

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HORSE TOURISM

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**NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE HORSE TOURISM**

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NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HORSE TOURISM

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"Bread may feed my body,

but my horse feeds my soul."

Author Unknown

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Foreword

For the development of tourism to a large extent plays a role the availability of natural resources, climatic features, the area of the country, the cultural and historical heritage. The greater the number of the natural and cultural resources and the more carefully and rationally are used and protected, the more are the opportunities for tourism. The more attention is paid to them, the higher the level of tourism development is in the region.

For long time now, it has been proved the fact that tourism is one of the most promising areas of the world economy, which ensures social well-being and quality of life, development of solidarity between countries and regions. The development of tourism and its varieties is largely determined by the availability of rich resources: expanded territory, climatic diversity, abundance of natural and historical and cultural attractions, which contribute to the formation of high tourist and recreational potential in a certain country. One of the varieties of tourism that has huge social and recreational opportunities, this is the equestrian tourism. The Latin word *equestre*, meaning horse, prompts that this is a type of tourism using horses as a means of transportation, as well as a kind of active recreation and sports.

This monograph is a study, that provides a brief historical background on the role of the horse in various spheres of life and on the development of the human society in different historical periods, as well as the development of horseback riding and its benefits. The core of this research is the equestrian tourism and the tool for its development – the equestrian routes.

The following manual discusses the characteristics and organization of the equestrian tourism in general and provides materials for some European countries where the equestrian tourism is traditional.

A detailed attention is paid also to the equestrian industry as an economic sector, that encompasses all the goods and services related to horses and the activities carried out with them in order to meet the needs of end users. The most important sectors of the equestrian industry are considered – horse breeding, dressage, horse training and horseback riding. In addition, the subsectors in which horses participate are analyzed by the type of activity they perform, such as: horse racing, equestrian sports, equestrian tourism, entertainment and therapy for horses, etc. Apart from that, the favorable economic and social environment for horses and the activities practiced with them, including capital, both human and economic, are requirements that can have an important impact on horse production throughout the value chain of the horse sector¹.

So far in the Bulgarian tourist literature there is no manual or publication related to the topic of the equestrian tourism. There is only information about the horse bases located in different parts of the country, their owners, the offers they offer and the price of the

¹ Mihók, Z.S.1@ y Castejón Montijano, R.2, El sector ecuestre y la economía, p.482, Dialnet-El Sector Ecuestre Y La Economía-5959658.pdf

service. Therefore, the author has tried to give an approximate statistic about the number of equestrian bases, the types of equestrian routes and their geographical location. The sources are mainly Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French, Hungarian and American publications and websites. Although many of the countries mentioned in the development are pioneers in the field of the equestrian sports and the equestrian tourism, there is still no European edition that covers the structural nature and specifics of equestrian tourism and equestrian routes. The possibilities of many of the countries in the Balkans and in Europe for the development of this type of tourism have not been analyzed in details, despite the historical and geographical preconditions that are a fact.

In Bulgaria, there exist only one issue titled "Theory and methodology of the disciplines comprehensive riding and endurance", conceptual guide for training riders and horses in the disciplines of comprehensive riding and endurance, which summarizes the experience of leading countries in the equestrian sports, the Bulgarian traditions, the personal practical experience of the authors and theoretical knowledge. The aim is to present a modern system for training the horse and rider in the disciplines of comprehensive riding and endurance². There are some more issues by the same author, Yuri Valev, but they all are related to the horse riding as a sport discipline, but not the book is not tourist-oriented.

The popularity of equestrian tourism is now growing rapidly around the world. Campgrounds are being built everywhere to serve riders, and equestrian tourist routes are being laid. Given the huge interest in equestrian tourism shown by different segments of the population in many countries around the world, the International Equestrian Federation has been paying serious attention to this problem in recent years. Within the federation, a special commission was set up under the supervision of the Italian professor Vittorio de Sanctis, which began to develop rules for international horseback riding, hiking and competitions.³

The publication is intended for tourism professionals, guides, tour guides, students, amateur riders, horse owners, or just for all interested people who want to learn more about the possibilities of the equestrian tourism, its specifics, foreign experience and prospects for its development.

