



Thoroughbred Industries Brexit Steering Group

Industry Update and position statement for second phase of negotiations – January 2020

The British thoroughbred racing and breeding sector, represented by the Thoroughbred Industries Brexit Steering Group, has welcomed the clarity provided by the December 2019 General Election result in relation to the immediate next steps on Brexit.

Following the necessary legislation passing through Parliament and receiving Royal Assent on 23 January, the United Kingdom will be leaving the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, with a transition period – during which the status quo will operate in terms of our key requirements – running through to 31 December 2020.

During 2019, the focus of the industry's Brexit steering group, which is formed of representatives from across the sector, was on assessing the implications of a potential 'No Deal' withdrawal from the EU, and preparing the industry accordingly. Our principal efforts will now shift to the nature of the UK's future relationship with the EU, and ensuring the best possible outcome for the sector.

There is complete alignment within our sector – and in particular between the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA) and Weatherbys – in respect of our aim of maintaining and enhancing British racing and breeding's international standing and competitiveness as a result of Brexit.

We have an open and international outlook, and our key priorities with regard to Brexit centre on ensuring the health and welfare of our horses in any future trading environment, and future immigration policy allowing us to recruit skilled staff to specialist roles in line with the requirements of our industry.

The transition period

In the short term, the UK will officially leave the EU at 11pm GMT on 31 January, upon which it will enter a transition period to 31 December 2020.

In immediate practical terms for the thoroughbred sector, this means:

1. The existing arrangements for the movement of thoroughbreds between the UK, Ireland and France under the Tripartite Agreement (TPA) will remain in place for the rest of the year
 - The Steering Group welcomes this at a critical time of year ahead of the commencement of Northern Hemisphere breeding season and the major races and Festivals in the months ahead
2. Any citizens from EU or European Economic Area (EEA) countries who arrive in the UK to work in British racing or breeding during this period can apply for settled status for them and their families beyond the end of the Implementation Period, with the application process concluding in June 2021.
 - The Steering Group strongly encourages all EU and EEA staff working in British racing and breeding to apply for the [EU Settlement Scheme](#), which is free of charge. Support is available to those who have any concerns or queries regarding the process through the National Trainers Federation (NTF), TBA and National Association of Racing Staff (NARS)



Our approach to the future relationship with the EU

In the longer-term, beyond 31 December 2020, the UK Government has stated its ambition to negotiate a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, underpinned by high standards of animal welfare. The Steering Group welcomes and supports fully this approach.

Our industry has over the last three-and-a-half years devoted considerable resource – including engaging specific expertise across animal health and welfare, taxation and tariffs, and horse transportation – towards ensuring that the industry is prepared for Brexit and that our priorities are understood by Government and policymakers.

Along with colleagues in the wider UK horse sector, we are grateful for the constructive engagement we have had with Government officials, principally at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to date and look forward to continuing our close co-operation in the coming months.

We will also continue to work closely with our colleagues in the wider European thoroughbred sector, both directly with Horse Racing Ireland and France Galop, and also with the European Mediterranean Horseracing Federation (EMHF), European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders' Associations (EFTBA) and the European and African Stud Book Committee (EASBC) in co-ordinating an approach and engaging with the European Commission and relevant national Governments.

Our objectives for the future relationship

The European thoroughbred industry has a high level of integration and numerous essential interdependencies – including standardised Stud Book conditions, a common Stud Book between Ireland and Great Britain, and broadly harmonised Rules of Racing. Our industries are collectively worth some €12 billion and account for hundreds of millions of Euros of trade annually.

Throughout the Brexit process to date, our priority has been to avoid the creation of unnecessary tariff and non-tariff barriers, and ensure recognition of the significant integration across thoroughbred racing and breeding, which existed even before the formation of the EU. It is also to ensure that the highest levels of welfare for the thoroughbred are maintained and enhanced.

Our overriding objectives from the outset, and as such for the UK's future relationship with the EU are as follows:

1. Maintenance of the free movement of the Thoroughbred horse across Europe

Thoroughbred horseracing and breeding's continued growth and success is predicated on the ability to move racehorses as freely as possible for competition, breeding and sales while, crucially, maintaining the highest levels of animal health and welfare.

Central to this movement is the Tripartite Agreement (TPA), in place since the 1960s and predating the UK's entry to the EU, which facilitates the movement of horses with high health status – including "thoroughbreds used for racing, breeding, in training or moving to a sale" – between the United Kingdom, France and Ireland.

We believe that there are clear and damaging equine welfare, logistical and financial implications if the free movement of thoroughbreds, specifically between the UK and Ireland, is compromised under future arrangements, or if the standards of animal welfare and health underpinning the movement of horses is lowered.



Regardless of whether the UK was leaving the EU, in April 2021 the new EU Animal Health Law is scheduled to take effect. It will govern the rules for movement of thoroughbreds within, imports into and exports from the EU (both temporary and permanent).

The Steering Group, alongside colleagues in the wider European thoroughbred and horse sport sector, has been engaging constructively with the EU on an ambitious High Health Horse status proposal – recognising the high animal health levels, strict vaccination protocols, and strict welfare standards within the thoroughbred horse population – enabling movement of thoroughbreds between EU and non-EU countries with sufficient health standards. This proposal has the support of Defra and the UK Government.

As currently drafted, we are concerned that the Animal Health Law does not provide appropriate recognition of these standards, or reflects that the existing system has evolved over 50 years and serves us well.

We will continue to engage in a constructive spirit alongside European colleagues and Governments to impress upon the Commission the need for a sustainable and sensible solution which raises standards and does not damage the ecosystem of European thoroughbred racing and breeding.

2. Ensure there are common movement, transport, health, welfare, Zootechnical and equine ID policies across Europe to the highest standards

There are numerous regulations which will need to be replicated and/or enhanced across a range of UK legislation beyond Brexit, underpinned by the future trading relationship with the EU – including on transport and equine ID. We will continue to engage proactively with the UK Government and EU as appropriate on these matters.

3. As far as possible, ensure the free movement of people working within the Thoroughbred industry

When the transition period has concluded, there will be new arrangements in place for EU citizens living and working in the UK, which will also apply to non-EU international citizens. The Government are currently consulting on the design of the future immigration system with work being led by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC).

It is critically important for British racing and breeding to have appropriate access to the best talent from the international racing industry. Approximately 1 in 5 people that work in British racing yards are from an EEA or non-EEA background and play a vital role in our industry and caring for our horses.

It is the Steering Group's view that the future immigration system needs to recognise the skilled nature of work required to care for racehorses and breeding stock, and allow us access to the best international talent, while the industry continues to invest in recruitment and retention of staff from the UK (with separate industry-wide plans in place).

Our industry has been engaging fully in the MAC consultation processes with the support of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We are calling for recognition of the skilled nature of caring for racehorses and breeding stock, and the unique cultural and economic contribution which the industry brings to the UK, as part of the design of the future immigration system. We will continue to do so in 2020 as the new system is developed.



Further information for the industry

The Thoroughbred Industries Brexit Steering Group will communicate regularly with participants on developments throughout 2020.

In the interim, the britishhorseracing.com webpage on Brexit will be updated with the latest information as it becomes available, while industry participants with any queries are encouraged to contact brexit@weatherbys.co.uk for further information.