



**General Assembly Meeting 2024
Crown Plaza Hotel - Bruges**

11th December 2024

Minutes

1. Opening of the Annual meeting

Mark Wentein welcomes members and new faces present today:

- Michael Koehler for FEEVA
- Heli Kivimäki-Manner for Hippolis in Finland
- Gabriella Torell Palmquist for the European Educational Network - EEN

2. Approval of the agenda and minutes from last General Assembly June 2023

Decision: The minutes are adopted without comment.

3. Report on activities 2024 from the Chairman

A lot has changed this year, political changes of course with the election in the Parliament but also So it was time for EHN to be revamped or renewed with:

A new visual identity:

- **A new website**, to reflect the new situation, more modern opening on our latest News and future events (presentation later during the meeting)
- **A new Manifesto 2024**
- **And as you have seen yesterday, a newly elected and reformed MEP Horse Group**

Four Board meetings were organized to discuss strategy and prepare future events:

13 February – To prepare EHN new Manifesto and the last MEP Horse Group of the previous legislature

7 May – To discuss our position on welfare in transport

27 June – To debrief EU elections and prepare meetings with MEPs and adopt the blood mares statement

11 September – To validate the list of MEPs interested by equine issues and prepare the first MEP Horse Group

MEP Horse Group in March 2024

MEP Hilde Vautmans chaired the meeting and recalled the various activities of the group

The new EHN Manifesto 2024 was presented and signed

Haïke Blaauw presented the first elements of the EHN Prospective study

Advocacy on topics - some will also occupy us also in 2025:

Silicons

In 2024, the European Horse Network was approached by the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) regarding a potential ban on certain types of silicones as part of the Stockholm Convention's review on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

EHN consulted its members to evaluate the potential impact on the sector, including areas such as medical materials and horseshoe production. Input was also sought from the European Equestrian Business Association, representing material producers.

As no concerns were raised by members, no further follow-up was conducted.

Welfare in Transport

In December 2023, the European Commission published a draft regulation on transport.

In 2024, the European Horse Network worked with its welfare working group to develop a position paper on the matter.

EHN also participated in the public consultation organized by the European Commission in April 2024.

In July 2024, we met with some MEPs and Sates Permanent Representations to present the sector's concerns regarding the proposed text.

EMA's opinion on essential substances

In 2024, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) updated the list of essential substances for the treatment of equidae under Regulation (EU) 2019/6.

Despite requests from the equine industry, **Phenylbutazone** was not added to the list of essential substances. However, **Pergolide** and **Ganciclovir** were retained on the list. The European Commission will now use the EMA's opinion to draft a list of authorized substances and invite contributions on the proposed text.

EHN need to prepare a response strategy (to be included in 2025 work programme)

Participation to equine events for the Promotion of EHN

May 2024: Chairman invited to conclude the **International Conference in Versailles**, presenting key challenges for the equine sector.

June 2024: EHN participated in a meeting organized by the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** on the protection of equids, as part of EFSA's upcoming opinion on equid welfare for 2027.

November 2024: EHN attended the General Assembly of the European Federation of Veterinarians in Animal Production (**FEEVA**).

November 2024: EUNetHorse EAB meeting - consultative board meeting to provide input on project advancements and strategic directions.

Update on the Prospective study

The prospective study initiated in 2023 faced delays due to changes within the teams at IFCE and FNRS.

To ensure its completion, the decision was made to hire a consultant. A contract has now been signed with the consultancy firm 4Sing, and the study, along with an action plan, will be presented to members in 2025.

4. Membership Applications

- i. Filière Cheval (Tanguy Courtois)
- ii. European Horserace Scientific Liaison Committee (EHSLC)

Decision: Both applications are approved by all members.

5. Board Election

According to the EHN statutes, the board can have up to 12 members.

The current statutes provide for the election of the entire board every three years. To ensure continuity and avoid the risk of a lack of candidates, the chairman and members are requesting a revision of the statutes for the board's renewal process (Several options could be considered, such as a 25% renewal every year or 50% every two years).

In order to ensure an accurate translation of the statutes, which must be submitted in Dutch, an official translator will be requested for the English translation.

