



# FEI GENERAL ASSEMBLY MANAMA, BAHRAIN

Manama (BRN), 20 November 2018

## **Newly re-elected FEI President Ingmar De Vos' acceptance speech**

I am honoured and privileged to be your President for the next four years.

Thank you for your confidence and your support – together we have already achieved so much and this is just the beginning!

I believe in our sport, in our community and in our potential. These are exciting times for equestrian – we are growing, our fan base is diversifying and we have seven amazing and unique disciplines to promote – the sky really is the limit!

The FEI is a service organisation and I have always made it very clear – it has been my mantra you could say – that this is my *raison d'être*!

The FEI belongs to all of you – and we are here to provide you the very best conditions, the very best tools and the very best guidance:

- to grow the sport globally
- to innovate
- to ensure good governance at all levels
- to protect and promote the level playing field
- to nurture and safeguard our athletes
- to be a leader in the sports world and, above all
- to preserve the ethos, the culture and the values which make equestrian sport unique and universal!

I am so grateful to work with and be a part of such a strong community.

Together – and this is the key word – together we can and we will continue to develop our sport and to attract new athletes, new fans and new sponsors. And we will do this by ensuring great sport, cutting edge formats and great products globally to showcase the unique attributes of our disciplines and our sport.

As you know, this is not as simple as it seems, we have a complex sport and we have specific challenges which no other sport has to contend with. But I believe in the team at HQ, I believe in the Committees, the Board and all the volunteers which actively support our decision-making process and I believe in you – the National Federations - and your abilities.

One of my biggest priorities is to keep our community together and ensure we stand united, because this is how we can continue to drive the sport to new heights.

I am really looking forward to 2019 and beyond!

We have many Olympic qualifiers ahead including the Longines FEI Jumping Nations Cup Final next year! And we will be testing our new formats for the Games not just from a sports perspective but also with our officials, OBS and timing so that we are 100% ready before implementation at the Games in Tokyo.

We will continue to develop and roll out the commercial strategy with hopefully new partners to come.



# FEI GENERAL ASSEMBLY MANAMA, BAHRAIN

And amongst many exciting plans, we will put into action all the work and the thinking behind the reform of our officials system, the online invitation system as well as new technologies, graphics and applications that are exciting for spectators.

One of the biggest challenges ahead is to do the right thing for Endurance – with a clear emphasis on Endurance riding not Endurance racing. It's about placing the welfare of the horse and horsemanship FIRST because this is what makes all the disciplines within the FEI Family unique from all other sports – the special bond between an athlete and their horse.

We are growing in size, in scope but also in vision, our standards are high and our community expects the very best. This is our benchmark and this is my KPI.

And we are all on this journey together – it is not the mission of one man but of a community and I am grateful to everyone in this room for all that we have achieved and all that we will go on to achieve.

And now, I would like to thank some of the important people that have led me to this moment and make this possible on a day to day basis.

First of all, to my wife Sabine – I forgot to mention her last time - four years ago - which obviously I have been reminded of very regularly... but really, she is my rock and she stands by me, even though I am rarely home. The same goes for my children, they are wonderful and I am so proud of them. I am fortunate to have a family which is passionate about the sport and supports me in every way. Thank you darling!

I also want to thank HRH Princess Haya for believing in me and effectively starting my FEI journey in 2011 - she led the FEI with great gusto and had a very strong vision to modernise, to professionalise and to make the FEI more accountable so I am grateful for her efforts and fortunate to follow in her footsteps.

And last but not least I want to thank my dear friend Jacky Buchmann whom many of you knew. He was a lifelong mentor for me, and without him I would not be here today. He is no longer with us, but he is often in my mind, and I carry his advice with me everywhere I go.