19 August 2020

Re: EEF statement of support for the FEI Jumping Invitation System

Dear Ingmar,

Dear Mr. President

With this letter we wish to inform you about the EEF Board's support for the FEI Jumping Invitation System that is currently under strong criticism in some of our equestrian media.

The EEF Board has unanimously decided that it is supportive of the FEI Jumping Invitation System for the following reasons:

- **The interest of the sport at the core of our actions**

  The Board acknowledges that the cooperation of the entire equestrian industry with its many stakeholders is necessary to secure a sustainable future for equestrian sport. There is no sport performance without an athlete and his horse. These have to be trained by professional trainers and cannot compete without the organization of competitions on all levels from grassroots to top sport. Events cannot be organized without the support of sponsors. Sponsors expect a return of investment. Each of these stakeholder groups is facing its own challenges and needs to survive as a business at the end of the day. It is our responsibility to ensure a balanced regulation that allows all these actors to play their role in the system and at the same time to provide the ground for individual businesses, following the premise of "live and let live". This, however, also means that for the benefit of the sport as a whole such regulation will, to some extent, sometimes limit the freedom of individual actors for the sake of the entire community.

- **Merit over money**

  The EEF believes that we must strive to regulate the sport in a way that ensures that merit on the field of play will always open doors to those in the sport that have proven their talent and competition results in the equestrian competition system. At the same time the

EEF acknowledges the importance of a free market and the need for stakeholders to be able to trust in the fundamental legal principles of the European community. Again, it is in the interest of the sport as a whole to ensure that we remain credible as a sport which also means that money shall never be the only deciding factor for being successful in our sport.

- **The youth – our future**
  Our regulatory strategy must be guided by the premise to ensure that young people will continue to be interested in our sport and willing to work hard to become an active part of the equestrian community. We have to be able to show a realistic pathway to those young people, continuously proving that those with talent, moral values, ambition and dedication can make it to the top of their sport. We must strive for equal opportunities for all but without forgetting that "money makes the world go round", also meaning that those young athletes will need sponsors and supportive horse owners one day that need to be attracted to and nourished by the equestrian community over the long-term.

- **Consultation process**
  The EEF Board acknowledges that democratic procedures must be and always are at the core of all our actions. This also means that compromise is inevitable if solutions are to be found. Nothing is ever completely right or wrong, many things depend on perspective and require lengthy debates and negotiations to be able to reach some common ground. The EEF therefore asks the FEI to ensure that also in the future all voices are heard and considered when changing or adjust the system. .

With reference to all of the above, the EEF Board believes that the current FEI Jumping Invitation System is in the interest of the sport, values merit over money, is putting appropriate emphasis on young/upcoming athletes and has followed a democratic consultation process within the FEI.

Does this mean that the current Invitation System is perfect? Probably not, but as always "the devil is in the detail". The EEF is thus committed to an ongoing evaluation and finetuning of the existing system and a respectful dialogue with all involved stakeholders on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Theo J W A Ploegmakers

EEF President

Armağan ÖZGÖRKEY

EEF 1st Vice-President