² Yuri Valev, Teoriya I metodika na disipline vsestranna ezda I izdruzhlivost, <http://yurivalev.com/product/>

³ N.A. Kovalchuk, G.O. Sokolva, Horse tourism and features of its organization, Zhurnal: Науковий вісник Львівського національного університету ветеринарної медицини та біотехнологій імені С.З. Ґжицького, (2017), pp.44

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most promising areas of the world economy, which ensures social well-being and quality of life, development of solidarity between countries and regions. The development of tourism and its subspecies is largely determined by the availability of rich resources: expanded territory, climatic diversity, abundance of natural and historical and cultural attractions, which contributes to the formation of high tourist and recreational potential. Equestrian tourism has huge social and recreational opportunities, which is a kind of active recreation and sports, tourism, or a way to move outdoors in nature.

The diverse and rich resources of the country, such as territory, climate, nature, historical and cultural landmarks, contribute to the development of equestrian tourism. Each country has its own unique natural resources and rich cultural and historical heritage, part of which are the centuries-old traditions associated with its development, which make possible the development of various types of tourism, including equestrian tourism, which can return people to their origin and roots.

There are many modes of equestrian tourism, which, unlike other types, is expressed in the opportunities it offers to people, regardless of age, social status and physical data and experience of testers who wish to practice it. Its main advantage is that it is practiced outdoors, in nature, is not dependent on schedule and transport load, is practiced in all seasons and its realization is based on contact with a living being - the horse with which man is in constant communication.

The main characters in this type of tourism are two - the horse and the man. But the main factor is the horse.

Given the above advantages for the development and implementation of this type of tourism, we can say that it has a wide range in terms of its geography and has the potential to be practiced wherever horses are bred. In addition, as it is realized in nature, it can be easily combined with other types of tourism, such as adventure, eco, hunting, fishing and more.

From an economic and cultural point of view, equestrian tourism contributes to the development of human values oriented towards nature, protection of the environment, protection and maintenance of natural territories, preservation of heritage and normalization of human relations; Horseback riding is an unforgettable experience that maintains the physique, the spirit, removes stress, allows communication with a cute animal, whose history has been closely linked to that of man for millennia. Equestrian tourism provides an opportunity to revive the traditional or rural way of life, offering a variety of activities in nature, thus opening new perspectives. Although a relatively new type of tourism for many countries, it also offers new jobs, becoming a secure economic source for the development of the territory.

While in the countries of Central Europe equestrian tourism has its own traditions, in the Balkans it has started to develop in the last 20 years. For this reason, for some of the factors for its development there is insufficient and complete information and annual

statistics on the condition of horses, their production and their number. Rather, there is information on practical advice on horseback riding, the necessary equipment and rules for riding, the availability of horse bases, clubs, schools and more.

This confirms that many countries have the potential to develop this type of tourism, but not yet at the required level. And the greater the diversity, the greater the motivation of potential tourists wishing to practice this type of tourism.

The horse in the human life

Man has been attached to the horse since 5,000 years ago, and this attachment has influenced his productive development. The horse is used not only as a means - a connection with the earth. Its main contribution over the centuries has been its use as a means of transport and as a military vehicle. Empires were expanded thanks to the strength and abilities of the horse in antiquity - a circumstance that again proves the close centuries-old connection of man with the horse.

Native and foreign literature is proud of the hundreds of brilliant pages of works of art dedicated to the horse or the hypoggenre. For thousands of years, the horse has played an important role in human life, which, of course, cannot but be reflected in the literature. From the very beginning of the relationship between man and horse, its` image has been romanticized by various narrators, singers and writers.⁴

Riding his crane, Don Quixote travels the world to expose evil and protect the poor and unfortunate from injustice.

In his book "The Horse, the Chariot and the Horseman", the Bulgarian author Kostadin Rabadjiev builds an idea of the world of the Thracians and the attempt to discover them, but also to understand the world in which our ancestors lived. The book puts the discussion on the means and possibilities of the ancient man to overcome the distances / to pass through the spaces /, to be a master in the inhabited world. This is the gradation in the meaning of the vehicle, which from convenience in the weekday rhythm becomes a means of demonstrating power and prestige in the world of the living, but also Beyond, where the chariot or horse are those who carried the high social status of burials⁵.

