

Equestrian Tourism

A briefing by the European Horse Network

July 2017



An economic and cultural reality

Its values, focused on nature, human relationships, and a different way of using horses, appeal to many. It offers rural areas a way to regenerate, diversify their activities, and open up to new perspectives.

Requiring appropriate infrastructures for travelling, it contributes to protect the environment and to preserve and maintain natural leisure areas.

Equestrian Tourism encourages relationships, exchanges between riders and the populations that they meet along the way as well as the discovery of local cultural heritage.

Equestrian tourism is one of the best ways to develop horse-riding by making it more accessible to a wider range of people.



Multidimensional activity: sport, tourism, culture, nature, environment

Horse-riding holidays covers many different aspects:

- Based rides - Rides where you return to a central base each day.
- Trail rides - Camp or stay at different locations each night.
- Riding Holiday Weekends - Short stay holiday destinations.
- Dressage - Practice your dressage whilst away.
- Family friendly holidays - Holidays for the entire family.
- Western - Practice being a cowboy or cowgirl.
- Safari - See the big game on horseback.
- Disabled Riders - Riding holidays for disabled riders.



Photo by Rolland MANAUD

An International structure to promote Equestrian Tourism



The Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre (FITE) was created in 1975 on the initiative of France, supported by Belgium and Italy. Its objectives are to unite National Equestrian Tourism Organisations (NETOs) from all over the world, coordinate their action and foster the development of all tourism activities involving the use of

horses.

The FITE supports and helps to develop transnational equestrian routes in order to improve prestige and access to equestrian tourism. The FITE has conducted a study on cross-border routes which has revealed the many disparities among the countries.

The harmonisation of rules and diplomas within the FITE

The FITE works for the harmonisation of secure and internationally recognised equestrian paths, along which places providing the necessary services for riders and horses during stops can be found.

For more than 15 years, with the help of the FITE, many NETOs have compared their teaching methods in order to harmonise their diplomas. By bringing professionalism and quality, this cooperation answers the growing concerns about security, seriousness and comfort. Equestrian Tourism diplomas have also been added in the equivalence grid of IGEQ (International Group for Equestrian Qualifications).

Specific equestrian competitions organised by the FITE

Together with the International Equestrian Federation, FEI, the FITE organises, regulates and promotes sports competitions around Working Equitation: the Techniques de Randonnée Equestre de Compétition, the driving TREC, as well as Traditional Working and Pastoral Riding events. The TREC is for the outdoor riders to compete through 3 different competitions: Orientation and Regularity Race (Parcours d'Orientation et de Régularité (POR), Varied Ground Race (Parcours en Terrain Varié (PTV) and Control of path (Maîtrise des Allures (MA). In less than 20 years, the TREC has become a top-tier competition.

As a sport aiming to preserve and to develop equestrian capacities regarding cattle leading and cattle sorting, the working equitation is also one of the main goals of the FITE.

<https://en.fite-net.org/>

Equestrian Tourism Projects



Some equestrian tourism projects received the support of the European Union as part of its policies, including INTERREG (2014-2020)¹ and COSME (2014-2020)².

EUquus - Equestrian tourism routes in Europe (2013 – 2014)

EUquus is a programme of the European Equestrian Network created in the frame of Equustur (see below).

It involves small and medium enterprises and local and regional authorities in the development and promotion of the equestrian tourism routes, in order to increase high quality tourism in Europe. Five public actors and three private enterprises acting on six different territories across Europe have been contributing to it.

As a result, a *Decalogue of best practices in equestrian tourism was drafted, an EUquus Label was created as well as a platform to commercialise equestrian tourism products around Europe and to enhance its attractiveness for tourists.*

¹ Financial programme aiming to support regional and local initiatives to share solutions about investment, innovation and implementation of projects with sustainable impact for people and places

² The programme aims to promote entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to allow them to realise their full potential in today's global economy.

For example, the French 'Route of the castles' and Spanish 'Royal path route' have been labelled.

