



21st March 2023
Board meeting Online
Minutes

1. Minutes of the last meetings – Sept 2022 and AGM Nov 2022

Minutes are adopted without modifications

2. Update on Welfare issues and EHN Position

In the context of the revision of the European legislation on animal welfare, the European Commission is currently working on a proposal of regulation on animals kept for commercial purposes, which will amend rules of Directive 98/58/EC on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes.

The EHN Welfare working group met on 17th March to agree on a common position about the keeping of Equidae insisting on the specificities of equidae and asking for a balanced legislation.

The clean version will circulate soon and members have until 31st March to make comments and agree on the content.

The position will be sent to the EU Commission and presented to the MEP Horse Group in June.

The EU proposal could be on the table of the EP in September 2023. However, the discussions will probably continue after the election of a new Parliament.

3. Proposal for a Prospective study

The main objective of a prospective study is to identify threats and opportunities for the equine sector and to find potential solutions.

The European equine industry is facing many important challenges (to maintain its SLO, to adapt itself to environmental challenges, etc). A prospective study is an opportunity to elaborate a common social project for the equine industry and to answer the question of the social utility of our industry.

Such studies are usually very expensive (between € 35.000 and € 55.000 based on the NED and FR experiences).

For EHN, the cost could be limited. Thanks to their experience, Haike (ongoing study inside FNRS in the NED) and Hubert (IFCE did similar studies in FR in 2012 and 2020) would work on it. But we still need to provide a budget for an external consultant. We may probably need help during specific stages of the project (the finalisation of the study, the elaboration of the action plan). This cost is currently estimated by €15.000. It may be less.

The project needs a validation by the EHN board before 31st March after receiving presentations of the French and Dutch studies.

If it is validated, we would like to have the first elements presented during the EHN Presidents' meeting in June.

4. Prepare MEP Horse Group + Presidents Meeting - June 2023

As it was done in 2017, there are many reasons to renew the invitation this year to all the Presidents/Chairmen of the Equine structures:

- EHN have grown to more than 30 members and it is essential to know each other better and have the involvement of all

- To organise a brainstorming session on forward-looking topics (Prospective study, Olympic Games, Welfare and ethics)
- To renew the obligations of all members to help each other with valuable information, feedback, technical knowledge,
- To explain once again the importance to be proactive on future regulations and agree on common positions

MEP Hilde Vautmans, as well as Ingmar Devos were consulted on possible dates and it seems that 7 and 8 June 2023 in Brussels could be confirmed soon.

The programme could be as follows:

7th June 2023

Location: Zaventem EHN Headquarters
 15.00 – 17.00 - EHN General Assembly
 Diner (location to be defined)
 Hotels in Brussels

8th June 2023

10.00 – 12.00 – President's meeting (topics will be prepared at the next Board meeting in April)

Location: Square de Meeus, 40 – 4th floor - Brussels

- Prospective study – The European Equine industry in 2040
- Olympic Games 2024
- FEI Ethical Group

12.30 – 14.30 - MEP Horse Group (with lunch) Horse Keeping and future EU Animal Welfare legislation

Location: European Parliament – MEP restaurant

Programme and speakers (to be defined at the next Board meeting)

5. Membership application: Belgium Equestrian Quality

Board members are not in favour of the application as Belgium Equestrian Quality is more a commercial label to increase the visibility of its members than a real specific equine organisation. Moreover, some members are already part of other organisations that are inside EHN.

6. Others

European Equestrian stats/Eurostat – EHN has received an answer from the EU Commission after asking to collect valuable statistics on equidae. Abstract: "Eurostat was collecting in the past data on horses on agricultural holdings. These data are not any more collected by Eurostat as horses are of very marginal use in agricultural activities. Horses, dogs, cats and other pets are not part of official statistical reporting obligations in the European Statistical system." EHN cannot accept such answer and would like to ask EU to reconsider through a letter to Ursula von der Leyen with the help of Hilde Vautmans insisting on the importance of valuable figures because of the economic importance of the industry and because of welfare issues. A copy to the EU Commissioner of Agriculture and Health and Welfare will also be sent.

Horse Economic Forum (Portugal) – Haike Blaauw and Paull Khan are invited to speak and could add some words on EHN inside their presentation.

World Trotting Conference in Berlin mid-August 2023 – The organisation of the meeting is made by UET who is asking EHN members to come and speak about the useful cooperation in Europe (Cooperation is the main topic of the conference). The draft programme will be sent soon.

European Trainers Federation takes the initiative to invite MEPs to a small seminar + lunch + racing in Ostende racecourse on 3rd July. Hilde Vautmans have been asked and other MEPs could join.

Update on EUNetHorse project – the project has officially started on 1st March and will organise a meeting in Le Pin Stud in June + coordination meeting with EHN members in October in France (Dates to be confirmed).

Vaccination issue in Denmark where the EU rules is interpreted differently with a 6 months vaccination instead of yearly vaccination. FEI needs to make a statement to clarify.

Also in Denmark, **the Animal Ethical Council** has adopted a recent report in which show jumping and dressage are negatively treated and in which it is asked to train horses from the age of 4 or 5 (instead of 2 as it is usually done). A task force of equine experts has been gathered to comment the report.

Roly Owers inquired about the **Eastern Europe Equine practitioners** organising a conference in May in Poland. FEEVA is not aware of such organisation.

Barbara Padalino, researcher, is **requesting support for a study on the transport of equines**. EHN will ask Filip vande Cappelle (ATA) to see if it is possible.

Next Board meeting: 28 April 2023 at 10.00 am online to prepare EHN events

To Do

- ⇒ ***Validate with the Welfare WG members, the common position on the Keeping of Equines before 31st March***
- ⇒ ***Validate the launch of EHN Prospective study with estimated budget before 31st March***
- ⇒ ***Confirm the dates of the EHN Presidents' meeting + MEP Horse Group in Brussels – firm confirmation from Hilde Vautmans and room reservation***
- ⇒ ***Letter from EHN to UVDL + EU Commissioners on the importance of the collection of EU Equine stats***