The horse also finds a place in children's literature, in which everyone from childhood remembers the brave Pippi, who can lift a horse with both hands, demonstrating strength. On the other hand, the horse is the daily companion of the three characters in their weekday adventures, described by Astred Lindgren.

The horse is a symbol of dynamism and nobility and occupies a permanent place in the work of many Bulgarian artists and sculptures. The horse with his grace has inspired many artists. Even the ancient Greeks adored the beauty of the horse and created exceptional sculptural specimens. The worship of them is connected with the creation of an

⁴ Konete v literaturata, <https://bg.world-animal.com/6332534-horses-in-literature>

⁵ Rabadzhiev, Kostadin, Konyat, kolesnitsata i konnikut, UI „Sv. Kliment Ohridski“, 2014, ISBN: 9789540736679, <http://knigabg.com/index.php?page>

ideal of beauty by merging the horse with man and the creation of a new form, reflected in the mythical image of the centaur⁶.

Horses have a long history as human companions, athletic partners and methods of transportation. The horse also has its place in art, which pays homage to this historical symbiosis between the man and the horse. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, strangely adapted horse statues appeared, often depicted with knight's legs, or legs raised for battle. The first statue in history is the bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, the first Christian emperor.

Picture: 1 Mark Aurelius` Horse statue in Padova, Italy



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=mark+aurelii+horse+statue>

Fortunately, this first standard for a horse statue has survived: erected in 175 BC, it remains in history as the ideal canon for a horse statue⁷.

There are many guides, textbooks and manuals dedicated to the art of riding and horse riding in general. Many manuals were written several centuries ago and present some very interesting views from those times on training methods, the art of riding a horse and other issues. Among them are the manuals of the following authors:

- one of the oldest textbooks on the art of riding, written by Kikuli from Mitani in 1360 BC. Kikkuli was an experienced horseman at the court of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma II.

- Another famous author who writes about horses is the Greek general Xenophon (around 427-354 BC). He writes very competently about the art of riding and in general deals with almost all aspects: from training, nutrition and choosing a horse to the right uniform for a horse and rider.

⁶ Конят в изкуството на Valentin Savchev, 03.11.2017, EzdaPress.com/8632/конят-в-изкуството-на-валентин-савчев/

⁷ Hudozhnikut i koniat: 10 kone proizvedenia na izkustvoto, <https://bul.worldtourismgroup.com/artist-horse-66411>

- The Italian Frederico Grisone developed the basic ideas of Xenophon in his book "*Riding Rules*", published in 1550.

- In 1593, the Frenchman Salomon de la Broy published the first French equestrian guide, *Le Cavalerie François*. Thanks to him, the French school had a huge influence on the European classical style of riding.

- Anthony de Pluvinel, a Frenchman, the first master of the French school, wrote one of the most influential manuals of the time, *L'Instruction du Roy en l'exercice de monter à cheval*.

- The 18th century is the century of Francois Robigon de la Guerrier, who in 1733 published the *Ecole de Cavalerie*, which became the most influential textbook on the art of equestrianism at the time. He is believed to be the founder of modern training - Guerrier's methods developed further and became the basis of the Spanish riding school in Vienna.

Thanks to these teachers and their instructions, the first riding schools were developed.

The Spanish Riding School in Vienna (SPANISCHE HOFREITSCHULE) is 454 years old. The history of the school is performed as a fairy tale with palaces, emperors, music and dances.

Picture 2: The Spanish Riding School in Vienna



Source: <https://www.vienna-unwrapped.com/spanish-riding-school-vienna/>

The Spanish Riding School is located in the center of Vienna and is part of the Imperial Palace complex. It is the oldest riding school in the world and the only one that trains horses and their riders in classical training techniques. The school's stables are housed in one of the most valuable Renaissance buildings preserved to this day, Stallburg. The castle was

built by Emperor Ferdinand I as the residence of his son Maximilian II, but was not completed until his accession to the throne and he continued to inhabit the old palace⁸.

The horse is associated with various cultural fields, including museums, literature, the arts, equestrian exhibitions and folklore events.