EDEN – European Destinations of Excellence

This price is attributed to sustainable tourism projects. The key feature of the selected destinations is their commitment to social, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism. For two French projects (Northern Vosges Regional Natural Park - Winner 2009; Morvan Region Nature Park - Winner 2013), the offering of horse riding was valued.



Photo by Rolland MANAUD

Setting up of tourism itineraries in Europe

● "A cheval sur 2 îles" (2000)

It is an interregional project between Corsica and Sardinia which enabled an exchange of good practices, especially for pony-games, and a possibility for Corsicans to farm Sardinian horses.

● Ippovia (2000 – 2006)

The project, jointly led by Corsica, Sardinia and Tuscany, allowed to compile, to identify and to promote their equestrian routes. A common website has been created to market holidays.

● Ippotyrr (2007 – 2013)

"Italy/France Maritime programme" is gathering Corsica, Sardinia, Tuscany and Liguria. It helps the institutional cohesion and the exchange of good practices, including through the creation of networks and shared methods to value equestrian activities in their territories.

● Equustur (2009 – 2011)

The project has been developed in the frame of the INTERREG programme which is financing cross-border initiatives thanks to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Equustur aims to enhance the rural, economic and social development by creating a European Equestrian Network between France, Spain and Portugal. 10 public partners from these countries have been involved. 10 routes has been designed, creating equestrian tourism products of quality. It has enabled to link equestrian tourism to culture and history by creating jobs in rural areas.



Photo by Amélia CHAPIGNAC

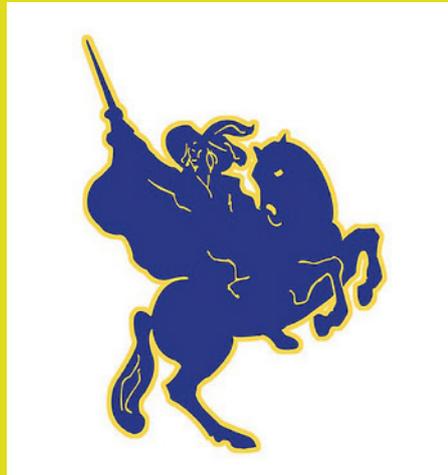


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The European Route d'Artagnan is the first European transnational riding trail (FR/BE/NL/IT/DE/ES)



The vocation of this route is to offer an equestrian and cultural quality experience, enabling the discovery of the European cultural heritage, on the tracks of the famous Musketeer and at the horses' pace.

It is more than 4 000 km of equestrian routes that are proposed



in France, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Germany.

The Route is officially launched on 10 July 2017 and will apply to obtain the label 'European Cultural Route' of the Council of Europe in 2018.

<http://www.route-dartagnan.eu/>



"Which legislations for Equidae in Europe?"

A current situation on the equine sector in different countries of the European Union. Publication created in partnership between the French Equine Institute and the European Horse Network

English version available:
<http://www.ifce.fr/produit/lawsforequineineurope/>

EHN and its Members

The EHN is a non-profit network composed of many equine organisations operating in Europe.

EFTBA - European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Associations,

FEI - International Equestrian Federation,

EEF - European Equestrian Federation,

EPMA - European Pari Mutuel Association,

Hippolia - Cluster and research Foundation

WBFSSH - World federation of Sport Horses Breeders,

HNS - Swedish Horse Council Foundation,

EMHF - European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation,

UET - European Trotting Union,

WHW - World Horse Welfare,

FECTU - European Draught Horse Federation,

ESSA - European State Studs Association,

CBC-BCP - Belgian Horse Confederation,

Hippolis - National Equine Competence Association of Finland,

FEIF - Icelandic Horses,

FEEVA - Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations,

EEN - European Educational Network,

ETF - European Trainers Federation,

BETA - Equestrian Trade Association,

IFCE - French Equine Institute,

FITE - International Equestrian Tourism Federation

GESCA - French Equine Professionals

FNRS - Professional Dutch Equestrian Centres