



# Horses and Sport

## Update October 2017

- 7 million horses in Europe and more than half involved in some kind of sport.
- Europe counts millions of leisure riders and the sport is growing for all ages and genders.
- More than 20 000 sporting events are organised every year in Europe
- Equestrian Sport is promoting values of integration, volunteering, mentoring.
- The Sport innovates to carry further sustainable value to increase European mobility, promote green events, improve animal welfare and new educative programmes,
- An essential source of revenue for many European rural areas
- An important part of our European traditional heritage

## Horse Sport and European Policy

The EU is now starting to implement its 3<sup>rd</sup> Work Plan on Sport (2017-2020). It sets out the key topics which Member States and the Commission should prioritise until 2020: integrity of sport, the economic dimension of sport and sport and society. Equestrian Sport will highlight its many advantages inside expert groups and conferences.

The French Equestrian Federation (FFE) was one of the major organisations participating to the first European Week of Sport, a perfect occasion to promote equestrianism. The European Equestrian Federation is working on projects to apply in Erasmus +. The programme promotes a range of sports events and collaborative partnerships, with funding for up to 1 200 projects.



## Equestrian and racing sport – A dynamic European economic sector

Equestrian sport is a unique case of a sport that involves animal and human athletes working together as a team. Equestrian Sport has 2 main sectors, racing and equestrian. In each, various disciplines (show jumping, dressage, flat and trotting racing...) organise a considerable number of competitions.

Europe is the location of more than 70% of the world equestrian events (more than 20 000) each year. The sector is a global creator of jobs, especially in rural areas. In comparison to other sports, the equestrian sector is the 1st sport employer in France with more than 13 % of the direct sport employment (rapport RUNOPES).

The equine industry and associated activities is part of our cultural heritage. The inscription of Equestrian sport in the French tradition on the UNESCO list of Intangible Heritage at the end of November 2011 is a sign for the growing awareness of equestrian heritage as an important part of our culture.

The equestrian organisations, FEI, the EEF and NFs are part of the Olympic movement, and hence are not there to serve the interests only of the professionals and the insiders but of everyone. They create an environment to help the sport grow. It is interesting to note that tickets sales for Paralympic Games is at record levels; and equestrianism is one of the few sports which shows such integration of teams and athletes from both Olympic and Para-equestrian.

The FEI World Equestrian Games 2014 in Normandy gathered more than 300,000 spectators and 1,060 participants. It represents a source of economic, touristic and media benefits for the territory. The total economic impact of the WEG amount to 102 million euros for Normandy and their social utility is evaluated at more than 36 million euros.

Horse Racing footprint on the European economy is 6 billion euros with 80 000 horse races per year in 3 disciplines, flat, jump and trot in 500 racecourses. It represents 300 000 jobs mainly in rural areas. Europe counts more than 20 million horseracing viewers, race-goers and bettors.



## A sport with many benefits: Health, Education and Training

Horseback riding is a healthy activity for improving body awareness, strength and coordination. Furthermore the experience of working with a living animal contributes to the mental health of the rider. More than many other leisure activities, this holistic approach corresponds with the WHO definition of health.

The well known health effects of contacts with a horse as well as riding itself have enhanced the establishment of equine therapy concepts such as Hippotherapy (complementary to physiotherapy), Riding for Disabled (sport riding as well as leisure riding) and Curative Education (i.e. therapy for people with behavioural disorders or psychological disabilities).

The positive effects have also been discovered by management training seminar coaches who increasingly use horses for development of leadership and behavioural training of business executives as well as for motivation and improving social competence.

Leisure riders practise simple riding (i.e. horseback riding) and/or low-level performance sport. Their motivation is basically relaxation, enjoyment, experience of nature and the animal. It is an activity which can be practised life-long. Therefore the age pyramid of riders shows a non proportional progress especially in the age groups above 50 years.

In most European countries leisure riders belong to a riding club or a particular school. This is a community asset and offers a place for socialising with others.

Not only have local opportunities for leisure riding developed, but equestrian tourism has also been established. Leisure riding with an adventurous character is offered through Europe to a worldwide audience (see the International Federation for Equestrian Tourism FITE) – again Europe is at the forefront of much of this. This again shows how sport can sustain rural economy and employment as well as contribute to the overall health of Europeans.

### A clean sport

Equestrian sport is a unique case of a sport that involves animal and human athletes working together as a team. The FEI's Clean Sport Campaign is a coordinated effort at many levels to provide all stakeholders with the information and tools necessary to address the issue of doping and inappropriate medication. FEI Clean Sport has been developed in close cooperation with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The Equestrian Community Integrity Unit (ECIU) represents a clear and determined effort to ensure the integrity of equestrian sport.

Elsewhere, such as in horseracing and trotting, testing of both horses and riders has been long-established.



# The Sporting Success of European bred horses

European bred horses – a business which is an important part of the agricultural sector – are exported worldwide. The number one racehorse in the world is British bred, and European bred racehorses and trotters enjoy success

worldwide, and provide significant European export revenue. In the World Breeding Federation for Sports Horses 2011 Studbook rankings European studbooks fill the first 23 top places in Dressage, Eventing, and Showjumping.

## Secure funding for the benefit of sport

Competing horses is a way to measure and select to improve an equine breed. At the same time, breeding is a part of agriculture revenues. The racing sector is largely financed by horse betting revenues. The return from betting benefits the wider equestrian sector in certain countries.

In Europe in 2016, Horse betting totalled €30 billion – 1.2 billion euros coming mainly from the Tote/pari

mutuel operators was reinvested in the European horse industry and racing, a considerable investment often at the crux of regional development (Normandy, County Kildare, Newmarket).

More than 2 million euros from betting revenues directly support each year the Olympic Equestrian teams of 3 Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland and Norway).

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

### EHN and its Members

**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

**WBFSh** – 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