








Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2016/2078(INI)	Procedure completed
Responsible ownership and care of equidae		
Subject 3.10.04.02 Animal protection		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Agriculture and Rural Development	 GIRLING Julie	23/02/2016
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 MELO Nuno	
		 DENANOT Jean-Paul	
		 MÜLLER Ulrike	
		 SEBASTIA TALAVERA	
		Jordi Vicent	
European Commission	Commission DG Agriculture and Rural Development	Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS Vytenis Povilas	

Key events			
12/05/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/01/2017	Vote in committee		
01/02/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0014/2017	Summary
13/03/2017	Debate in Parliament		
14/03/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/03/2017	Decision by Parliament	T8-0065/2017	Summary
14/03/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2016/2078(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54

Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/8/06482

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE589.295	16/09/2016	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE594.022	16/11/2016	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A8-0014/2017	01/02/2017	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T8-0065/2017	14/03/2017	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2017)390	22/08/2017	EC	

Responsible ownership and care of equidae

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted an own-initiative report by Julie GIRLING (ECR, UK) on the responsible ownership and care of equidae.

Members recognised the considerable economic, environmental and social contribution equidae make throughout the EU. The equid sector within the EU is worth over EUR 100 billion per annum and created approximately 900 000 jobs.

The estimated 7 million equidae in the European Union perform varied roles: sources of milk and meat, they are also competition and recreational animals to working animals in transport, tourism, rehabilitation and education therapies, research animals, and wild and semi-feral animals.

Against this background, Members called for greater EU-level acknowledgement of the equid sector, and its benefits for the rural economy, and for it to be incorporated to a greater extent into the various CAP components.

They encouraged Member States to create an environment in which on-farm businesses are viable.

European guidelines: the Commission is called upon to develop European guidelines on good practice in the equid sector for various users and specialists.

These guidelines should:

- consider the multifunctional role of equidae by including guidance on responsible breeding, animal health and welfare and the benefits of equid sterilisation, work in tourism, agriculture and forestry, species-appropriate transport and slaughter and protection against fraudulent practices, including doping;
- be accessible in a variety of formats and languages to breeders, equid societies, farms, stables, sanctuaries, transporters and slaughterhouses.

Sustainable tourism: Members called on the Commission to recommit to the development of a European charter for sustainable and responsible tourism, with the dissemination of clear information to help tourists and stakeholders make welfare-friendly choices when deciding whether or not to use the services of working equidae.

Protection of animals and responsible ownership: the Commission is called upon to establish new reference centres for the protection of animals and to improve levels of full compliance with, and consistent enforcement of, legislation, along with the dissemination of information and best practice relating to animal welfare.

The Commission is called upon to :

- propose a shortened maximum journey limit for all movements of horses for slaughter;
- enhance scientific research in order to develop humane methods of slaughter better suited to equidae.

Members recalled the principle that any cruel, abusive treatment by any owner, trainer, groom or other person must not be tolerated anywhere, under any circumstances. Members States are called upon to apply stricter legislation regarding the mistreatment and to properly investigate reports of inhumane practices and welfare violations vis-à-vis equidae.

Lastly, the report stressed the need to clarify the VAT law applying to the equine sector in order to foster the development of a growth- and jobs-oriented equine sector.

Responsible ownership and care of equidae

The European Parliament adopted by 656 votes to 10, with 27 abstentions, a resolution on the responsible ownership and care of equidae.

Members recognised the considerable economic, environmental and social contribution equidae make throughout the EU. The equid sector within the EU is worth over EUR 100 billion per annum and created approximately 900 000 jobs.

Recognition of the sector: the estimated 7 million equidae in the European Union perform varied roles: sources of milk and meat, they are also competition and recreational animals to working animals in transport, tourism, rehabilitation and education therapies, research animals, and wild and semi-feral animals.

Against this background, Parliament called for greater EU-level acknowledgement of the equid sector, and its benefits for the rural economy, and for it to be incorporated to a greater extent into the various CAP components. It encouraged Member States to create an environment in which on-farm businesses are viable.

European guidelines: the Commission is called upon to develop European guidelines on good practice in the equid sector for various users and specialists.

These guidelines should:

- consider the multifunctional role of equidae by including guidance on responsible breeding, animal health and welfare and the benefits of equid sterilisation, work in tourism, agriculture and forestry, species-appropriate transport and slaughter and protection against fraudulent practices, including doping;
- be accessible in a variety of formats and languages to breeders, equid societies, farms, stables, sanctuaries, transporters and slaughterhouses.

Member States are urged to establish voluntary labour guidelines including daily working hours and rest periods to protect working equidae from overwork and economic exploitation.

Sustainable tourism: Parliament called on the Commission to recommit to the development of a European charter for sustainable and responsible tourism and to issue guidance on welfare-friendly tourism models with regard to working equidae.

Protection of animals and responsible ownership: Members stressed that equid owners should have a minimum level of knowledge of equid husbandry, and that with ownership comes a personal responsibility for the standard of health and welfare of the animals in their care. Parliament underlined the importance of Animal Welfare Reference Centres for the protection and welfare of the animals and called on the Commission to:

- encourage and collect exchanges of good practices and educational programmes of different Member States in terms of animal welfare;
- conduct regular audits of the slaughterhouses on their territory that are licensed to take equidae and increase the number of inspections on donkey and horse milk farms;
- ensure the proper application and effective and uniform enforcement of existing EU legislation on animal transport and propose a shortened maximum journey limit for all movements of horses for slaughter;
- promote exchanges of good practices to facilitate rational use of medicines for equidae;
- enhance scientific research in order to develop humane methods of slaughter better suited to equidae.

Members recalled the principle that any cruel, abusive treatment by any owner, trainer, groom or other person must not be tolerated anywhere, under any circumstances. Member States are called upon to apply stricter legislation regarding the mistreatment and to properly investigate reports of inhumane practices and welfare violations vis-à-vis equidae.

Lastly, the resolution stressed the need to clarify the VAT law applying to the equine sector in order to foster the development of a growth- and jobs-oriented equine sector. It also called on the Commission and the Member States to support the work of the European Horse Network and the European State Stud Association, as they play an important role in the development of the European horse sector.