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THE WORK OF THE EMHF OVER THE PAST YEAR **(PRESENTATION FOR PARIS CONFERENCE)**

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The European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation was founded in Stockholm in 2010 and represents the racing authorities of 23 countries in the European and Mediterranean region. During the summer, Holland became our newest member.

The membership includes larger racing and breeding countries such as Great Britain, France, and Ireland as well as smaller developing countries such as Morocco, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

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Overall, this region accounts for 23% of the thoroughbred foals born in the world; 20% of the thoroughbred races run in the world; and 27.5% of the betting on racing in the world.

Based on end of season ratings, eleven of the worlds top 15 flat races in 2012 were run in the region.

The main objective of the Federation is to develop relations between the established racing authorities in the region and to ensure that the more developed countries provide support and guidance to the emerging racing nations. The EMHF promotes racing and seeks to defend its integrity and also represents the interests of horse racing where necessary before the European Union bodies.

The EMHF has formally met twice over the past year. We held a successful General Assembly in Madrid in January, hosted by the Spanish Racing Authority, the Sociedad de Fomento de la Cria Caballar de Espana. Fifteen of the 21 member countries were present as well as an observer from Azerbaijan.

As well as the normal business of a General Assembly excellent presentations were delivered by Nick Attenborough (Consumer PR Director of Racing for Change, the body set

up to promote British racing) and Faina Zurita de Ussia (President of the La Zarzuela racetrack) on the theme of 'Racing in Times of Economic Adversity'.

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A continuation of our programme of seminars was agreed. These will be hosted over the next three years by those countries with the largest racing industries (France, Great Britain and Ireland and Germany), for the particular benefit of member countries in which racing is on a smaller scale. These will cover such topics as the Health, Safety and Welfare of Riders, Practical Administration in Thoroughbred Breeding and Racing and Harmonisation of Rules.

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May saw the latest of these Seminars, when France-Galop hosted a two-day event on Anti-Doping Policy. Ten countries were represented: Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Lithuania, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. The 20 attendees included stewards, racing chemists, veterinary officers, administrators and lawyers. This seminar gave the participants the opportunity to gain an overview of doping control and to study the challenges which face us all in this area.

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In July, our Executive Council met in Budapest. The use of Anabolic Steroids was the central topic on the Agenda, and we reached unanimous support on behalf of European and Mediterranean racing authorities for the proposed IFHA stance on banning these substances in racing and training.

The Executive Council also considered the different tax treatment of prize money in the various racing jurisdictions and is now working towards a harmonised policy.

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A new Executive Council was elected following the Budapest meeting comprising

Mr Brian Kavanagh, Ireland (Chairman)

Mr Thierry Lohest, Belgium (Vice-Chairman)

Mr Behcet Homurlu, Turkey (Vice-Chairman)

Mr Omar Skalli, Morocco (Vice-Chairman)

Mr Paul Bittar, Great Britain

Mr Manuel Garcia Orozco, Spain

Mr Zsolt Hegedus, Hungary

Mr Hubert Monzat, France

Mr Rudiger Schmanns, Germany

The term of office of this Council above will run to June 2016.

I am pleased to advise that Bjorn Eklund, the driving force behind the establishment of the European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation, was also elected as Life President of the Federation.

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On our website www.euromedracing.eu, we have now mapped the whereabouts of all the racecourses which stage gallop racing in our member countries – it is the only resource where this information can be found.

Assistance has also been given to several member countries with their ambitions to elevate the status of their races, and to secure international recognition. For example, EMHF supported Spain's successful application for a number of its top races to be elevated to international Listed status. Similarly, we have assisted Hungary in its application for inclusion in the International Cataloguing Standards Booklet

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An important objective of the EMHF is to seek to encourage as many of the countries in our region to sign up fully to as many of the Articles in the International Agreement on Racing and Breeding as possible. A process has begun with countries who have not signed up to certain Articles, or who have only partially done so. This approach has already met with success and we have found that by explaining the current meaning and requirements of an Article, countries are sometimes able to sign up. This process will continue with the objective of achieving harmonisation of as many articles as possible throughout the region.

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The majority of our members are also members of the European Union and we have a standing Sub-Committee whose purpose is to ensure that the key messages of the thoroughbred racing industry across Europe are conveyed effectively to the political decision makers in Brussels. The EMHF fielded experts at various EU workshops, who have managed to convey racing's case effectively, and in July we issued a statement strongly welcoming the decision of the European Commission that a parafiscal levy on online betting activity on French horseracing was compatible with the EU Single Market. This is a very important precedent for many other EU countries.

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I am happy to say that interest in joining the EMHF is strong. Since last year's Conference, membership of has risen from 21 to 23 countries, with the addition of Ukraine and The Netherlands and we are in conversation with several other countries about their possible membership.

Finally, I could not let the work of the European and Mediterranean Horseracing Federation pass without acknowledging the enormous contribution that is being made by our Secretary General, Paull Khan. We are very grateful to Weatherbys for providing Paull's services to the Federation and he has transformed the way in which the Federation operates.

Paull has a passion and enthusiasm for his work and has established very positive working relations with John Pierre Kratzer of the European Trotting Federation and together they are addressing many areas of common concern between the two codes.

The next General Assembly of the EMHF is due to be held in Morocco on Saturday 1st February and the next Executive Council meeting will be in Istanbul on 30th June, the day after the Gazi Derby.