



Brussels, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### **European Parliament's MEP Horse Group starts a new chapter**

**The European Horse Network has confirmed Belgian MEP, Mrs Hilde Vautmans as the new Chairwoman of the European Parliament's MEP Horse Group.**

The MEP Horse Group was founded in 2011 by British MEP Julie Girling, as a part of the European Horse Network (EHN), with the aim of bringing greater visibility to the horse sector on the European political agenda.

Since then, the Group has worked on numerous European regulatory issues and texts such as the Common Agricultural Policy, veterinary medicines, consumer sales, the VAT reform and Brexit.

*"I feel very honoured to take over the presidency from Jean Arthuis and Julie Girling. We have made great progress since 2011 but there is so much to be done to ensure the European equine sector is properly recognised in Brussels. Together with EHN, I want to commit myself to all possible areas of the sector, those being: both recreational as professional equestrian sports, agriculture, hippo- and equitherapy, tourism, etc. The horse industry is indeed a crucial sector that immensely contributes to the welfare of our European economy. As Chairwoman, I will do my best to push through and put these challenges on the agenda of the European Parliament in order to improve and enhance the current situation in Europe."* said **Hilde Vautmans** (Open Vld, Renew Europe) who has just launched the first working meetings for September.

Mrs Vautmans, who succeeds French MEP Jean Arthuis, aims to encourage several of her new parliamentary colleagues to attend the Group's first meeting of this Parliament on 15 October in Brussels. Her primary focus will be to highlight the many assets of the European horse sector and propose political actions to support it and develop it.

*"We are delighted to welcome Mrs Vautmans as our new Chairwoman and have no doubt that she will, as a passionate rider, promote the interests of the horse industry in Europe and guide the Parliament's MEP Horse Group towards milestone actions,"* adds **Mark Wentein**, President of EHN.

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#### **The equine industry in Europe**

- 100 billion euros a year economic impact
- 800 000 full time jobs equivalent provided by the sector
- 7 million or more horses in Europe
- 6 million hectares of permanent grassland given over to horse grazing

#### **EHN represents the European Equine Industry since 2010**

*The European Horse Network is a non-profit network of stakeholders acting at a World, European, and National or Regional level within the European horse sector. EHN has been created early 2010 following the European Horse Conference, EQUUS 2009, organised by the Swedish European Presidency. The aim is to organise a platform to communicate on the horse sector and promote its development 30 European and International structures linked to horses' activities (Breeding, horseracing, sport, betting, research, recreation and tourism, education, health and welfare)*

**More information about EHN: [www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu](http://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu)**

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