

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The period from March 2008 to August 2009

The board has during the passed financial year consisted of president Claës-L. Ljung (Sweden), vice president Berit Tveter Alm (Norway), our new vice president Dieter Kerbaum (Germany) together with vice president and secretary-general Fredy Moder (Switzerland). Mrs Sabine Klettenhofer, Austria has been a most reliable and charming treasurer for our organization.

The labour in our committee has been productive and friendly. For me myself it has been a source of inspiration and an opportunity to meet with a lot of interesting people sharing my passion for horse racing. During the past fiscal year I have experienced good help from the whole committee and I also know that my colleagues in the board has been in contact with some of our members! This, I can assure you, is also the case for our secretary general and myself.

The 55th general assembly of the FEGAT was held in Kortrijk, Belgium on Friday the 21st of March in connection with the European Championship for Gentlemen drivers.

Dieter Kerbaum from Germany was elected as vice president for the coming 3 years. Fredy Moder from Switzerland was re-elected secretary general for 1 year. Sabine Klettenhofer was re-elected treasurer outside the board for 1 year.

Board meetings have been held on the following occasions during the past fiscal year:

in Kalmar, Sweden in connection with the European Championship for Lady Drivers 2008

in Mönchengladbach, Germany February 2009. The main issue on this meeting was the proposal for new parts of our statutes presented by a committee existing of Fredy Moder and myself.

Between the secretary general and myself there has been contacts several times every week. I have also been in contact with the other two board members. The SKYPE program on Internet has been most helpful to give economic communication between us.

There has been technical contacts between non-FEGAT countries concerning the development of the amateur sport and legal advice for forming national organizations in Australia and New Zealand. There has also been questions about an even closer connection between the non-European countries and FEGAT. Three out of four non-European countries have accepted to pay an amount of EURO 500 a year for the work performed by the FEGAT in connection with the world championships.

The championships

The EC for men was held in Belgium 21st until 25th of March. We had races in Ghlin on March 22nd, Kuurne on March 23rd and Tongeren on March 24th. Champion

became Carlos Cruellas Munar from Spain (40 points) followed by Thomas Mjöen from Norway (37 points) and Andre Pögel from Germany (35 points). From the curious events during the racing we had a strange experience – heavy snowfall in Belgium!!!

The ladies version of the EC was held in Sweden, unfortunately with too few possibilities for each driver to compete. European Champion was Gundula Bauer, Austria, followed by Hajdu Biborka, Czech Republic and Maria Carmona, Spain – all well driving ladies. The championship took place in Kalmar 12th of September and Tingsryd 14th of September.

FEGAT EUROPE CUP was not held this year due to a decision taken on a general assembly that the year a world championship is organized there will be no FEGAT EUROPE CUP.

In May the World Championships were held in the US. FEGAT was represented by Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic and Spain. Gavin Cook from New Zealand is now ruling World Champion followed by Teddy Wang, Denmark and Fred Handelaar The Netherlands. We were racing on two racetracks in the Chicago area, Maywood Park and Balmoral and four tracks in the New York area, Monticello, Yonkers, Freehold and The Meadowlands. A fantastic arrangement – thank you NADA and thank you Joe Faraldo!

Friendly meetings between member countries are numerous. Many of these matches are brought up as ideas on FEGAT meetings when members have been talking off record – so is the birth of THE NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIPS as well as a yearly meeting between Russia and Sweden.

Now 16 members but maybe 15 after this general assembly! We were happy to say welcome back to Italy and Spain who are members again from our general assembly two years ago in Denmark. While Spain have been fulfilling their duties, Italy have not. They have not paid their member fee for the years 2008 and 2009 and are due to our statutes to be expelled. This has to be discussed and a decision to be taken on our general assembly 2009. A reason for Italy's missing member fee is probably that they were quite astonished that they had to use the FEGAT rules when it came to who would represent Europe in the world championships 2008. They thought they had a given place in the event while the truth is that FEGAT rules only gives possibilities for participation to the first 8 (or whatever digit that will be actual) in the European championships the year before. Italy was last in this championship.

