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## WELCOME

Social media provides a powerful communications platform for individuals and organisations and has become a part of everyday life in our society. In our private spheres, freedom of speech is one of our fundamental rights; however, when using social media, there is a thin line between public and private, as there is between personal and professional. Nothing is truly private on social media and as soon as you have posted content, you no longer control it.

As a global organisation with a diverse community, the FEI recognises the value and the impact social media can have, and we have created these Guidelines for all FEI representatives so that we can harness that strength and use this potent medium for the good of the sport.

The term FEI representatives covers a broad spectrum, including FEI Staff, FEI Board and Committee Members, FEI Officials, FEI Coaches, FEI Experts, FEI Tutors and anyone that may be speaking or representing the FEI in any way.

Guidelines for functioning in an electronic world are just as important as the values, confidentiality and ethics policies we have in place.

As an FEI Representative, you have agreed (formally and tacitly) to refrain at all times from making any statements either written or oral, including but not limited to the media or in social media, or behaving in any way or taking any actions or omitting to take any action, that might

cause harm to the FEI or to equestrian sport in general. This includes statements that might create a perception of bias.

We understand this is a big responsibility, and these Guidelines have been created to provide you with the necessary information as well as best practices so that you can fulfil your commitment to the FEI with regards to social media.

We trust and encourage you to make the most of this medium, however please always remember your position as an FEI Representative and how a public posting can be seen as an official comment from the FEI and may have a negative impact on the reputation of the organisation.

## WHAT DO THE RULES SAY?

We are all bound by the following Rules, so it is important to reflect how these affect our use of social media:

### **Definition of “Incorrect Behaviour” (Appendix A - [FEI General Regulations](#))**

*Any form of unsportsmanlike or improper conduct towards (a) Officials or any other party connected with the Event (other Athletes, journalist, volunteers, OC staff, FEI representatives, members of the public etc.) and/or (b) Doping Control Officers, Testing Veterinarian, Chaperones and/or any other person involved in the collection of a doping control sample. Examples of Incorrect Behaviour include, but are not limited to, (i) shouting aggressively or using offensive language (swearing); (ii) physical violence, (iii) making inappropriate gestures; (iv) issuing a threat; (v) failure or refusal to comply with the reasonable instructions of an Official, the FEI or the OC; (vi) damaging the property of another person; (vii) inciting or encouraging others to engage in Incorrect Behaviour; (viii) engaging in conduct that endangers others persons or Horses; or (ix) assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, conspiring, covering up a rule violation (or attempted rule violation) by another person.”*

### **FEI Code of Ethics on Confidentiality (Appendix F - [FEI General Regulations](#))**

*FEI constituents shall not disclose information entrusted to them in confidence. Disclosure of other information shall not be for personal gain or benefit, nor be undertaken maliciously to damage the reputation of any person or organisation.*

*This includes private information about co-workers, private communications, financial disclosures, development news or any other sensitive information.*

### **FEI Officials’ Code of Conduct (Appendix H - [FEI General Regulations](#))**

*I will maintain a neutral, independent and fair position towards Athletes, Owners, Trainers, Grooms, Organisers, other Officials and stakeholders. Financial and/or personal interests will never influence my officiating duties and I will spare no effort to avoid any such perception.*

*In the course of your duties or when representing the FEI you must refrain from making any public statements, including to the media or in social media, that might cause harm to the FEI or to equestrian sport in general. This includes statements that might create a perception of bias.*

### **Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy with Disclosure Statement (Appendix 3 - [FEI Internal Regulations](#))**

*The appearance of impropriety can be as damaging as actual impropriety to the FEI’s reputation. As a result, this policy is designed in such a way that compliance therewith will avoid, to the fullest practicable extent, both the perception and incidence of improper situations. A substantial appearance of a conflict of interest exists whenever others may reasonably infer from the given circumstances that a conflict exists.*

## BEST PRACTICES

### **BE neutral**

You should maintain a neutral, independent and fair position towards Athletes, Owners, Trainers, Grooms, Organisers, other Officials and stakeholders so as to avoid comments being misconstrued in a way that could damage both your reputation and the reputation of the FEI, even indirectly.

If you speak about others, always do so with respect, based on facts and in a way that does not discredit or belittle any party.

Even a positive comment can be misinterpreted. An FEI Official simply congratulating an Athlete on a good performance can be misconstrued by others as evidence of favouritism towards that Athlete.

### **BE mindful of potential conflicts of interest**

A conflict of interest is defined as any personal or financial relationship, including relationships of family members that could influence or be perceived to influence objectivity when representing or conducting business or other dealings for or on behalf of the FEI. Family members include a spouse, parent, child or spouse of a child, sibling, spouse of a sibling, cohabitating companion or any other individual with a significant familial or familial-like relationship.

Conflicts of interest come in a number of different forms. The appearance of impropriety can be as damaging as actual impropriety to the reputation of the FEI, the persons involved and to the sport as a whole. FEI representatives must, to the fullest practicable extent, avoid both the perception of and actual improper situations on social media, just as in real life.

### **AVOID sensitive content and controversial issues**

- Do not post, share and/or comment on information or photos of a sensitive nature. This could include accidents, incidents or controversial behaviour.
- Do not comment on legal matters pertaining to the FEI.
- Do not engage with negative coverage or comments.

#### **Remember**

- If you see misrepresentations made about the FEI in the media, you should contact the relevant department at FEI Headquarters, and not comment directly on social media platforms.
- Photos and videos can sometimes be edited before they are posted on social media and it is not always easy to know when the photo/video was taken.
- A person at the centre of the controversy has the right to be heard (i.e. give their side of the story) before any disciplinary action can be taken.

### **ASK when in doubt**

Whenever you are unsure as to whether or not the content you wish to share is appropriate, seek advice from others before doing so. If in doubt, refrain from sharing the content to be on the safe side.

### **ABIDE by...**

#### **Applicable laws**

- Do not post or link to content that contains illegal or indecent content, including defamatory, vilifying or misleading and deceptive content.

#### **Copyright laws**

- Always respect intellectual property, copyright, trademarks, and other relevant laws. A good rule of thumb is: If it's not yours, and you don't have permission, don't post it. In

every instance, you need to have the consent of the owner of copyright on the image and/or video.

## **EMBRACE our differences**

You represent the FEI values. Do not post abusive, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, derogatory, defamatory or inappropriate content. The FEI will not tolerate discrimination of any form.

## **CONCLUSION**

Remember, you are an ambassador of the FEI, therefore avoid social media communications that could be misconstrued and potentially damage the reputation of the FEI and the sport. Do not post disparaging or defamatory statements about the FEI, Athletes, Owners, Trainers, Grooms, Organisers, other Officials and stakeholders. Make sure that your profile and any content you post is consistent with the professional image you should present. Think before you post!

Be aware of the FEI Rules and Regulations at play and ensure that your use of social media never breaches any of the FEI Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies. Any violation is subject to disciplinary measures, which may include the termination of employment/function within the FEI.

We are grateful for your commitment to the FEI and encourage you to always use social media in a positive way.

You represent the FEI, do us all proud and celebrate your passion for equestrian sport!

## **CONTACT**

If you have questions, comments or feedback, please contact [Mr Francisco P. Lima](#), Director of Governance and Institutional Affairs directly.

**END**