

NF NEWS - A message from the FEI President

From: FEI Communications (communications@fei.org)

To: newsletter@fei.org

Date: Friday, 18 December, 2020, 09:59 pm IST

A message from the FEI President

Dear friends and colleagues,

As we get ready to embark on a new year, on behalf of the entire team at the FEI, I wanted to send you a message of hope, of strength, determination and gratitude.

In many ways, most of us want to remove or strike off 2020 from our memories, and jump straight back into what we know and the certainty we are accustomed to.

But there is a part of me that wants to celebrate 2020. Amidst all the devastation to our sporting landscape, the toll on our personal lives and the economic turmoil – which is ongoing – I do not want to forget 2020 and everything we achieved as a community. The many obstacles we overcame, the solutions we delivered and the creativity and resilience we showed, has made us stronger and more united as a global equestrian family.

Believe me when I say my thoughts are with you. I applaud the resilience of our Athletes, our Organisers, our National Federations and all the members of the Community, including Owners and Officials and the equine industry but also the great staff we have at FEI HQ for their adaptability and perseverance in an ever-changing environment. This required great courage but also trust and commitment in a moment of incredible uncertainty and confusion, and our community certainly rose to the challenge as one.

The trials we faced this year have also cemented my determination to ensure that we never become complacent and that we should always continue to strive for the best. Whether that be in terms of governance, integrity, the values we promote and instil both on and off the field, horsemanship and horse welfare, biosecurity, clean sport, sustainability, development initiatives, technology and reporting systems, education, and of course at the FEI HQ, the services, the support and the leadership we provide to you, our members, and the equestrian community.

So what did we concretely achieve? It's hard to do it justice in a few paragraphs, and to place any of these achievements in an order, but here are what I consider some of the highlights from 2020:

Governance, International Cooperation & Awards

- The FEI was recognised once again as a **leader in governance**, earning a top tier classification in the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) governance review. This is testimony to the hard work we have undertaken over the years to ensure we have robust governance structures and practices in place, the very same foundations which ensure we can respond to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Sustainability** did not get left behind, and in 2020, we won the **IOC DoW Award** for a second year running. Alongside this, I am also extremely excited to say that the Helsinki Horse Show won silver at the Sport Business Awards this week, recognising the Organiser

SNE - 45

for their innovative and sustainable initiatives. We are more than ever committed to continue working together with OCs to raise awareness and bring them into the fold. This is a shared legacy for the future we must all embrace.

- We also created an International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) Task Force for Brexit and EU Animal Health Law to address the issues we will be confronted with in the near future. The objective was clear and simple: provide a solution for efficient EU cross-border movement of sport, racing and breeding horses from 2021, as well as a framework for the temporary movement of essential, skilled people such as grooms, trainers, athletes, jockeys and veterinarians. This has been an important and unprecedented show of solidarity by the horse industry, with the Task Force made up of all the key bodies in Europe, namely the FEI, the EEF, the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) as well as the International Thoroughbred Breeders Federation (ITBF), and the European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Association (EFTBA).
- We continued to promote and advocate for the values at the heart of our sport and our community, by attending conferences, joining forces with key actors in the humanitarian field and ensuring we had a voice at the table. **Gender equality** was high on the agenda in 2020, and I am delighted to congratulate once again our Secretary General Sabrina Ibáñez on her appointment as Chair of the ASOIF Diversity and Gender Equality Consultative Group. This reaffirms our commitment to gender equality, and is another marker reflecting who we are and what we stand for as an organisation. And just days ago, we took a further step and signed the **UN Entity for Gender Equality: Sport for Generation Equality** Letter of Commitment to support the six principles and overall vision outlined in the Sports for Generation Equality Framework.
- We continued to nurture and build close and meaningful relationships with all the major sporting organisations (IOC, IPC, APSO, GAISF, ASOIF, WADA, CAS), expanding our influence with key roles within their committees and working groups.

Covid-19 Challenges & Solutions

- The FEI Board and Executive Board passed close to 200 Covid-19 related **Resolutions and Decisions** to specifically address issues which arose from the restrictions and consequences of the global sanitary requirements. This includes the **FEI Covid-19 Relief Fund** to the amount of CHF 1,050,000 to provide targeted financial assistance to boost grass roots equestrian activities at riding clubs and schools, particularly the care and upkeep of horses, and ultimately to help withstand the current economic difficulties created by the pandemic.
- Working closely with the FEI Medical Committee, we were also able to rapidly establish the **Return to Play** policy, effective risk assessments and guidelines based on the recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO), and thereby support our Organisers and the entire "Event" industry so that they could deliver a safe environment for our Athletes and their entourage to compete in.
- Both FEI Solidarity and FEI Campus continued to deliver courses and education, focussing on the online medium to reach all our stakeholders and ensure that they had the tools and the opportunity to grow and develop.
- We created dedicated communications channels and platforms to provide transparency to the decision-making process around Covid-19 and ensure everyone always had all the latest information, documentation and resources at their disposal.
- We ran successful online solutions for the FEI Sports Forum and FEI General Assembly, enabling the full consultation and decision-making processes to be maintained.
- And last but not least, we were able in these difficult times to keep our organisation financially healthy. Despite the many actions we have undertaken to reduce costs, the pandemic has had a negative impact on our finances for 2020 and most probably also for 2021. But thanks to a risk assessment made a couple of years ago and the decision to define and build up a financial reserve, we are able to absorb these losses without bringing our organisation into financial difficulties for the time being.

