

FEI SPORTS FORUM 2022

25-26 April, Lausanne (SUI)



Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear guests and friends,

Welcome to the FEI Sports Forum 2022!

It's hard to believe the last in-person Sports Forum was back in 2019. So after three years we are happy to be back here in IMD and to see all of you in-person and also our greetings to all those following the Sports Forum online.

It was my intention not to mention and repeat myself again regarding the impact of the different pandemics on our sport and society as we believe we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel and we need to focus on the future. But with the conflict in Ukraine it feels like for three years in a row we are running from one crisis to another and I really wonder in what a crazy world we are living today.

As we face the hardship and suffering of the Ukrainian people, we are reminded of what is important and how we - even as a sport - can provide support and solidarity in times of great need.

I want to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the Ukrainian delegation that are here with us under the leadership of the Secretary General Mykhailo Parkhomchuk. It was only in December of last year that I made an official visit to your NF in Kiev and it is unbelievable what happened to your country and its population since then. I still have great memories of your warm welcome and hospitality and I can tell you that you are more than ever in our hearts and thoughts and we commend you for the great resilience you have demonstrated so far.

Having the Ukrainian delegation with us the coming days will allow us in the margin of this Sports Forum to continue discussions on how we can continue to support you and our equestrian family in Ukraine in these difficult times.

It's also great to see the solidarity and support initiatives from our National Federations not only from the region and the coordination done by the Ukrainian Equestrian Federation and the Ukrainian Charity Foundation in cooperation with the EEF and FEI. Together we have established the priorities to ensure the CHF 1 million FEI Solidarity Relief Fund reaches as many individuals and horses as possible.

With the additional support from other National Federations and Associations, I sincerely hope you feel supported and know you can count on the FEI Family.

I truly hope this war is over very soon but this may just be wishful thinking. Whatever the future holds, all we can do is hope for the best but be prepared that our help and support will be needed for a longer period.

But back now to the FEI Sports Forum.

I think we all know why we are here and what important topics are on the Agenda so I don't want to take valuable time that should be used for discussions by going in detail through this agenda. The ultimate goal of this Sport Forum is – as you all know - to provide your input to come to clear and broadly supported proposals for our General Assembly in

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November (in Cape Town, South Africa), but also to look at some preparations for important upcoming championships later this year.

I am happy to welcome delegations from the Organising Committees of our different World Championships 2022.

I am also happy to officially welcome in-person some of the members from the Grooms Consultative Group which we set up last year during the online Sports Forum on the eve of a landmark moment for grooms as we will formalise the FEI's relationship, finally I would say, with the newly created International Grooms Association here at the IMD tomorrow morning.

I also need to mention that our Solidarity and IT Departments both have a stand in the lobby and they are available for the delegates today and tomorrow.

As far as evening activities are concerned, we look forward to welcoming all of you tonight at the Olympic Museum which will serve as a kind of appetizer to the FEI 100 Years Celebration on Tuesday evening at the Millenium!

So, I would say let's get to work but before we jump right in - I am delighted to introduce Professor Sam Abadir from IMD for a fascinating introduction to thought leadership and engaging with stakeholders in turbulent times. A short lecture which is very fitting and I am sure will be of great interest to everyone in this room!

Once again, thank you to everyone for being here – the delegates, the sponsors not to forget, and I look forward to the constructive discussions ahead. Professor, the floor is yours.