In the European countries, the horse is very popular, despite the urbanization and the post-industrial era. There is almost no country without its own rich and life traditions related to horses. Equestrian centers of national importance continue to be maintained, such as the National Riding School of Saumur (France) /l'Ecole nationale d'équitation de Saumur/, the numerous German equestrian centers, the Spanish School in Vienna /l'École espagnole de Vienne/ and the Haras de Alter do Chão (Portugal).

Many museums are dedicated to the horse in Europe and around the world.

In **France**, the Chantilly Museum of the Living Horse is the most famous. In addition to its beautiful collections, arranged in 31 rooms, it offers over 150,000 visitors a year of educational presentations and shows with a high artistic level. We should also mention the Musée du cheval de courses and the Saumur Horse Museum, the Musée du cheval de Saumur, as well as several other more modest museums dedicated to the drawn horse (Relais du Cheval de draft comtois à Levie, Musée du cheval de draft de Luchapt near Poitiers, etc.) or local agricultural traditions associated with the horse.

France also has several collections of horse-drawn carriages. Among them is the collection of cars from **the French National Horse Farm**, which includes several sites.

In **Belgium**, the Spa Spaadois Horse Museum is worth a visit.

In Pinerolo, **Italy**, there is also a very beautiful historical museum dedicated to cavalry.

Germany is also home to the Deutsches Pferduseum in Verden (Aller) and Hippomaxx, a museum of horses, in Münster, Westphalia.

As for **Austria**, Vienna hosts the Lipizzaner Horse Museum.

Switzerland is also home to rich collections of horse-drawn carriages. One of the most famous is in the La Sarraz Horse Museum (MUCHE), /see Appendix 10/. It preserves the cultural heritage associated with horses in Switzerland, traces the evolution of the horse over the centuries and dedicates temporary exhibitions to it. A dozen periodicals devoted to equestrian and equestrian sports are published in whole Europe, such as European Journal of Sport Science⁹, Journal of Equine Veterinary Science¹⁰, Trainer magazine¹¹, "Horse & Hound Back"¹², "Horsemanship"¹³, "Konna ezda" /in Bulgarian/¹⁴, etc.

⁸ 454 godini Ispansko uchilishte za ezda vuv Viena, BGMEDIA.AT – Avstria, 10/01/2016, <https://bgmedia.at/450-%>

⁹ European-journal-of-sport-science <https://idrottsforum.org/european-journal-of-sport-science>

¹⁰ Journal-of-equine-veterinary-science <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-equine-veterinary-science>

¹¹ "Trainer", <https://trainermagazine.com/>

¹² "Horse & Hound Back", Published by TI Media Limited, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin>

¹³ Horsemanship magazine, <http://horsemanshipmagazine.co.uk/>

¹⁴ "Konna ezda", <https://www.360mag.bg/posts/97977/horse-2>

There are many museums dedicated to the horse in other places outside Europe, such as Lexington (Kentucky, USA), Kildare (Ireland) or Moscow (Russia)¹⁵. Among the American museums are: the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame & Museum, preserving the history of the American Quarter Horse, Texas¹⁶; The Carriage Museum of America, The IMH, which is the largest and most comprehensive museum in the world dedicated to exploring the important history of all horses and their impact on human civilization¹⁷.

The equestrian industry

The concept of the horse industries is not the same everywhere, either in different places or in scientific literature. The differences arise because new sectors are created from time to time, while others disappear, and the role of horses does not have the same importance in different countries and cultures¹⁸.

People and organizations, united by common goals, aspirations, orientation of professional activity, as well as connected by common commercial interests, form a kind of common whole, which can be called industry¹⁹.

The horse industry, or equine industry, is an economic activity associated with horses. It also includes agribusiness activities related to the use, possession or ownership of horses, as well as leisure activities and related economic activity that provides associated goods and services. The horse industry is more varied than almost any other sector either within agriculture or in the wider leisure industry. It can be divided into two parts:

- Activities based on the use, possession or ownership of horses (Core activities)
- Suppliers of horse related goods and services for those core activities (providers to the core)²⁰.

The equestrian industry is a multi-billion dollar industry involving almost every country in the world, in one form or another. Horses are expensive creatures for breeding and maintenance, and the equestrian world is the second most expensive sports group in the world. The economies of many countries were in recession, and this affected the equestrian industry. In recent years, she has been trying to recover, but is having a harder time²¹.

