



Brussels, 13 July 2017

The European Horse Network meets European parliamentarians to raise awareness of the many economic and environmental benefits of Equestrian Tourism, a fast-growing activity

In about forty years, in a society where leisure is increasingly taking place, marginal activity and little regarded, equestrian tourism is undoubtedly the most appropriate way to interest, retain the greatest number of riders and attract the general public by the values attached to them, such as the protection of natural environments, the development of the rural economy.

Mrs Hilde Vautmans, Belgian Member of the European Parliament, herself a rider, introduced the debates by mentioning in particular the first European equestrian trail, the Route d'Artagnan, 4000 km across 6 countries, which she intends to practice.

Frédéric Bouix, President of the International Equestrian Tourism Federation, notes the growth of this activity, which has already touched more than 6 million riders across Europe despite the technical and legislative obstacles on which the Federation is working. The ambition is to continue to create European equestrian trails, an EuroCheval on the EuroVelo model.

Equestrian tourism corresponds perfectly to the orientations of the European tourism policy, as confirmed by Valentino Izzo of the Tourism Unit at the Commission, slow and sustainable tourism with the valorisation of local cultural and tourist assets.

Julie Girling, author of the parliamentary report on responsible ownership and equine care, voted by a very large majority in plenary last March, suggests including equestrian tourism in a European charter on tourism in order to coordinate and harmonize the diplomas of accompanying persons, the working rules of horses in these areas.

European horse racing also attracts tourist activity and organisers of racing are promoting the development of races on the beach that Paull Khan and his members inside the European Galop Federation intends to promote throughout the summer.

All speakers agreed that equestrian tourism often allows a first approach with the horse, recreates the link between the townspeople and the rural world and popularizes this essential relationship with the animal.

Jean Arthuis, French Member of the European Parliament, thanked the speakers and his colleagues Hilde Vautmans, Julie Girling, Lieve Wierinck and Jan Huitema for their presence and already announces the date of the next meeting on 7 November in the European Parliament for a conference looking at sports, trade and financing of the European equine sector.

More information about EHN: www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu

European Horse Network members:

European and International Associations linked to horses (Breeders, Sport, betting, research)

CBC - Belgian horse Confederation EFTBA - European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Associations, FEI - International Equestrian Federation, EEF - European Equestrian Federation, EPMA - European Pari Mutuel Association, Hippolia - Pole Filiere Equine (Normandy), FEIF - Icelandic Horses, WBFSh - World federation of Sport horses Breeders, HNS - Swedish Horse Industry Foundation, EMHF - European, Mediterranean Federation of Horseracing Authorities, UET - European Trotting Union, WHW - World Horse Welfare, FECTU - European Draught Horse Federation, FNRS - Equestrian Centres in Netherlands , GESCA - French equine professionals, ETF - European Trainers Federation, FITE – Equestrian Tourism, BETA - British Equestrian Trade Association, EEN - Equestrian Educational Network, ESSA- European State Studs Association, FEEVA - Federation of European Equine Veterinary, IFCE - French Institute for equestrian sport, Hippolis - The National Equine Competence Association of Finland.

The European Horse Network has collected the numbers from different studies to give an estimate of the horse industry in Europe:

- 100 billion by the economic impact
- 400 000 full-time equivalent jobs provided by the sector
- 7 million horses in Europe
- 6 million hectares of permanent pastures devoted to pasture

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