

Dear National Federation Colleagues,

A busy fall calendar has allowed me to travel and meet with so many of you face-to-face, while others have participated in the "Meet the Candidates" sessions arranged by the FEI. I am writing to you following my most recent trip to CSIO Rabat in Morocco, where I witnessed a fantastic display of show jumping, including a thrilling four-way jump-off in the Nations Cup.

I have been grateful for the opportunity to meet with so many riders, owners, officials, and members of National Federation leadership. Our conversations have allowed me to further expand my understanding of the various regions the FEI serves and the priorities and concerns in each. This is part of an extensive listening exercise that has also taken me to events in the Dominican Republic, Germany, Italy, Greece, Ireland, Japan, and Switzerland over the past two months.

I soon head to South Africa and Kazakhstan, as well as to the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar, Senegal. Should you elect me as your next FEI President, I pledge to continue this regional outreach so we can focus on addressing the issues that matter the most to you and develop action plans together.

As you prepare to vote on the next FEI President, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight three topics that are of great importance to the future of our sport: the Olympic Movement, youth participation, and the officials' community.

The Road to the Olympics

Keeping equestrian sport within the Olympic and Paralympic movement is paramount.

While secured for the next two Olympic cycles, we must protect our place beyond the LA 2028 and Brisbane 2032 games. This requires strong representation in both IOC and IPC discussions as well as competitive international pathways.

Competing on the Olympic stage is the ultimate aspirational goal for our sport. It is a source of great pride and prestige. As a child, Canadian Club, a horse owned by my family, won team gold in show jumping at the 1968 Mexico Olympics. Witnessing this historic achievement inspired me to pursue my own Olympic show jumping dream as an athlete, and I know first-hand the excitement that comes from being part of the Olympic Movement.

I believe we must:

- Work closely with the IOC and IPC to understand their objectives and metrics, and to deliver on their future priorities.
- Consolidate and extend our position within the Olympic and Paralympic movement including reinvigorating the Olympic Council and working with ASOIF President De Vos.
- Explore opportunities to expand Para equestrian competition and representation.
- Closely track trends and issues that could potentially impact us in the future so we are proactive, not reactive.

A Pathway for Officials

Many federations do not have enough officials, who are essential to ensuring an equitable field of play. Officials are subjected to long days, exposure to the elements, and sometimes, challenging food and accommodation conditions. They are the direct link between the athletes, the organizers, and the Federation and, in that role, must deal with disgruntled stakeholders face-to-face.

I believe that strong, consistent international sport depends on well-supported, educated, and experienced officials. Having chaired the FEI Officials Working Group on two occasions, first from 2016-2017 and again from 2024-2025, I have witnessed the issues facing the officials' community across all geographies and developed a holistic plan to improve the entire system. So far, however, that plan has only been partially implemented.

There are many ways in which the FEI can strengthen its support of officials, and one of my top priorities will be to implement greater opportunities for development.

As president, I would draw on my experience to:

- Implement each and every recommendation from the Officials Working Group reports.
- Explore a system of mentoring between officials, pairing experienced Officials with those who are less experienced.
- Educate and support our officials so that they feel ready to make the right call, every time.
- Develop a stronger pathway into the vocation so that we can recruit, educate, and retain the next generation.
- Create more opportunities to gain experience and knowledge including rotation of officials and a re-examination of appointments.
- Expand travel funding and support.

Cultivating Increased Youth Participation

Young people are the future of our sport. As a father of four, all of whom ride, this subject is particularly close to my heart. But as so many NFs have experienced, the pathway for young, deserving athletes to gain the necessary experience to reach the higher levels still requires further focus. I believe that youth development, greater access to the FEI Challenge, online education through FEI Campus, athlete scholarships, talent identification and recognition, greater access to ranking points and exploring mentorship programs, are the best way to encourage increased participation and achievement.



My Manifesto

I invite you to read more about my priorities in my full Presidential manifesto here. To be as inclusive as possible, it is offered in eight languages.

Testimonials

The number of colleagues who have offered to provide words of support has been touching. Some I have worked alongside as volunteers on various FEI committees while others I have had the privilege of competing both with and against. Here is a small sampling of those remarks:



"Mark is a true statesman. His knowledge, integrity, and commitment to the long-term success of our sport is as impressive as his business and volunteer leadership. I have had the pleasure of competing alongside Mark and, in addition to being a top rider, he was an excellent Nations' Cup teammate, including at the Pan American Games. I fully endorse Mark in his FEI Presidential campaign."

- Ian D. Millar
10-time Olympian



"For many years I had the pleasure of working with Mark in the FEI Officials Working Group. Mark is a natural leader; he set a clear direction, kept the group focused, and worked in a highly structured way. Thanks to that approach, we delivered valuable, practical advice to the FEI. It was a real pleasure working with him, and I would gladly do it again."

- Peter Bollen
Honorary President,
Equestrian Organizers



"Having worked alongside Mark Samuel on both the Pan American Equestrian Confederation (PAEC) and the FEI Board for over a decade, I have seen first-hand his dedication to Equestrian sport across the Americas and around the world.

Over the past decade, his service on numerous FEI committees, including the Endurance Temporary Committee and the FEI Officials Working Group, among many others, has given him a broad understanding of the sport's diverse needs. His experience as a top-level show jumper brings an invaluable athlete's perspective, while his successful business career has given him the leadership, discipline, and strategic vision the FEI requires to move forward and take the next step.

Mark also understands that the future of equestrian sport depends not only on maintaining excellence at the highest level, but also on supporting the development of the sport in less developed countries. He is a firm believer in creating opportunities for athletes, officials, coaches, and horses in all regions. At the same time, he recognizes the need to protect and promote the highest standards of performance, welfare, and competition at the top of the sport and most importantly safeguard our position in the Olympic movement, which is vital to our sport.

Mark combines extensive experience, unquestioned integrity, and a genuine commitment to the future of our sport. He understands the challenges the FEI faces, listens carefully to the perspectives of its stakeholders, and has the judgment and leadership to bring people together around practical solutions. I firmly believe he is the strongest candidate for the FEI presidency and has all the qualities needed to lead the organization forward."

Carmen Barrera
Former Chair of PAEC
Past Chair of FEI Group IV

I would be honored to serve as your next FEI President. If we have not yet had an opportunity to speak, please reach out to me at mark@samuel4fei.com to schedule a time to talk. The FEI is a Federation of Federations, and every voice matters.

Yours truly,
Mark Samuel