



## Introduction

**The Equestrian Action Group (EAG) was created to campaign for assurance of the “happy equine athlete” which is primarily the ridden sports horse.**

Equestrian activities, particularly in the context of competitions, are under scrutiny by many individuals and groups, whether or not they belong to the so-called "equine industry". The welfare and well-being of horses in particular are being called into question.

The term '*Social License to Operate*' (SLO), which defines the acceptance of any activity by society, is also being used more and more frequently in relation to equestrian activities, both competitive and leisure. The media coverage of these activities, whether they are practiced with respect for the horse or give rise to criticism or even formal opposition, also helps to drive the debate, sometimes in a very passionate way. It is clear that the eventual loss of the SLO, and therefore of the acceptance of the use of horses by humans, would sound the death knell for the entire equine industry and put an end to a history dating back to several thousand years, rich in both traditions and emotions.

In order to conserve equine sport, it is essential that the sport is carried out with respect for the horse. The horse is a sentient being and has feelings. The EAG supports that there must be an account of physical and behavioral requirements and ensuring that the five freedoms defined by the *Farm Animal Welfare Council* (FAWC), namely (1) freedom from hunger and thirst, (2) freedom from discomfort, (3) freedom from pain, injury and disease, (4) freedom to express normal behavior and (5) freedom from fear and distress are respected at all times.

Various organizations, in particular the FEI and other equestrian sports federations, have been working on this issue for several years. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, the changes are either insufficient or too slow or sometimes remain at the level of theory without finding any real implementation in everyday equestrian practice.

The “Equestrian Action Group” was set up in response to these findings, and to help ensure both the good treatment of horses and the very future of the industry.

## The association

The idea of creating this association was born from the meeting of three people who are passionate about horses and equestrian sports:

- Bernard MAUREL, FEI 5\* dressage judge, federal expert in dressage for the French Equestrian Federation (FFE), coach and trainer for the CRE ARA, former President of *European State Studs Association ESSA*.
- Charles TROLLIET, FEI Veterinarian, Former President of the Swiss Equestrian Federation (FSSE), President of EQUI-SCOPE, Swiss Equine Industry Platform
- Catherine WEBER DE RIZE, Former President of FEI Group V (Central America and Northern Latin America), General Manager of the *Association of Certified coaches in Equestrian Disciplines (ACED)*.

A number of preliminary discussions with industry players across the globe, who are involved in various activities, encouraged the development of the concept of an independent action group. This will be favorable to equestrian activities practiced with respect for the horse and able to develop or support concrete actions aimed at contributing both to good equestrian practice and to the sustainability of the industry.

"**EQUESTRIAN ACTION GROUP**", an association under French law, was founded on 24 August 2023 with the following statutory aims:

- Promote good equestrian practice and its implementation, particularly in the context of competitions;
- Promoting animal welfare in general ;
- Protecting equestrian sports;
- Raise awareness among all those involved in the industry (riders, trainers, teachers, officials, organizers, owners, breeders, sponsors, equestrian federations, associations, medias, ...);
- Propose or support initiatives aimed at improving equestrian welfare;
- Informing the public ;
- To combat all forms of mistreatment of horses.

The statutes of the association will be sent on demand.

## **Operating mode**

To fulfil its statutory aims, the EAG brings together members from all the socio-professional groups that make up the equine industry at international level. These people are involved "ad personam" and not as representatives of an organization. However, depending on their skills and contacts, they can act as a link with one or other of the industry's institutional players.

In particular, it is planned to call on:

- equestrian sports people (riders, drivers, etc.)
- trainers and coaches
- officials from all disciplines
- organisers of equestrian events
- horse owners
- breeders
- sponsors
- representatives of the equestrian press
- scientists
- other people who can contribute their specific expertise.

Together, these members form a THINK TANK, to which ideas and proposals are submitted to help achieve the association's aims. Members are also free to put forward proposals for concrete action on their own initiative.

### **For more information:**

Website: [www.equestrianactiongroup.fr](http://www.equestrianactiongroup.fr)

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