

21 November 2023, Mexic City (MEX)

Equestrian Community Integrity Unit – 2022-2023 Report

by Lord John Stevens

Chairman, Equestrian Community Integrity Unit (ECIU)

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It does not seem too long ago that we were in Cape Town together and I would like to offer my sincere apologies that I am unable to be with you all in Mexico City this year.

The past twelve months have been an important period for the ECIU, we have conducted a number of investigations, some that are still ongoing, and we have seen the result of our investigations and work achieved by the Legal Department upheld at recent Court of Arbitration for Sport hearings. Whilst incidents such as those that are investigated by the ECIU can be seen as blemishes on the sport, these give us the drive and dedication to ensure that Integrity prevails and the fairness of competition is upheld for all athletes.

Fairness of competition is one of, if not, the critical pillar of sport that ensures parity across the board. Once this is tarnished, as fans and stakeholders we can never truly believe what we see playing out in front of us. We have seen this in many sports over the years, and it is prevalent wherever someone believes they can gain an advantage over their peers. Standing up for the sport that we all love is vital to ensure that we do not allow this type of behaviour to work its way into our sport, and it needs all of us, the FEI, National Federations, Athletes, Grooms, Organisers and fans to be that voice.

We have seen a continual shift in recent years with respect of the global landscape of sports integrity and the importance of safeguarding. We are incredibly proud to work alongside an International Federation that takes a proactive approach to the matter and be ahead of the game in this respect. The ECIU and FEI reporting mechanisms allow for confidential reporting to a trained individual who can then respond accordingly to all safeguarding concerns.

Alongside independent investigations, a second area of our remit is to deploy a CCTV surveillance system to major events within the FEI calendar. This year we attended the rescheduled 2022 FEI Endurance World Championships in the United Arab Emirates and the 2023 Pan American Games in Chile. The events themselves could not be further apart in terms of the venue set up, however the versatility of our system ensures that footage is captured and recorded in a secure manner. When installed at events, the system brings an additional level of security and peace of mind to athletes, grooms and owners. Regardless of the time of day, there is an oversight of people, horses, equipment and belongings.

The ECIU reporting hotline is a vital tool in the battle against wrongdoing within our sport. The FEI have been at the forefront of best practice with the creation of the ECIU in 2010, which has regularly been recognised in the ASOIF Governance Reviews. The independence of this function is a critical element of transparency for any organisation and we have seen many International Federations follow the FEI's lead and contract independent parties to monitor and manage Integrity Units on their behalf. The fifth Review of International Federation Governance by the ASOIF Governance Taskforce is set to begin in the coming weeks and with independent reporting, whistleblowing and investigations function being key indicators, the FEI are sure to be in position to be scoring in the top bracket of the Integrity section once again.

Reports to the hotline are triaged on a case-by-case basis with a large proportion filed and stored within our data management system, CLUE, whilst awaiting for further intelligence to progress with an investigation. Assistance from the wider Equestrian community in coming forward with any information, whether deemed significant or not, greatly assists our investigations. Without the support of the Equestrian Community, we can only go so far as to ensure those responsible for their negative impact on our sport are held accountable.

The following data shows how the ECIU records the information received through the hotline, whilst the graph indicates the trends that have taken place within the Equestrian Community over the past five years. For the time period of October 2022 to September 2023, the ECIU received twenty three unique reports to the hotline. We can see that this year we received considerably more reports than the previous twelve-month cycle and this was in fact the third highest total since the hotline was established in 2010.

We have seen a drastic increase in reports concerning Horse Welfare, which can be attributed to successful investigations in recent years. As the Equestrian Community observes action being taken on reports to the hotline, this will give encouragement to those who have witnessed incidents to come forward with their concerns. Whilst these allegations increased over the recent period, we would encourage continued identification of welfare matters that cause concern within the community and report these to the ECIU at the earliest opportunity.

Regulatory reports have reached their highest figures since the Hotline was established and are routinely provided to the Legal Department for their review. The remainder of the areas have seen an average number of reports.

Whilst the number of reports has increased significantly, I would continue to urge any member of the Equestrian Community that has concerns about behaviours

and practices of individuals to contact the ECIU. When reporting, your identity will remain anonymous if you so choose, as the integrity of our sport is of the utmost importance.

We are looking forward to 2024 with what is set to be as spectacular year for Equestrian sport. The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be another opportunity to showcase the unique relationship that our sport has between horse and athlete, with men and women competing against each other on the grandest stage of all.

The ECIU can be contacted through the hotline on +44 207 935 5822 or by email at report@equestrianintegrity.com

Data received to the ECIU hotline

Table 1. Category break down and comparison of reports received by the ECIU between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

| <u>Category of Information</u> | <u>2022-2023</u> | <u>2021-2022</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Conflict of Interest | 1 | 0 |
| 2. Misconduct | 1 | 0 |
| 3. Doping | 2 | 1 |
| 4. Regulatory | 5 | 1 |
| 5. Request for Information | 2 | 2 |
| 6. Safeguarding | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Horse Welfare | 9 | 2 |
| 8. Other (e.g civil matters) | 1 | 4 |
| Annual Total | 23 | 11 |

Table 2. A comparison between the total reported for the twelve months between 2022-2023 against the average annual total since the data was recorded in 2010.

| | <u>2022-2023</u> | <u>2010-2023</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022-2023 vs Average Annual Total | 23 | 18.64 |

Figure 1. Trend of categories reported to the ECIU in the past five years

