

Press Release

Sunday, July 12, 2026

France Galop Pays Tribute to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

France Galop has learned with profound sadness of the passing of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who died on Sunday, July 12, 2026, at the age of 74.

Emir of Qatar from 1995 to 2013, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani left a lasting mark on the international racing industry, notably through the development of economic, cultural and sporting partnerships.

Guillaume de Saint-Seine, President of France Galop, said:

"At this sad time, France Galop pays tribute to the memory of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. It was under his reign that the ties were forged which today continue to unite Qatar and French racing. Since 2007, the partnership between the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club and France Galop has made a major contribution to the international prestige of our flagship races and has become a cornerstone in the development of our Institution. On behalf of France Galop, its Board of Directors and its Committee, I extend our deepest condolences to his son, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, and to the Al Thani family."

In France, this cooperation, driven by a shared passion for the horse, has taken shape since 2007 through the partnership between the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) and France Galop centred on the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (Grade 1), which became the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. This partnership, which continues to this day, has strengthened the international profile of France's premier Flat race and helped cement its status as one of the highlights of the global racing calendar.

Over the years, this cooperation has gradually expanded to encompass several other major French races. Since 2021, the QREC has also been the title partner of the Qatar Prix du Jockey Club (Grade 1), while the partnership between the two institutions now extends to numerous races within the French racing programme.

The partnership between France Galop and the QREC has also supported the development of Purebred Arabian racing in France, notably through the creation in 2008 of the Qatar Arabian World Cup (Grade 1 PA), run at ParisLongchamp during the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe weekend. Today, this race is widely regarded as the world's leading championship event for Purebred Arabians.

Through his unwavering commitment to French racing over the past twenty years and his forward-looking vision, His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani has left an enduring mark on the history of racing. France Galop pays tribute to an exceptional partner, a passionate supporter of horse racing and a statesman whose legacy will continue to inspire future generations.