

GUY HEYMAN

At the recent European Trainers' Federation Annual General Meeting – held last December in Cologne – I was elected to serve as your chairman of the European Trainers' Federation, succeeding our dear friend and ambassador, Crikette Head-Maarek, who has given up so much time to the federation. I am delighted that we will be able to continue to count on her support as she will be fulfilling the role of deputy chair, along with Christian von der Recke.

Crikette Head-Maarek and Guy Heymans



FOR those of you who don't know me, I have been closely involved with the federation since it began 20 years ago. I have been training horses since 1980 and am based in Belgium, where up to last year I had a string of between 30-to-50 horses under my care.

I am also closely involved in the day-to-day management of Ostend Racecourse, where I have been working on returning the seaside venue to its former glory days. We have made much progress over the last few years and I really feel that the momentum is now with us.

Having the experience of training racehorses and dealing with owners has really allowed me to concentrate on providing good customer service and focus on what these key groups of people need from a racecourse. I also

have a business building horseboxes, which supplies trainers across Europe.

So, with my different roles, I am able to understand the racing business from different viewpoints, but my overriding desire has and always will be to help fellow trainers. I view my coming chairmanship as an opportunity to further the excellent work carried out by those who have carried the mantle before me.

Being based in Belgium does have its advantages! Over the past 18 months, I have spent much of my time in the corridors of the European Parliament, representing our interests within the European Horse Network group that we are aligned to.

Racing is always under much pressure and at times it is easy for those who don't understand the sport (especially in

legislative roles) to dismiss it. I do very much consider it my responsibility to be the voice of trainers in Brussels and to fight our corner and explain our business to those who need to understand.

Within the racing industry, we will continue to lobby for greater integration of relevant rules but sometimes I feel that the trainer is the last person to be consulted by bureaucrats. So it's my objective to make sure that the trainer's voice is heard.

I am also of the opinion that trainers should be used more to promote the sport, and it was very heartening to learn from Michael Grassick at our recent AGM about plans in Ireland for their leaders to develop a fund which will specifically aid the marketing of our profession.

Perhaps the Irish lead could be followed in other countries across Europe – I would certainly be supporting such a

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