Commercial Partnerships & Fan Engagement

- We successfully delivered innovative digital campaigns and fan engagement with a complete rethink in light of the content/stories at our disposal due to the disruption of all major events. This includes the successful campaign **#ForTheLoveOfEquestrian** and new

digital series such as #Icons to engage with fans all over the world, as well as a completely virtual FEI Awards Campaign and Ceremony in 2020.

- In June of this year, we launched "My Horse Club" on TikTok, which is yet another platform we can use to share the unique values of the equestrian world to reach the next generation of fans, athletes, grooms, coaches, officials, organisers, vets, and the list goes on.
- We worked closely with our commercial partners to create complementary brand awareness and digital growth strategies to offer alternate outlets for brand visibility. One result has been the creation of #HorseOClock with Longines, the FEI's Top Partner.

IT Services to our Members & the Community

- Just a few days ago, we successfully tested our new **horse vaccination app** (as part of the FEI HorseApp), with the first horse successfully vaccinated and recorded in the application! We have ambitious plans to continue testing the app in 2021, and will be working closely with our vets to provide a digital framework that will greatly assist everyone in this important process.
- After three years of intense development, the **FEI Online Invitation System for Jumping** was successfully rolled out for CSI Events as of February 2020 with few or no glitches to report! We continue to develop the system with new features such as the OC invitation option deployed just this week, which will provide a more transparent and efficient platform for all stakeholders involved in the process. We made significant progress with the FEI Online Schedules Platform – which will revolutionise our processes and efficiency in this domain - and will be launching a pilot phase in 2021 prior to being fully rolled out, first in Eventing and then for the other FEI disciplines.

Confirmation of the Programme and Quota for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

- Last week we received the confirmation from the IOC that our three Olympic disciplines are also confirmed for Paris 2024 and that, although many sports saw a decrease in their quota, our quota remains unchanged. This is the result of a team effort where we have shown as an International Federation that we are able to embrace change and to do what is necessary to remain relevant in an ever-changing sporting and Olympic landscape. This will also be an additional motivation for all of us to deliver great equestrian competitions in the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As I said, it's hard to summarise our achievements, but I want to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to the community. I understand this has not been an easy year and many of us would not like to repeat it, but we should all be proud of who we are as a community, what we achieved together in 2020 and the standards and vision we set for the future.

I have every confidence that we are ready for 2021 and all the uncertainties that remain as a result of this pandemic. And I also have every confidence that our sport will shine at the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo and that we will build on everything we have learnt.

We must continue to strive to be the best and to give our best at every level of our sport. We have just shy of 100 years of experience as an international governing body, and many of you have decades of experience under your belt. So together, we actually have thousands of years to draw from, and perhaps Covid-19 is a coming of age, prompting us to look at situations differently, and be brave with our convictions and our mind-set. I look forward to next year's celebrations of 100 years of the FEI as it will be an excellent opportunity to further promote our sport and engage with and broaden our fan base.

I hope during the next few weeks and the festive season, the entire community will have the opportunity to recharge their batteries and get ready to tackle 2021 with the same vigour as 2020.

Thank you for your time, for your incredible passion, your resilience, your enthusiasm and your commitment to making our sport and our community better and stronger, together. As always, we are here for you.

Stay safe and healthy and season's greetings to all of you,

Ingmar De Vos

FEI President

FEI Communications Department

t +41 21 310 47 47

HM King Hussein I Building
Chemin de la Joliette 8
1006 Lausanne - Switzerland

Cc: FEI Board, MoU signatories, FEI Headquarters

Our privacy policy, which describes how we handle personal information is available here (<https://www.fei.org/privacy-policy>) and information on how we use cookies is available here (<https://www.fei.org/cookie-policy>). Any e-mail sent from the FEI may contain information which is confidential and/or privileged. Unless you are the intended recipient, you may not disclose, copy or use it; please notify the sender immediately and delete it and any copies from your system. Any unauthorised disclosure, copying or distribution of this message may be prohibited and unlawful. Computer viruses can be transmitted via email. We recommend you check this email and any attachments for the presence of viruses as the FEI accepts no liability for any damage caused by them.