Decision: Following the vote, the elected board members are:

- Nadine Brandtner - WBFSH
- Mark Wentein - Brugse Koetsiers
- Amandine Julien - IFCE
- Paull Khan - EMHF
- Catherine Bonnichon de Rancourt - FITE
- Roly Owers - WHW
- Peter Bollen – Equine Nutrition
- Nick Elsass/Joe Herson – EFTBA
- Marie Orard – HIPPOLIA
- Michael Kohler – FEEVA
- Guillaume Maupas - UET
- Haike Blaauw – FNRS

Decision: Paull Khan and Peter Bollen will reflect on the revision of the statutes for the board's renewal process. Several options could be considered, such as a 25% renewal every year or 50% every two years. They will make a proposal to the Board. A legal translator will be needed to prepare the publication of the future by-laws once adopted.

6. Draft Work Programme and budget proposal for 2025

EU Animal Welfare Consultations and Strategy (Transport, Keeping, Slaughter)

- European Parliament: Reports on transport regulation will be ready in Committees in February and amendment probably in April.
- A working group meeting will take place in January to discuss potential proposals to present to MEPs, including amendments and updated positions.

EMA Essential substances

- EHN seeks to gather input from members on the EMA's opinion
- Potential actions include drafting a letter to the EMA and DG SANTE, and raising awareness among MEPs.

UK-EU Trade Agreement

- Revision of the global agreement between UK-EU
- Sharing information and see if we can find common position to solve problems, such as paperwork for the transport of horses

Evaluation of the animal health law

- A study based on this evaluation will explore better integration of technologies and potential updates to the AHL.

Illegal betting

- Paull Khan proposes to add the issue of illegal betting to the work programme. While the EU may not be competent on the subject, sharing knowledge and experience regarding national regulations would be valuable.
- The webinar and report on illegal betting and its impact on the financing of the sector, conducted by the EMHF, could be shared with the members.

Prospective study – Results and Action Plan

- Continuation of the study through the recruitment of a consultant.
- A workshop will be organised with members in March/April to finalize the study and the action plan.

European data and statistics

- Members’ request for updating equine industry figures, moving away from outdated 2010 data.
- ongoing lobbying efforts to reintegrate horses into European agricultural statistics
- But need to have updates figures. To achieve this, a consultant will be required to assist with the work.

Peter Bollen will chair the group working on statistics and include FEI in the process.

Organisation of an event outside of the Parliament – EHN will contact the staff of Hilde Vautmans and Nina Carberry to discuss the feasibility of the event.

The Budget proposal for 2025 could be as follows (column in red):

Expenses						
Office	700	700	Headquarters in Zaventem			
Web	1457,32	1500	finalise and launch new website			
Communication/Printing	1288,2	1000				
MEP Horse Group	6281,86	6000	MEP Horse Group meetings			
EquiGala January	3569,5	3600	Invite EU Commission + COPA			
Prospective study	4375	13125	Action Plan 2040			
Translation Fee	1327,85	1000	Translation of the by-laws			
EU Projects		5000	Update Equine stats			
Event		5000				
Board						
AGM	8000	5000				
Presidents Meeting						
Transport FG+MW+AJ expenses	4200	4000				
Administration/financial fees	30	30				
	31229,73	45955				

Decision: Members agree on Paull Khan’s proposal to revive the Legal Group (January/February) to look at the different issues listed above (outside Welfare issues):

- **Objective:** Sharing information and expertise.
- **The Legal Group is valuable if members propose topics and ensure follow-up afterward.**

FITE, WHW, Equine Nutrition, Interbev, IFCE, EMHF, CBC volunteered for the WG. An invitation will be sent soon.

Invitation for the next Welfare WG will be sent soon.

7. Setting the annual membership fee for 2025

Decision:The annual membership fees will increase as follows: the fee of 1500 will rise to 1600, the fee of 600 will rise to 700, and the fee of 300 will rise to 350

8. New website presentation

The new website is presented to the members. The members note that the statutes should be added.

The chairman calls on members to provide images to enrich the website and EHN publications.

Decision: The website will be completed and launched beginning of 2025.
A few members will have the possibility to provide updates.

9. Others

Roly mentioned that Nina could take the lead on digital equine identification. A strategy could be prepared inside the Legal Group.

Haike Blauw raised concerns about the law on water quality, which could impact working surfaces.

Interbev reminded the group not to forget about horses intended to slaughter in welfare-related discussions.

End 12.10 pm

TO DO:

- Organise the Welfare Working Group in January
- Launch the Legal Working Group (January/February) Agenda: Essential substances, illegal betting, EU/UK Trade Agreement...
- Contact the staff of Hilde Vautmans and Nina Carberry to find dates for next events
- Send link to the new website to collect input from members and determine who can provide updates
- Find a date for the Workshop on the Prospective study and action plan in March/April