



HORSE SPORT

IRELAND

F.A.O. Board of Directors Dressage Ireland clg

admin@dressageireland.ie

Re: FEI European Dressage Championships 2026 – CDIJ

12 June 2026

Dear Members of the Board,

Your correspondence of the 11th June refers.

HSI notes your continued concerns in relation to Junior representation at the 2026 FEI European Dressage Championships. It is also noted that the selection process has not yet concluded and that formal nomination and selection processes remain ongoing in accordance with the published framework.

HSI also notes that your correspondence acknowledges both HSI's responsibility for international selection and the distinction between FEI qualification and national selection criteria. It is therefore important that those principles are applied consistently. HSI does not accept the characterisation that the matter is solely one of "outcome". Selection decisions within a High Performance system are based on the consistent application of established and published criteria, designed to assess readiness for championship competition.

FEI qualification establishes eligibility for consideration but does not determine readiness for selection. Selection decisions are based on objective performance data and comprehensive technical assessment of whether combinations are appropriately prepared to compete at championship level. The criteria applied have been refined and applied consistently over successive cycles and have demonstrated their appropriateness in preparing combinations for Championship competition. The effectiveness of a High Performance pathway must be assessed over time through sustained progression and consistent standards, rather than by reference to a single outcome.

Selection decisions also necessarily include consideration of athlete and horse welfare, including veterinary factors, suitability for travel, and the capacity of combinations to meet the demands of championship competition. These considerations are integral to the assessment process and are not always externally visible. This approach is aligned with the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse, which requires that welfare must be paramount and that participation is restricted to horses and athletes of appropriate fitness and competence. The factors referenced within your own



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correspondence, including soundness, availability and readiness to travel, underline the importance of these broader considerations.

HSI notes, with some concern, that these welfare considerations have not been reflected in your correspondence and that matters relating to youth athletes appear to have entered the public domain. Given the age and stage of development of those athletes, it is important that such matters are handled with appropriate regard for safeguarding and athlete welfare considerations.

HSI also notes the broader points raised in relation to participation and membership, which fall within the remit of Dressage Ireland as the affiliate body responsible for the development of the discipline at national level. HSI remains open to engaging constructively in supporting participation initiatives. In that regard, HSI operates a participation grant programme through which affiliates may deliver targeted initiatives to increase participation, and Dressage Ireland may wish to consider engaging with these mechanisms, including the submission of an application for funding when open in 2026.

HSI does not consider that a review of the youth dressage pathway is warranted. The strategic direction for High Performance sport is set out in HSI Strategy 2030, which establishes a welfare-centred and performance-driven framework across all disciplines, developed through extensive sectoral consultation. These standards and pathways are not determined by individual selection outcomes. It is noted that Dressage Ireland did not engage with the development of that strategic framework. In this context, it is disappointing that the position advanced reduces a complex, technically led and welfare-centred system to a simplified outcome-based assessment.

Selection decisions for the 2026 Championships will be made in accordance with the published criteria and the framework established under Strategy 2030, and it would not be appropriate to revisit those decisions. While HSI does not propose to engage in further correspondence on this matter, we would be willing to meet at an appropriate point to engage constructively on the broader development of the discipline on a national basis on a forward-looking basis.

HSI considers that its position has been clearly set out and does not propose to engage further on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Avalon Everett

Chief Operations Officer & General Counsel

Horse Sport Ireland

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Avalon Everett

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Anne-Marie Dunphy

Dressage High Performance Manager – Youth & Senior

Horse Sport Ireland

Signed by:

Anne Maire Dunphy

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