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# INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF EQUESTRIAN TOURISM

RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES DU TOURISME ÉQUESTRE

**09.13.2022**

**Silkeborg - Denmark**

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS



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# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



The FITE was born in 1975 by the will of a few countries to get together to develop equestrian tourism around the world.

Alongside equestrian tourism, outdoor equestrian disciplines have flourished with TREC and Working Equitation, which bring us together every year for sporting and convivial events around horses and nature.

Equestrian tourism also means large gatherings of riders that we find in particular in Italy, Belgium or France.

**But equestrian tourism is also a leisure activity in which more than 6 million Europeans wish to take part. Thanks to horses, thanks to nature, they discover territories, their history, their culture, meet local population, alongside other actors of outdoor sports and tourism.**

Alone or accompanied, the practice of equestrian tourism requires the learning of equestrian and travel techniques, which are the privileged know-how of equestrian guides whose training is conducted in each country, with the support of the FITE.

**Itineraries, accommodation and related tourism activities are essential ingredients for these trips** and are also at the heart of the FITE's development strategy with the recent creation of the Horse Friendly Lodging and Equestrian Tourism Centre labels, which I would like to highlight. These labels should structure local, national and international offers, in line with the aspirations of riders and professionals, in a responsible and sustainable approach.

**This meeting is an opportunity to present the initiatives of several countries that have chosen the horse and horseback riding to develop tourism and highlight their territory.**

This event is also an opportunity to discuss the challenges of our activities in a changing social context that requires constant adaptation.

**Finally, this meeting is an opportunity to meet again after two years of interruption of our activities due to the health context.**

Frédéric BOUIX  
FITE President



# INTRODUCTION

## 2022 INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF EQUESTRIAN TOURISM

**This first International Meeting of Equestrian Tourism, organized on September 13, 2022 in Silkeborg in Denmark, gathered about twenty people, stakeholders of equestrian tourism and outdoor sports coming from 9 different nations.**

Initiative of the FITE Board of Directors and the Equestrian Tourism Committee, **the objective of this Meeting was to exchange on the different practices, to share ideas, to promote outdoor sports and in particular equestrian tourism as well as the economic, social and environmental benefits, with a particular implication of the territories and rurality.** This Meeting have also been conceived to share experience and initiatives of several countries that have chosen horse riding and tourism to develop equestrian activities and promote their territory. It was organized with the will to propose a gathering to all the stakeholders after the interruption of the activities due to the sanitary context and to develop together avenues of collaboration for the whole sector.

4 topics were discussed during this Meeting :

- Equestrian tourism and rural development,
- The creation and promotion of equestrian routes,
- Equestrian tourism, its interrelation with other forms of tourism and cooperation with other outdoor sports,
- Border crossing on horseback in the European Union.

Several project promoters spoke in plenary before discussing each topic in round tables.

Following this Meeting, the FITE has developed several recommendations for all the stakeholders involved in equestrian tourism (riders' associations, equestrian federations, equestrian structures, etc.).

You will find them here, along with the Silkeborg FITE Statement.



# SPEECHES



**By Kate DASHPER:**  
**Professor at Leeds**  
**Beckett University**  
**Great-Britain**

Studies show that the typical profile of equestrian tourism practitioners is female, middle class, and 40-60 years old. There is a whole section of the population that could also be reached, taking into account their needs and aspirations. One of the obstacles to the development of equestrian tourism is the perception that it is expensive. Environmental issues also need to be taken into account: the impact of climate change on the practice but also the impact of the practice on the environment. The practice is seen as not very "accessible", and people lack the confidence to set off with a map. Equestrian tourism still needs to be explained and promoted more effectively.



**By Trille**  
**ANDERSEN:**  
**Founder and CEO**  
**of HorseBnb.dk**  
**Denmark**

One of the obstacles to the practice of equestrian tourism is the lack of accommodation for riders and horses along the routes but also the lack of information for horseback riders.

In response to this, Trille Andersen created the HorseBnb.dk platform. On this platform also appear proposals for hay hotels and events organized by equestrian structures. The platform is currently developed in Sweden and Trille Andersen wishes to establish it in other European countries.

