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EHN Board Member
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World Horse Welfare

“Every horse should be treated with respect, compassion and understanding.”

- President – HRH The Princess Royal
- Pre-eminent international horse charity
- Horse-human partnership
- Shaping legislation to improve welfare
- Respected by the public, governments and regulators
- Practical approach





Overview

1. European Horse Network (EHN)
 - a. Background
 - b. Governance
 - c. Members
2. Performance to date
 - a. Visible achievements
 - b. Long-term successes
3. Next steps



Origin of the EHN



The European Horse Network (EHN) formed in 2009

Product of a Swedish initiative at the European conference:
EU Equus 2009

Political will matters:

Sweden – first EU Presidency to support a conference on horses – inviting EU sport ministers to racecourse helped!





About the EHN

Mission Statement

EHN is a non-profit network of stakeholders acting at a World, European, National or Regional level within the European horse sector.

Objectives of the European Horse Network

To share knowledge and work on issues of common interest and concern such as:

- Animal health and welfare
- Exotic and endemic diseases
- Breeding and husbandry
- Transport and identification
- Rural development and environmental impact
- Working equids
- Education, research and development
- Funding of the equine industry
- VAT and taxes
- Tourism





Why, how and what of the EHN

Why? To put the horse (equine) on the EU agenda

How? To attract all parts of the horse sector: breeding, sport, racing, science, education, transport, health, welfare and tourism *and* to use this internal expertise to develop and promote a coherent message to decision makers

What?

- a **platform** of the horse industry
- a **tool** that anybody can use to lobby institutions
- a **competence centre** producing documents and position papers, as well as organising events
- a **dynamic structure with little money** but important achievements and huge ambitions!

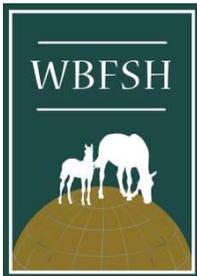


Members

The EHN currently consists of twenty-three active member organizations



Members





Visible Achievements – 1

EU Parliamentary Horse Group

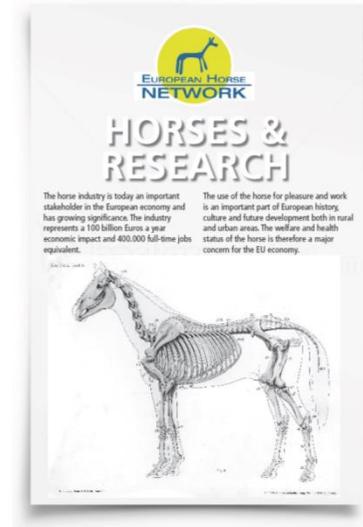
- 3 meetings per year – ‘MEP lunches’
- 6 MEPs (or so) attend each event
- 7 issues presented and discussed
- Result: engagement and more informed debate and decision-making



Visible Achievements – 2

Publication of Information Leaflets

- Common Agricultural Policy
- Responsible ownership
- Sport
- Health
- Medicine
- Welfare
- Education
- Research
- Jobs



Horses & Education



Key figures

- 76% of the riders say that they have a strong leadership (compared to 46% of non riders)
- 83% of the riders say that they have a strong capacity to deliver (compared to 59% of non riders)
- 98% of the riders say that they are more connected (compared to 74% of non riders) ref. SCHNEIDER, 2012
- More than 80 % of questionnaire respondents reported that horse riding made them feel "lighter, a lot" or "extremely cheerful, relaxed, happy or active". Qualitative data suggests that horse riding can play a role in managing negative feelings relating to anxiety and depression.
- Asked to rate different motivations for going horse riding 82 % of questionnaire respondents rated the motivation of "interaction with horses" as either "very important" or "extremely important" ref. BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY 2011

Sport and education with horse

- Helping people
- A family sport
- Women and men compete together
- Has an influence on the personal development
- Improves the physical fitness during the whole life
- Gives the possibility to include people with handicap into the regular competition and education systems
- Is an important part of our European traditional heritage
- Promoting values of integration, volunteering, mentoring





EAAP: Horse Commission Session, Warsaw

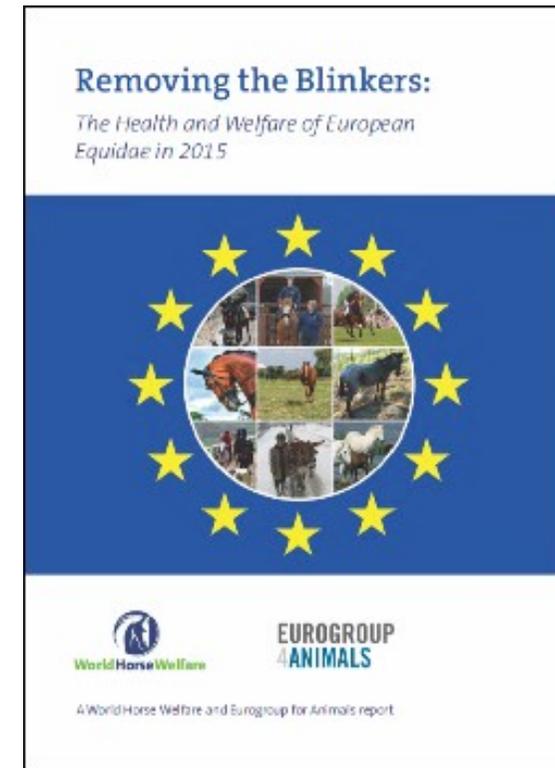
- The EAAP (European Federation of Animal Science) Horse Commission Session: Warsaw, September 2015
- “Innovation and research for developing the horse sector – Equine practice in Science”
- Joint session with the EAAP and EHN to fill gaps between science and practice – and find common ground for obtaining funds for research





'Removing the Blinkers'

