

CRYSTAL CUP MEDIA RELEASE

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**FRANCE ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF
EUROPEAN CHALLENGE
'THE CRYSTAL CUP 2010'**

Six European nations have teamed up to host a new Cross Country Steeplechase Challenge in 2010, identifying the most successful stable to run horses over Europe's unique cross country courses of hedges, walls, ditches, banks and rails. The Crystal Cup brings together a total of 10 races in France, Belgium, Italy, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Great Britain, with combined prize money of over 700,000 Euros. The most successful stable, accumulating the highest number of points throughout the series, will receive the Crystal Cup and 10,000 Euros, to be shared between the trainer and stable staff.

The schedule for the 10 participating races starts in Pau (Western France) in February, with the Grande Cross worth 75,000 Euros. The series features four further races in France at Fontainebleau, Compiègne, Lion D'Angers and Craon and travels to Punchestown in Ireland for the La Touche Cup in April, Waregem in Belgium for the 100,000 Euro ING grote Steeple Chase van Vlaanderen in August, to Merano in Italy for the Grand Cross in September and to the Czech Republic for the world famous Velka Pardubicka in October. The final race of the series is at Cheltenham's International Meeting in December.

This multi-national challenge will see Cross Country Steeplechase champion trainers Josef Vana from the Czech Republic, Enda Bolger from Ireland and France's Guillaume Macaire compete head-to-head with their strong teams of horses to produce the first European Crystal Cup Champion.

Points will be awarded to the first six horses to finish in each race, with extra bonus points awarded to horses that have travelled from abroad to take part. All runners taking part in the final race at Cheltenham in December will receive an additional bonus point. As well as the 10,000 Euro award to the winning stable, there will be individual trophies celebrating both the horse and rider who accumulate the most points over the 10 race series.

Announcing the Crystal Cup at Auteuil's International Meeting on Sunday, Jean D'Indy, Vice Chairman of France Galop said, "France is proud to be announcing this exciting, six-nation initiative, that brings together Europe's leading Cross Country racecourses to celebrate the most successful stable in the 10 chosen races in 2010".

Representatives from the six nations of France, Belgium, Italy, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Great Britain attended Auteuil's International Jumps weekend to announce the launch of this exciting new European race series.

Cheltenham Racecourse's Managing Director Edward Gillespie, who has been appointed President of the Crystal Cup, said: "We have been working on this project for many years and to have brought a challenge together that involves six European nations is an enormous achievement for all concerned. Cross Country Steeplechasing is the form of Jump racing that promotes the best opportunities for international competition. We look forward to these 10 races through 2010 and to crowning a worthy winner next December."

For more information about the Crystal Cup please visit www.crystalcup.org

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Notes to the editors:

SCHEDULE FOR THE CRYSTAL CUP 2010

Month	Location	Country	Prize Money in Euros
Feb	Pau	France	75,000
April	Fontainebleau	France	50,000
April	Punchestown	Ireland	30,000
April	Compiègne	France	50,000
May	Lion D'Angers	France	112,000
Aug	Waregem	Belgium	100,000
Sept	Craon	France	75,000
Sept	Merano	Italy	40,000
Oct	Pardubice	Czech Republic	178,000
Dec	Cheltenham	England	25,000

Total 735,000 Euros