

The SGR Research Group ADS-UAB is happy to present its latest contribution to the publication “**Removing the Blinkers: The health and welfare of European equidae in 2015**”. Published by [Eurogroup for Animals](#) and [World Horse Welfare](#) this report is the first of its kind, as it is the first ever to investigate the scale of the horse sector in Europe, to recollect all legislation affecting it, and to point out the key health and welfare challenges of the EU’s equids, bearing in mind that we are talking about an industry that generates more than 100 billion euros to the economy.



The necessity to draft this report was highlighted by the European Commission and various stakeholders during the first meeting of experts on the welfare of horses in 2014, which was the starting point of this important debate, calling for a specific legislation to protect all equines who often fall between the cracks of legislation regarding farm or companion animals, without a clear classification. Furthermore equines (horses, donkeys, and mules) are uniquely versatile and fulfil a wide range of roles, such as leisure and companion animals; working animals in tourism,

forestry, agriculture and food production; as well as animals used for therapy and training and as elite athletes in sports. More than any other species, they are often subject to a change in role and owner in the course of their relatively long lives. Given the situation, the time had come to examine whether the existing laws are sufficient to protect them in all these fields. Subsequently the European Commission and the established European Commission Equine Steering Committee recognized this and identified five areas of specific concern

to look into: (i) Identification and registration, (ii) Welfare at transport, (iii) Welfare at slaughter, (iv) Responsible ownership and (v) Rural development. This report is the first attempt to look at these concerns in depth and to map out all existing and lacking information, to pose questions on the sector, and to provide clear recommendations as to how these animals can be better protected for the sake of animal health and welfare and also of the European economy.

As Dr. Andrea Gavinelli, Head of the Animal Welfare Unit (DG SANTE, EC), states, *“The main elements that emerge from this report show that high standards of health and welfare are essential for the success of the equine industry. The outcomes of this report encourage us to work together to meet those standards which would bring benefits not only to equidae but to people too.”*

Roly Owers, CEO of World Horse Welfare commented, *“This report provides a long overdue insight into the EU’s equine sector, and the welfare challenges our horses face. [...] We cannot allow this sector to continue being ignored at European level, either in terms of the health and welfare issues, or in terms of securing a sound future for a sector that has traditionally been one of the prides of Europe, that is proving to be such a valuable export industry and that is still so relevant to European society today.”*

Reineke Hamelers, Director of Eurogroup for Animals continued, *“We see through this report that there is a real need for better and harmonized protection of equids through species-specific legislation as well as non-legislative guidance on responsible ownership. We will use this research as an important conversation opener with all EU stakeholders, and it will form the basis of our policy agenda for at least the next five years. Now is the time for the European Commission to take action [...] and start addressing the concerns raised.”*

Alongside many European organizations, federations, ministries, and professionals, the SGR Research Group ADS (Animales Derecho y Sociedad) of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), directed by Prof. Dr. Marita Giménez-Candela, has taken part in the compilation of the existing legislation regarding equines on European scale. In particular the members involved are: Prof. Dr. Marita Giménez-Candela (Director), Dr. Carlos Contreras, Dr. Ferrán Pons, Dr. José Antonio Jiménez Buendía, Mag. Cristina Bécares Mendiola, Mag. María González Lacabex, Mag. Núria Murlà Ribot, Mag. Martina Pluda, Mag. Elizabeth Montero Romero, Mag. Tisa Kosem, Grad. Irene Jiménez López, Grad. Jessica Lauren Steffen.

To consult the full report click here: <http://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Equine-Report-15th-June-2015.pdf>

To consult the executive summary please click here: [http://eurogroupforanimals.org/files/news/downloads/747/eu equine report executive summary.pdf](http://eurogroupforanimals.org/files/news/downloads/747/eu_equine_report_executive_summary.pdf)