**By Federico**  
**GARCIA: President**  
**of the Instituto para**  
**la promocion del**  
**Turismo Ecuestre**  
**Spain**



The Institute for the Promotion of Equestrian Tourism was created in 2019 in Spain to coordinate the actions of regional equestrian federations that are in charge of equestrian tourism.

This national organization brings together equestrian tourism stakeholders, organizes all the work and activities, promotes and develops equestrian tourism and represents the sector at the national level.

**By Caroline**  
**SEEHUSEN:**  
**Danish Icelandic**  
**Horse Association**  
**Danemark**



The practice of equestrian tourism and its development depends mainly on access to trails and practice areas. This access can be restricted by law, and depends mainly on the public/private portion of natural areas.

Local equestrian tourism associations are working on access to private roads and on raising awareness among private owners to open them up to riders.

The lack of connection between different routes is also an obstacle to the practice.

Caroline Seehusen explains that riders also face different problems: safety on the roads, non-harmonious signage, obstacles on the trails... Collaboration with other stakeholders of sport and outdoor sports is essential to advocate for a better access to nature and to collaborate to put an end to conflicts of use between the different practitioners.

# SPEECHES



**By Cécilia DO-TEGGOUR:**  
Head of Tourism  
Department,  
Fédération Française  
d'Équitation  
France

Developed by the French Equestrian Federation, the interactive map GeoCheval makes an inventory of more than 30,000 km of equestrian routes, tourist points of interest, and equestrian establishments and accommodations labeled by the FFE around these routes.

GeoCheval is a real promotional tool for the territories and is accessible to riders, the general public, public decision-makers, tourist stakeholders, etc. It allows the promotion and the development of equestrian tourism, in connection with the operators of the territory.

**By Mike MC CLURE:**  
Chairman of ENOS,  
European Network of  
Outdoor Sports  
Northern Ireland



Mike MC Clure presents the new motto of ENOS: "Taking action together for the sustainable and responsible development of outdoor sports across Europe", the 10 commitments of the ENOS Charter as well as the avenues of collaboration between outdoor sports stakeholders.



**By Gaetano BORRELLO:**  
FITETREC-ANTE  
Italy

The FITETREC-ANTE presents the cross-border projects developed, especially the Tour du Mont Blanc on horseback and the European Route d'Artagnan, a portion of which passes through Italy.

The FITETREC-ANTE is involved in building a solid network for heritage management and the promotion of sustainable cultural tourism.

# MESSAGE FROM

## Stefano DOMINIONI, European Institute of Cultural Routes



Stefano DOMINIONI presents the Cultural Routes program of the Council of Europe, which currently has 48 certified routes, criss-crossing the 46 member States of the Council of Europe and beyond. This program is supported by networks of more than three thousand institutional sites, namely local and regional communities, museums and heritage sites.

*"The program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is particularly committed to highlighting lesser-known heritage destinations, including many rural areas. This allows visitors to gain new experiences, take part in authentic exchanges with local communities and discover tangible and intangible heritage across the continent."*

***The recognition in May 2022 of the participatory status with the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes at the FITE will allow the creation of new equestrian routes or equestrian variants to the Cultural Routes already labeled so that equestrian tourism spreads in Europe.***

"Equestrian routes allow visitors to discover our common cultural heritage in a spirit of slow, sustainable and responsible tourism, contributing to the vitality and enhancement of territories through the practice of outdoor sports, and are therefore perfectly in line with the values of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes programme."



# COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the round tables discussions and speeches, several recommendations and avenues of collaboration for equestrian tourism stakeholders were raised.

## 1 Equestrian tourism and rural development

### Assessment:

- Need for information for potential practitioners and for potential organizers and developers,
- Lack of knowledge about the practice (required skills, financial accessibility...).

### Recommendations:

1. **To inform public and private local stakeholders** - local authorities, tourist structures, accommodation providers, etc. - of the benefits (social and economic) of developing equestrian tourism in their area and of the complementarity with other tourist activities,
2. **Develop cooperation with rural stakeholders** (agricultural sector, tourism sector...),
3. **Provide expertise, advice** and support to local authorities in their projects,
4. **Explain and communicate to all audiences about the practice:** range of activities, for all levels, affordability, benefits for well-being and health,
5. **Develop a family offer**, for riders and non-riders,
6. **Rely on local breeds** of horses to develop activities.

