



HORSE SPORT

IRELAND

Ms Joan Adrain
Chair
Dressage Ireland CLG

17 June 2026

Dear Joan,

Re: FEI European Championships Juniors 2026

Firstly, may I congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of Dressage Ireland and wish you every success in the role.

I am writing further to the recent correspondence between Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) and Dressage Ireland concerning youth dressage representation at the 2026 FEI European Dressage Championships.

While HSI considers the substantive issues relating to selection criteria and selection processes to have been fully addressed through the exchange of correspondence between our organisations, a number of governance, communications and athlete welfare concerns have arisen from the manner in which this matter subsequently developed in the public domain. As previously stated, HSI has no issue with Dressage Ireland raising concerns regarding matters affecting the discipline or seeking clarification regarding decisions within the High Performance programme. Constructive engagement between affiliate bodies and the National Federation is an important and necessary part of the governance framework of our sport.

However, HSI is concerned that correspondence relating to an ongoing High Performance matter was placed into the public domain at an early stage and that the issue subsequently became the subject of extensive public discussion and commentary across social media platforms.

Of particular concern is the timing and manner of those public communications. Dressage Ireland's correspondence was issued to HSI on 9 June 2026 and, less than twenty-four hours later, Dressage Ireland elected to publish the correspondence on social media before HSI had been afforded an opportunity to respond. In HSI's view, such an approach is difficult to reconcile with principles of good governance and constructive engagement between sporting bodies. Ordinarily, where concerns arise regarding an ongoing High Performance matter, the appropriate course is to allow the relevant organisation an opportunity to consider and address those concerns before the matter is escalated into the public domain. The decision to publish the correspondence at that stage had the



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foreseeable effect of generating public pressure, commentary and speculation regarding an ongoing process involving youth athletes.

HSI is also concerned that matters involving youth athletes and selection processes became the subject of extensive public debate. Such matters require particular care and sensitivity. Public discussion carries the potential to create unnecessary pressure on young athletes and their families, generate misunderstanding regarding the facts of a case, and undermine confidence in established governance processes.

Of further concern is the emergence of information now in the public domain (Facebook) indicating that at least one combination referenced within the wider debate was never intended to travel to the Championships due to welfare considerations relating to the horse. If that position was known, or reasonably capable of being established, prior to the commencement of public commentary regarding team representation, it raises questions as to whether the public narrative fully reflected the factual position.

The emergence of this information reinforces the importance of the position consistently articulated by HSI throughout this matter; namely that considerations of horse welfare, suitability for travel, readiness for Championship competition and athlete welfare form an integral part of any selection assessment and cannot be reduced solely to qualification status or competition scores.

More broadly, HSI is concerned that welfare considerations repeatedly referenced in our correspondence received limited attention within subsequent public commentary, despite welfare being a fundamental obligation of all organisations operating within equestrian sport.

In light of these developments, HSI would welcome clarification from Dressage Ireland regarding the following matters:

1. What consideration was given to the principles of good governance and constructive engagement before correspondence concerning an ongoing High Performance matter was placed into the public domain prior to HSI having an opportunity to respond?
2. What consideration was given to athlete welfare and safeguarding implications before correspondence and related commentary were placed into the public domain?
3. What steps were taken to verify the factual position regarding the availability and willingness of combinations to travel before public statements were issued?



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4. What governance processes were followed in determining that public communications concerning an ongoing High Performance matter were appropriate?
5. How does Dressage Ireland consider that the public handling of this matter aligns with principles of good governance, athlete welfare and constructive engagement between sporting bodies?
6. Given that matters relating to individual youth athletes and their families formed part of the wider discussion surrounding this issue, HSI would welcome clarification regarding how any actual or perceived conflicts of interest were identified, declared and managed by the DI Board during its consideration of this matter.

I wish to emphasise that the purpose of this correspondence is not to revisit selection decisions, nor to prolong a disagreement between our organisations. Rather, it is to ensure that lessons are learned from recent events and that future engagement is conducted in a manner that best serves athletes, horses and the long-term interests of the sport.

As you assume the role of Chair, I believe there is an opportunity for both organisations to reflect on recent events and to establish a constructive and collaborative basis for future engagement. To that end, Denis Duggan CEO Horse Sport Ireland and I would be pleased to meet with you in person at a mutually convenient time to discuss how HSI and Dressage Ireland can work together more effectively in support of athlete development, participation growth, welfare standards and good governance across the discipline.

HSI remains committed to a positive and productive relationship with Dressage Ireland and looks forward to working constructively with you in your new role.

Yours sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Avalon Everett
Chief Operations Officer & General Counsel
Horse Sport Ireland

cc. Denis Duggan CEO Horse Sport Ireland