



Brussels, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019

**The first meeting of the Horse Group of the European Parliament was held this week in Brussels in the presence of the new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der LEYEN.**

**Mrs Hilde VAUTMANS, Belgian MEP, new President of the Horse Group of the European Parliament welcomed several of her parliamentary colleagues from different Member States, France, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Hungary, United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>.**

The horse group, MEP Horse Group, was founded in 2011 by British MEP Julie GIRLING, with the aim of increasing the visibility of the horse industry on the European political agenda.

"We have made great progress since 2011, but there is so much to do to ensure that the European equine sector is properly recognized in Brussels," said Mrs VAUTMANS.

Mrs VAUTMANS presented the strengths of the European equine sector and prepared the actions she intends to carry out with her fellow parliamentarians in the coming years.

She has set 4 priorities:

- The horse as an "agricultural" animal in the next CAP;
- The promotion of knowledge and good practices as a basis for animal welfare;
- Tax harmonization;
- The availability and harmonization of the placing on the market of veterinary medicinal products.

Recalling the symbolism attached to equines in terms of sustainability and interconnection with the environment, Mrs. Ursula von der LEYEN stressed that the horse perfectly characterizes the alliance between tradition and modernity.

The stakeholders of the equine industry exposed the current stakes related to the Brexit and the movements of the horses. The work related to equine welfare and the green assets of the equine sector in the next CAP were discussed. The under-representation of equidae in European funding and research programs has also been highlighted.

In conclusion, Mark WENTEIN, proud of the evolution of the European horse network he chairs, has listed the priorities of the Manifesto<sup>2</sup> on which EHN intends to work with the institutions: "Never before has there been so much interest from the industry but also from the new Members of European Parliament and EU administrations."

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Rory PALMER, Mrs Henna VIRKKUNEN, Mrs Ulrike MÜLLER, Mr Kris PEETERS, Mr Márton GYÖNGYÖSI , Mr Bernd LANGE

<sup>2</sup> Priorities of EHN Manifesto:

- Consider horses as agricultural animals
- Promote horse welfare and responsible care
- Favour appropriate funding to equine activities
- Ensure favourable taxation system for equine activities
- Promote the availability of medicines and a good disease surveillance system
- Educate and integrate workforce into a dynamic industrial ecosystem

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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 Voice of 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 is 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) are working with the European Institutions and Member States.*

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

*EHN Office: Square de Meeus, 40 - B-1000 Brussels - +32 2 4016165*