## 2 The creation and promotion of equestrian routes

### Assessment:

- Disparity in the organization of equestrian tourism in the different countries and even within some countries, including the management of equestrian routes.

### Recommendations:

1. **Exchange and work with tourist structures** (accommodation providers, points of interest...) to develop the tourist offer on the territory,
2. **Collaborate with other outdoor sports** by optimizing existing routes (pedestrian, cycling, etc.) and by creating multi-practice routes to develop common routes,
3. **Work with site owners** to make different routes for each practice,
4. **Take advantage of European funding opportunities** to develop cross-border routes,
5. **Training of supervisors and field experts** (trackers, GPS collectors, etc.),
6. **Train riders and non-riders** (from a very young age) in the outdoor situations that they can encounter to avoid conflicts of use and dangerous situations,
7. Develop an international **tool to identify equestrian routes**.



# COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 3 Equestrian tourism, its interrelation with other forms of tourism and cooperation with other outdoor sports

### Assessment:

- Conflicts of use between practitioners of outdoor sports,
- Less consideration given to equestrian tourism compared to other outdoor sports.

### Recommendations:

1. **Be inspired by the Danish "Outdoor Council" approach** which gathers institutions and organizations of all outdoor activities and environmental protection,
2. **Collaborate with tourism organizations** to include equestrian tourism in the range of activities offered in an area,
3. **Work with other tourist stakeholders** to propose multi-activity tourist offers,
4. **To be open to other outdoor activities** and to train equestrian tourism practitioners to allow a better harmony,
5. **Explain and communicate the specificities of equestrian tourism** (safety rules, behaviors to adopt, signage, etc.) to practitioners of other outdoor sports.

## 4 Border crossing on horseback in the European Union

### Assessment:

- The modalities of crossing the borders on horseback remain unknown.

### Recommendations:

1. **To provide information** on how to cross borders on horseback,
2. **Collaborate with local, regional and national stakeholders** to develop cross-border routes,
3. **Apply to European calls for projects,**
4. **Work on the international recognition of equestrian tourism guide diplomas.**

***The entire equestrian tourism sector (riders' associations, equestrian federations, equestrian structures, etc.) must work to develop actions in this direction.***

***The FITE will also work to achieve these objectives and to develop useful technical documents on these issues.***



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SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2022  
SILKEBORG • DENMARK

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## Silkeborg FITE statement

Gathered on September 13, 2022 in Silkeborg (Denmark), during the first International Meeting of Equestrian Tourism organized by the Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre, we shared the wealth of equestrian tourism activities and its opportunities for People, Horses and Territories.

We have also noted together the need to facilitate exchanges on a European and even international scale, and first of all, the crossing of borders on horseback.

With this declaration, we, the participants of the International Meeting of Equestrian Tourism in Silkeborg, call upon the institutions and authorities, so that the European spirit of equestrian itinerancy, practiced by more than 6 million Europeans, becomes a reality.

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## Déclaration FITE de Silkeborg

Réunis le 13 septembre 2022 à Silkeborg (Danemark), lors des premières Rencontres Internationales du Tourisme Equestre organisées par la Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre, nous avons partagé les richesses des activités de tourisme équestre et ses opportunités pour les Hommes, les Chevaux et les Territoires.

Nous avons aussi constaté ensemble la nécessité de faciliter les échanges à l'échelle européenne voire internationale, et en premier lieu, le passage des frontières à cheval.

Par la présente déclaration, nous, participants aux Rencontres Internationales du Tourisme Equestre à Silkeborg, interpellons les institutions et autorités, pour que se concrétise l'esprit européen pour l'itinérance équestre, pratiquée par plus de 6 millions d'Européens.

# CONCLUSION

*"This first International Meeting of Equestrian Tourism has highlighted very concrete actions for everyone and for the future work of the FITE.*

*This Meeting is the beginning of an adventure. It will call for other editions, with a next meeting in spring 2024.*

*I encourage all participants, stakeholders of equestrian tourism, each Federation and each member of the FITE to bring these issues around equestrian tourism whether locally, nationally or internationally.*

*Thank you to each of you for the richness of the discussions and exchanges."*

*Frédéric BOUIX  
FITE President*



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