Geschrieben von: Dieter Ludwig/Offz
Donnerstag, 02. Juli 2020 um 16:15



**FEI-Präsident Ingmar de Vos**

(Foto: Kalle Frieler)

**Brüssel. Diesen Brandbrief dürfte keiner aus der Oberen Etage im Reiter-Weltverband (FEI) achtlos beiseite schieben. Das ist offene Rebellion von Stephan Conter (Belgien) nach sicherlich Absprache von Gleichgesinnten gegen die selbstherrliche FEI-Obrigkeit, und so etwas ist bisher in diesem Verband auch einmalig.**

Das fast gnädige Abnicken von Beschlüssen und Empfehlungen seitens der Führung im Reiterweltverband (FEI) ist nun wohl endgültig Geschichte. Prinz Philip von Edinburgh war der letzte Souverän, der mit Handaufhebung Beschlüsse bei den Generalversammlungen durchwinken ließ. Der Königingemahl führte die FEI 22 Jahre bis 1986, dann übergab er das Szepter seiner Tochter Anne, weil er nicht wollte, dass Dieter Graf Landsberg-Velen aus

Deutschland als ewiger Vize zum Präsidenten aufstieg.

Auf die frühere Military-Europameisterin folgten die ebenfalls blaublütigen Pilar de Borbon aus Spanien und Prinzessin Haya von Jordanien. 2014 wurde der Belgier Ingmar de Vos (56) zum Präsidenten gewählt, und alle glaubten an einen Neuanfang des verkrusteten Weltverbandes, weg von Militär und Adel. Nichts dergleichen. Seit Beginn der Corona-Pandemie als jüngstes Beispiel ab und zu ein paar lauwarme Worte, nichts von Bedeutung von Ingemar de Vos, und dass die juristische Kommission der FEI im Falle der nun sofort wieder startberechtigten Schweizer Springreiterin Nadja Peter Steiner vor dem internationalen Sportgerichtshof (CAS) eine Niederlage erlitten hat und vom Vorwurf des Dopings und zweijähriger Sperre freigesprochen wurde, feiert die FEI geradezu grotesk und unverstämndlich als eigenen Erfolg. Aber einem ondit-zufolge strebt Ingmar de Vos längst naxh noch Höherem, nämlich auf den Thron als Präsident des Internationalen Olympischen Komitees (IOC) - als Nachfolger des Deutschen Dr. Thomas Bach.

Doch zunächst hat sich Ingmar de Vos mit seiner willigen Entourage dem Vorwurf von Stephan Conter zu stellen. Conter ist ein finanzstarker Unternehmer, Reitstallbesitzer, seine Pferde startet unter anderem auch der deutsche Ausnahmespringreiter Daniel Deußer, und er veranstaltet große hoch dotierte Turniere in Knokke. In einem Offenen Brief nennt er die FEI einen diktatorische und antidemokratische Vereinigung, die keine Freiheiten zulasse. Er fordert gleichzeitig zum Protest gegen die FEI auf. Er hält die in seinen Augen selbstherrlich eingeführten neuen Regeln für Turniere für sinnlos und schädlich für den Sport allgemein.

Was frühere schon kritisiert wurde, hebt Stephan Contger nochmals hervor, dass nämlich Verbände wie Botswana, Simbawne, Honolulu oder die Firschi-Inseln mit ihren Stimmen gleiches Gewicht hätten wie die großen Reiternationen Deutschland, Großbritannien, Belgien, Frankreich, die USA oder die Niederlande. Conter erregt sich auch daran, dass die FEI immer mehr Macht an sicht reißt, dank der Zustimmung kleiner Verbände, um in die Turniere hineinregieren zu können. Das Ausüben von Macht auf Veranstalter, Turniere und Sponsoren führe auf längere Sicht zu einem Desinteresse an Reitsport und Turnieren, sagt er. Dass Reiter nicht mehr Turniere frei auswählen dürften, sondern möglicherweise durch den Weltverband gar zu einer nicht gewollten Veranstaltung abkommandiert würden gegen den eigenen Willen, wäre mehr als verwerflich und ein Eingriff in die vom Gesetzgeber verbriefte freie Ausübung des Berufs.

**Der Offene Brief im Wortlaut:**

**In my opinion, the FEI is a dictatorial, anti-democratic and freedom-depriving federation that is detrimental to the equestrian community and the development of our sport. To my dismay, this organization is characterized by a total lack of understanding. The current state of affairs demands a response. We need to mobilize and stand together. Join me in this protest.**

**Dear friends, riders, trainers, organizers, and sponsors,**

This is not the first time that I speak my mind about the FEI. Earlier I did this in one-on-one conversations or shared my opinion through formal or more informal means of communication. With this letter I want to express my dismay and complete lack of understanding. Moreover, I emphasize the need to stand up to the decisions and rules that have been forced upon us by the Fédération

Equestre Internationale. Or rather the decisions and rules of its chairman who imposed these restrictions, namely new ‘entry rules’ applicable to 2-star and 3-star shows. I strongly oppose these new entry rules and want to make everyone aware of the consequences. I consider these rules to be absolutely baffling,

pointless, undemocratic and, even worse, very harmful to our sport and its prosperity. These

rules undermine the ability for our sport to grow, but also the ability of all parties involved, riders, organizers, trainers and sponsors to operate freely.

