



Brussels, 10th July 2012

MEPs focus on the unique opportunities within equestrian sport

On the 10th July 2012 the third meeting of the European Parliament Horse Group led by European Member Julie Girling was held at the European Parliament in Brussels. The meeting focused on sport and horses in advance of the opening of the London Olympics later this month.

"Equestrian sport is one of the most dynamic sport disciplines in Europe", said **Julie Girling** in her opening comments. "But to date it has not had the exposure it deserves in the European policy making arena."

The meeting heard from British European Member **Emma McClarkin** that sport is now a European policy. The Parliament has already debated a number of related issues such as financing, governance and integrity and will continue to do this within the Sports Intergroup headed by European Member **Sophie Auconie**.

Hanfried Haring, Chairman of European Equestrian Federation (EEF), highlighted how unlike in many other sports, there is not a wide gap between performance and grass-root sport. Equestrian sport is the only sport where male and female athletes compete against each other on equal terms. It also provides wonderful opportunities for people with disabilities, as will be showcased at the London Paralympic Games next month.

Bo Helander, chair of the Permanent EU Committee of the EEF, outlined the challenges posed by EU competition law with a sports federation that is a monopoly, as required by the International Olympic Committee. Such a model needs to be recognised by EU institutions in order to be able to continue the promotion of horse sport across all Member States.

Julie Girling brought the meeting to a close by stressing that today, despite the perception; equestrian sport is enjoyed by people from all strata of society. "We need to constantly promote this reality if we are to encourage even more people to take up the sport at a grass-roots level."

For more information;

Office of Julie Girling: Tel: +32 2 284 56 78 or email Julie.girling@europarl.europa.eu

More information on the EHN: www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu or contact info@europeanhorsenetwork.eu