As always in an organization like the FEGAT we have different engagement from different members. Some seems to sleep between our annual meetings and some have a very good contact with the board throughout the entire year. I think you can feel a little yourselves on which side you belong and remember that we in the FEGAT board like to have a close contact with every single member country!

Work in the board. Berit Tveter Alm and Dieter Kerbaum will present the reviewed five-year plan for the work inside the FEGAT in writing on our general assembly 2009. Some of the items the board has have been successfully performed and some are still to deal with. On the board meeting in April 2006 Berit Tveter Alm and Dieter

Beck were given the mission to freshen up our old 11-point strategy, which in the old ruling version looks as follows with my own commentaries in italics:

1. The board feel that the number of members in the FEGAT will remain unaltered during the coming 5-years period and it is no reason for changes in the system around championships and likewise. *This § is now irrelevant.*
2. The new rules for world championships worked out by the secretary general and the president in the FEGAT after hearing the non-FEGAT participating countries. *We used these rules in the US in 2008.*
3. The entire FEGAT shall try to find an international sponsor who will follow our championships and use the good will of them for their business promotion. *This is a responsibility for all members!*
4. In general we shall try to reach a higher standard for our championships. *We are of course grateful for all help from our members!*
5. In every member country shall be a race named the FEGAT Race every year. An honorary price shall be provided named "FEGAT - HONORARY PRICE". *I know that this has been done in Russia and Sweden – but any place else?*
6. The amount of races driven under FEGAT flag shall be expanded. Press releases, starting lists and results must be forwarded to our secretariat. The FEGAT name must be given more importance. Our secretariat stands willing to provide all addresses and contacts necessary to make this possible. *However, this does not mean that FEGAT shall have any more championships/friendly meetings organized by the FEGAT. It would be too hard to find all organizers!*
7. Within the frames of our economy and with possibilities we know of we will make promotion over the Internet and over our homepage. Every country is responsible for finding sponsors who will have advantage of our homepage and who are willing to pay a sum for this. *Some of our members have done this, some not...*
8. Economy: we must be able to keep the standards of today and hopefully raise them. One way to do this is by higher member fees. *If all members sell some advertisement place on our website the problem will be solved! This would be a better way than having a higher member fee.*
9. We will help to act as intermediary in finding practice jobs for interested persons with the aim to give tuition to young, horse-interested people. *This has been done and we must evaluate if we shall continue or not!*
10. In our homepage we will give the opportunity for interested sponsors to add a link to their homepage. *See other proposals concerning our website!*
11. We will present an annual book again. *Most likely not! We now have our website as a tool.*

I hope that you will read the 11 points above with a little self-criticism. Have you as a member fulfilled what you are expected to do? 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 are all works for us all – what have you done the last year???

To all of you I want to express my gratitude for the passed year. Despite big differences in the possibilities for the sport, in culture and character the FEGAT stands strong. We have been able to give and to take in a way that makes us all to feel like winners.

I feel especially happy that we now have reached a point where all members are carrying out their duties with arrangements in the scheduled way! This is now also true for the world championships – France will organize 2010 and New Zealand in 2012.

I also want to use this opportunity to say thank you to the amateurs in Belgium for the gentlemen's EC and Sweden for taking care of the ladies EC.

FEGAT of today. FEGAT is the only umbrella organization for harness amateurs throughout the world. Overseas nations search our aid and maybe we should widen the sphere and have a worldwide branch to give everyone a possibility for shelter. These are current issues for the board to work with!

As always:

FEGAT is going ahead with good speed and a wise general assembly and a productive board successfully perform our work! Thank you!

Always be proud to be a member of the FEGAT!

Fegen July 21st 2009

**Claës-L. Ljung
President**