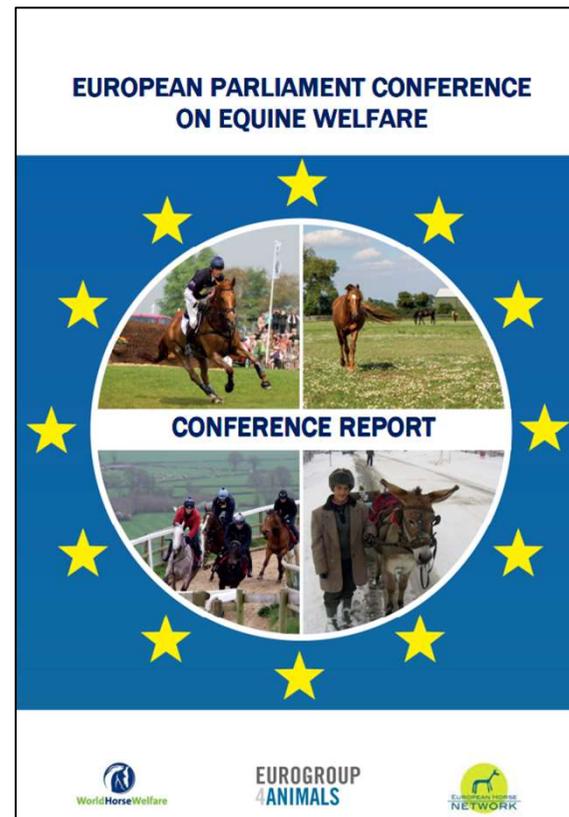
- Requested by European Commission
- Initiated by EU funded meeting of experts in May 2014
- 120 stakeholders' input across all sectors
- First report on scale and scope of the EU equine sector, legislative landscape and welfare priorities
- Key welfare challenges identified:
 - Lack of horse care knowledge
 - Unsuitable environments
 - Neglect
 - Patchy access to euthanasia
 - Overbreeding





European Parliament Conference on Equine Welfare

- Held in October 2015 – first EU level conference on the welfare of horses, donkeys and mules
- Hosted by Julie Girling MEP, Eurogroup for Animals and the EHN
- Covered findings of *'Removing the Blinkers: The Health and Welfare of European Equidae in 2015'*





Responsible Ownership

- EHN supported EU proposals for improved support for responsible equine ownership inspired by '*Removing the Blinkers*'
- Proposals, adopted January 2017, highlighted the key welfare issues in Europe
- Recommendation for:
 - Development and dissemination of **basic guidance** on horse care across EU
 - **Funding mechanisms to reward** semi-subsistence farms for good equine welfare
 - **Measures to help consumers and tourists choose** welfare-friendly equine services (e.g. carriage rides)



Equine Conference in the European Parliament

- October 2016
- Hosted by Jean Arthuis MEP (former French Economy Minister, set up Friends Group in the EP on sports integrity, ethics and sustainable financing of sports through betting)
- Wide-ranging focus
- Economic importance of horse industry
- Taxation and regulation
- Lifetime exclusion from food chain





The challenges of transport

- Shared health and welfare concerns about long-distance transport of horses across Europe for slaughter
- World Horse Welfare evidence of stress, dehydration, exhaustion, injury, disease, lack of fitness for transport
- EU Transport Regulation inadequate – not based on scientific evidence/largely unenforced
- Change needed – in meantime produced practical guidance for transporters to comply with Transport Regulation

Watering Guidelines

- Sets out watering do's and don'ts
- Dispels myths ('water doesn't cause colic')
- Advises on quantities, dispensing, frequency
- Should help prevent dehydration and ill-health



Fitness for Transport Guidelines

- Sets out how to assess fitness for transport
- Easy system signals whether to load, not load or seek veterinary advice
- Should reduce number of horses transported in unfit state, so reduce suffering
- EC helping to translate/proofread different language versions





Communication

- All minutes, leaflets, press releases and Newsletters are posted on the EHN website
- EHN twitter account

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EHN Minutes
European Parliament Meetings
Newsletters
Archive News

News - Press Releases

EHN posts the following information on this page:

- Minutes of Board and General Assembly meetings
- Newsletters (every 2/3 months)
- Reports from its thematic meetings with Members of the European Parliament and representatives of the European Commission

PDF EHN Seminar Report 9 Oct 14
[EHN Seminar Report Oct 14.pdf](#)
Adobe Acrobat document [63.8 KB]

PDF EHN Caen Press Release
[EHN Caen Press Release.pdf](#)
Adobe Acrobat document [205.8 KB]

PDF MEPs focus on the unique opportunities within equestrian sport
July 2012
[EHN Sport PR.pdf](#)
Adobe Acrobat document [35.8 KB]

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9 Oct
EuropeanHorseNetwork
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Long-term achievements

- **Close and regular discussions** with EU Commission representatives through EHN Board and annual meetings
- **Greater coherence** on racing industry positions (breeding, TB racing, trotting, betting)
- **Constructive engagement on equine welfare**
- **Cooperation with other EU stakeholders** – COPA (EU farmers' union), EAAP (European Federation of Animal Science), FEEVA (European equine vets)
- **Initiating dialogue with Eurogroup Brexit taskforce**



Next steps

- Update **economic/impact** figures for equine sector
- Solve the complex situation around **equine sales** (animals considered goods inside EU Consumer Sales Regulation)
- Find solutions on **veterinary products** and animal health to reintroduce equines in the food chain in a manner that protects equine welfare and ensures food safety
- Raise the profile of the **responsible use of working equids** and their impact on human livelihoods
- **MEP Horse Group 2017** meetings (May/July) to discuss taxation/sustainable financing and equestrian tourism
- **Brexit**.....



Thank you for listening – questions?

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