



## **Press Release**

Lausanne (SUI), 14 September 2020

### **Digital passport solution proposed for European horse movement**

The International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) Taskforce for Brexit and European Union (EU) Animal Health Law has formulated a digital passport solution to ensure the efficient cross-border movement of sport, racing and breeding horses from 2021.

The proposed solution would allow for the free movement of horses between Great Britain and Europe following the end of the Brexit transition period in December 2020 and would also meet the requirements of the new EU Animal Health Law Legislation, which comes into force at the beginning of next year.

The digital passport system would simplify the movement of horses by providing authorities of EU countries with fail-safe information on the horse's identity, as well as real-time monitoring of its movement and ownership information. These passports would also contain up-to-date vaccination and medical records, allowing for a higher level of monitoring and prevention of potential disease outbreaks.

The digital passports would be available and operational from the beginning of 2021, although paper passports would continue to be issued as is currently required by the EU. Ultimately, if the system is approved by EU Member States, it could be used as an alternative to paper passports.

It is hoped that the solution, based on existing EU legislation and agreements, will gain strong support from the main stakeholders in the European horse industry. If adopted, it would ensure a level of identification, biosecurity and disease detection that goes beyond the scope of what is currently contained in the new EU Animal Health Law legislation.

The IHSC Task Force is the result of a unique collaboration that has brought together the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), the European Equestrian Federation (EEF), the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA) as well as the International Thoroughbred Breeders Federation (ITBF), the European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Association (EFTBA).

"This is an unprecedented show of solidarity for the horse industry in Europe," FEI Veterinary Director and Chair of the IHSC Task Force Dr Göran Akerström said.

"Great Britain's decision to leave the European Union, the difficulties in implementing the new Animal Health Law legislation, as well as the problems created by the global pandemic stand to adversely impact a regional industry

which generates an annual revenue in excess of €50 billion and provides employment for more than 500,000 people.

“Any obstacles to the cross-border movement of horses and associated personnel would result in huge economic losses to Britain, Ireland and France, as well as other EU Member States such as Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy.

“It is imperative that we put in place systems and processes to ensure the efficient and safe cross-border movement of horses and this digital passport would play a key role in that.”

The Task Force has met every week since May to work on solutions that will ensure the unhindered movement of horses with guaranteed high health status, as well as the temporary movement of essential, skilled people such as grooms, trainers, riders, jockeys and veterinarians across EU borders.

The long term aim is to create a Europe wide network of databases which registers a horse’s identity, allows for an equine to be easily located and identified, and ensures the secure movement of horses anywhere in Europe.

### **About IHSC Taskforce for Brexit and EU Animal Health Law**

The Taskforce for Brexit and EU Animal Health Law comprises representatives from the key European Sport Horse and Race Horse industries. It was formed by the International Horse Sports Confederation (IHSC) - constituted jointly by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) and the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA).

Its purpose is to work with Governments and key individuals to devise and present solutions which would facilitate movement of Sport Horses and Thoroughbreds (competition, training and breeding animals) across the EU and including between the EU and the United Kingdom post Brexit and the implementation of the EU Animal Health Law.

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