We all remember clearly how, in 2017 the FEI managed to impose regulations on us through a socalled democratic ‘voting system’. Regulations that were achieved by giving countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Honolulu and the Fiji Islands the same voting power as far more developed and more strongly represented ‘equestrian countries’, such as Germany, Belgium, France and the

Netherlands. With this voting system the president of the FEI was able to ascertain a majority of the votes to push through his personal decisions at this general meeting in Lausanne.

This was the beginning of a two-track policy that places restrictions on show organizations, prevents healthy competition and favours certain organizations at the expense of others. I have spoken at great length about this issue and the disgraceful approach, as well as its implications. In my opinion this is a meaningless issue that is fuelled by an incomprehensible and disturbing urge to control everything. At the same time, it feeds a system that allows exceptions for some organizers, while others do not have the same privilege.

I am not going to reminisce about this episode that is etched in everyone's memory. The decisions made in this meeting (new organisational policies for the 5-star shows and a parallel system for the Global Champions Tour) have already been widely discussed. It should be noted that on the subject of 5-star shows, after numerous discussions and opposition, an agreement was reached on a ‘60/20/20’ arrangement.

Having said that, The FEI, who is once again hiding behind the sacred General Meeting in 2017, has launched new entry rules for the 2-star and 3-star show at the beginning of this year. Without consulting more experienced, major players or their members. New entry rules based on the votes of countries with very small federations that together represent no more than a hundred athletes. These

votes weigh equal to the votes of federations that represent hundreds of thousands of athletes. The presidency of the Council of the FEI probably thought that everyone dozed off and would give him free reign (I must admit, a great political strategy to wait it out and then slip it through).

These new entry rules for 2-star and 3-star competitions form a new system which is simply not acceptable. I absolutely do not understand what it is based on, nor the logic and motivation behind it. The only thing I do understand is that this new system is disadvantageous for all parties in our sport, and that means you, dear friends, riders, trainers, sponsors, and organizers. The only motivation behind all this seems to be a toxic desire to exercise control. These new rules will have a huge impact on our flexibility, our entrepreneurial freedom, our prosperity, and the development of show jumping. And will result in a progressive disinterest in our sport.

To the organizers and sponsors, Shows and competitions can be organized thanks to sponsors and their financial support. These sponsors naturally want to see something in return. They want to receive benefits, especially by

starting places that the organizer can grant them. Organizers also use shows and competitions in a business context, enabling sponsors to invite their clients. This is also very important, in addition to the promotional aspects and support for our sport. This new system sabotages the possibilities for organizers and sponsors completely. In what way is it still interesting for organizers and sponsors to organize or sponsor a show/competition?

Riders can no longer choose which shows to compete at. Semi-professional riders can no longer ‘treat’ themselves by buying into a big, more special show or a more luxurious event like a Tour in Spain, a multi-week competition in Dinard or even the CSI-series in Knokke. Due to the FEI's 'decision matrix', the choices are limited to a degree that there is little left to choose.

Everyone must be able to determine the budget that they wish to spend. As a comparison for example, you also have a budget when you plan a vacation or when choosing a restaurant or hotel. Some will opt for a more affordable holiday for respectable reasons and others for more luxurious trips with 5-star hotels and restaurants. This is part of individual freedom and the choice to spend money the way one wants to.

It is hard to believe that this individual freedom in the private sphere (such as going on vacation) does not apply in our sport. Especially considering that the range of shows to choose from is large and varied. There are between five and ten 2-star and 3-star competitions per week, intended for a large

audience (amateurs, semi-professionals, and professionals). So there is no reason to impose restrictions based on dictatorial rules, which go against individual freedom of choice.

In addition, there are the riders who are selected to compete at a 5-star event, where a 2-star and 3-star competition takes place simultaneously. This rider can no longer invite his/her clients to the same event that same weekend to grow his/her business with them, or to train them at the same location, or even bring their partner who might want to participate in the 2-star or 3-star show.

If a trainer does not have the choice to enter his/her clients at the same event, and they are forced to compete in the same weekend at shows in Budapest, Prague, Bourg en Bresse and Liège due to the new 'entry rules', how can a trainer continue to provide service? No freedom of choice means that the FEI makes it impossible for trainers to function and conduct business.

In short, the above letter provides just a few examples of the disastrous consequences that the new rules of the FEI entail. I hope I have been able to make you aware that it is our duty to stand up for ourselves. And for our sport and its prosperity. We must unite and oppose the new rules!

II therefore ask you to join me and let the FEI know that we disapprove of this new system. You can join in by signing the attached petition. We will present this petition to the FEI with the intent of changing this incomprehensible, absurd, and detrimental system.

Stephan Conter

CEO Stephex Group

Link zur Petition