and technology are combined to bring a unique experience. It offers an ideal opportunity to network extensively with colleagues in the vibrant atmosphere of Antwerp, the largest city in Belgium with many historical and cultural attractions. Antwerp has the second largest port in Europe. It is also the center of the global diamond industry and the city plays a leading role in terms of fashion and gastronomy. Antwerp is easily accessible by public transport from the airport in Brussels. There are continuous direct trains that reach the center of Antwerp within half an hour. Both the congress center and all congress hotels are located in the proximity of the train station in Antwerp. 

For more information, please visit www.el2019antwerp.be.