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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(16.2.2024)

The welfare of Equidae is currently covered by Directive 98/58/EC<sup>1</sup>, concerning the protection of animals for farming purposes which contains general provisions for all farmed animals. Directive 98/58/EC is only applicable to farmed animals and not to animals intended for use in competitions, shows, cultural or sporting events or activities, such as equestrian sports. The welfare of Equidae used for such activities is subject to Member States' national legislation.

As announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy<sup>2</sup>, the Commission is working on a revision of the EU animal welfare legislation, in order to align it with the latest scientific evidence, broaden its scope, make it easier to enforce and ultimately to ensure a higher level of animal welfare. This revision process includes a revision of Directive 98/58/EC.

The Commission promotes a high level of animal welfare via different means, including through the EU Animal Welfare Platform. Under that Platform, a voluntary initiative on responsible ownership and care of Equidae has produced a guide to good animal welfare practices for the keeping, care, training and use of horses<sup>3</sup>, which covers equestrian sports, as well as a series of factsheets<sup>4</sup>. While these documents do not represent the official position of the Commission, they were endorsed by the Platform and provide useful tools to guide relevant stakeholders.

In addition, the Commission is engaging in discussions with the International Federation for Equestrian Sports and other actors representing equestrian sports to encourage communication around horse welfare in equestrian sports.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Communication from the Commission 'A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system', COM/2020/381 final.

<sup>3</sup> [https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/aw\\_platform\\_plat-conc\\_guide\\_equidae\\_en.pdf](https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-07/aw_platform_plat-conc_guide_equidae_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform-conclusions\\_en#equidae](https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform-conclusions_en#equidae)