

MARSEILLE PLANS CASINO COMPLEX IN ITS PORT



services.

The Municipal Casino of Marseille, the French city that hosts 4.5 million tourists per year, will not be developed at the former headquarters of the SNCM, a French ferry company, as it was planned. Despite its size (20,000 sq. m) the place will not be adapted for the installation of a gaming establishment, according to Jean-Claude Gondard, the secretary-general of Marseille's city

services.

However, the project is not abandoned. **The city council agreed with the construction of a casino on pier J4**, right opposite the Mucem and the Villa Méditerranée.

"In Euroméditerranée's plans, it was always intended to erect a large facility on the plot situated on the north section of J4, along the quays," explained Jean-Claude Gondard.

Proving investors' enthusiasm for this site, which has been undergoing renovations since the opening of the cultural facilities, the city is said to be weighed down under applications from candidates: "We regularly receive proposals. We even had an application from a cinema operator wanting to open an art house cinema on the site," added the secretary-general of Marseille.

Cinephiles will have to wait, as for now the city council decided for the casino option; an option which should boost the city's budget. "We're aiming for a large establishment which could bring in tens of millions of royalties just with standard operations," stated the head of city administration.

For the time being, the operation is still in its preliminary stages. Thus, before shouting "Bingo", the project will have to go through a long administrative process. "The project could be completed in four or five years from now," explains Gondard. During this time, the city will launch a call for projects and will select an operator to whom it will entrust the management of the establishment via a PSD (public service delegation).

The opposition of the group "Marseille to Win" (SP, Modem, Société Civile) is sceptical about the installation of a gaming establishment in relation to Marseille's many social problems. As for the profit of €10 million which the municipal majority is promising, this should be put into perspective with the commune's budget of one billion Euros.

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