

THE ROYAL PIGEON RACING ASSOCIATION

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Affiliated to the Federation Colombophile Internationale

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To: Craig Williams MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Pigeon Racing

As you are aware, cross channel pigeon racing has been taking place for over 120 years. In 2021, with the implementation of new EU Animal Health Regulations, this historic sport was under threat. Over the past 14 months the Royal Pigeon Racing Association, with assistance from yourself, Defra, European friends and organisations, have been lobbying the EU to achieve amendments to the regulations that made it impossible to move racing pigeons from Third Countries into the EU. Following the latest amendments to EU Regulations, I believe we are now in a position to be able to achieve cross channel racing in 2022, albeit while adhering to many requirements that pre-Brexit were not required.

These requirements include that each pigeon loft (premises) has to be registered with the competent authority of the country of origin. As you are aware, the competent authority in the UK is Defra. In recent weeks I have attended a number of meetings with Defra officials in order to establish a process of registration. The latest meeting was on 7th April when we were told that the registration process would be published within the next two weeks. This period has passed and we still have no definitive date as to when this process will be published. This and any further delay will have a detrimental impact on the possibility of achieving channel racing this year.

Considering the fact that no cross channel racing took place in 2021, I am sure you can appreciate that our members are getting more and more frustrated with this position and there is a real threat to the future of this historic sport. Therefore, in your capacity as Chair of the APPG for Pigeon Racing, could you support a request to Defra or the appropriate minister for the registration process to be published as soon as possible, and for suitable resources to be allocated to the registration process to ensure lofts are registered as quickly as possible.

Whatever peoples' political position on Brexit, it would be a shame if Brexit did mean we lose two racing seasons and therefore jeopardise the future of this historic sport that enriches many lives by providing opportunities of recreation, competition and social inclusion, that in turn has a positive impact on their mental health and well-being.

Thanks.

Ian Evans
CEO