The equestrian industry is an economic sector that encompasses all goods and services related to horses and the activities carried out with them in order to meet the needs of end users. The most important sectors of the equestrian industry are breeding,

¹⁵ /Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval pp. 126 .7

¹⁶ Horse Museums Around the Globe, <http://www.theequinest.com/horse-museums/>

¹⁷ International Museum of Horse, <http://imh.org/about/about-imh/>

¹⁸ Csilla Obadovics - Laszlo Kulcsar: Horse industry in Hungary: the rebirth through tourism and leisure? JUIIN 2015, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283351497>

¹⁹ http://www.goldmustang.ru/special/our_products/books/2329.html - © 2014 goldmustang.ru

²⁰ Market Information, "British Equestrian Trade Association - Market Information". www.beta-uk.org.

²¹ The Horse Industry and The Economy, Introduction, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~swans20m/classweb/Untitled-11.html>

breeding, dressage, horse training and horseback riding. In addition, the sub-sectors in which horses participate can be analyzed by the type of activity they perform, such as: horse racing, equestrian sports, equestrian tourism, entertainment and therapy for horses, etc. Apart from that, the favorable economic and social environment for horses and the activities practiced with them, including capital, both human and economic, are requirements that can have an important impact on the production of horses throughout the value chain of horses²².

As it was mentioned above, the equestrian industry encompasses all goods and services related to the horse, which is, above all, a living being that breathes, feeds, gets sick and has a number of functions. For this reason, we must mention that it is closely related to nutrition, training, veterinary medicine, the textile industry.

The equine sector plays an important role in several countries around the world, each with its own characteristics. Several examples illustrate this diversity. In Canada, 950,000 horses have an economic contribution of \$ 15 billion and stimulate exports with a contribution of over \$ 100 million, especially in the horsemeat market²³.

In Britain, there are 900,000 horses and ponies for 57 million people, especially racehorses.

In Ireland, another kingdom of horses, the economic branch of horse racing is such an economic engine that the Irish government supports it at € 23 million a year because it alone has a turnover of € 1 billion and employs 25,000 people.

All of these countries emphasize that the horse, which is highly established everywhere in the rural economy, plays a very important economic, social and environmental role, for example for

- the well-being of society,
- the gender equality - the majority of European practitioners are women
- the employment or sustainable development of the rural areas²⁴.

The lifespan of equidae is longer than that of traditionally fed animals. The horse lives an average of 20 years or more. And unlike other animals, most horses are mainly used for racing or riding on certain trails or routes. Therefore, the horse remains part of the industry for a long time, constantly consuming agricultural products such as feed, grain, bedding and forest products. In addition, the horse continues to generate and contribute to the economy in a variety of ways, including by paying fees for horse entertainment and racing, equipment rental, accommodation and food, competition and auction fees, truck and trailer purchases, fuel purchase, riding, driving and stable equipment purchases, use of veterinary pharmaceuticals, fees for competitions and riding, boarding, training, agricultural and veterinary services, purchase of tractor and agricultural machinery. All this variety of

²² Mihók, Z.S.1@ y Castejón Montijano, R.2, El sector ecuestre y la economía, p.482, Dialnet-El Sector Ecuestre Y La Economía-5959658.pdf

²³ Rapport d'activités et recommandations de la commission d'identification des équidés, Canada Hippique (2004), www.equinecanada.ca.

²⁴ Conférence internationale sur le cheval, Skara, Suède, 12 juin 2001.<http://eu2001.se/eu2001/main/>, EU EQUUS 2001,

services related to the equestrian industry creates a number of employment opportunities for permanent and seasonal workers²⁵.

According to the specialized edition for equestrian sport "Equestrian Arithmetic", the modern equestrian industry can be divided into several areas²⁶.

The first is equestrian sport, which includes three classic Olympic disciplines - dressage, show jumping and triathlon; non-Olympic sports officially recognized by the International Equestrian Federation: competitions in driving, haircutting, jumping and distance. Racetracks are **the second** element and are subdivided into competitions (smooth and with obstacles) of purebred English horses, competitions of purebred Arabian horses and competitions - draftsmen and pacers.

In **third place** remain the popular exhibitions and championships of the breed, the most common exhibitions of purebred Arabian horses, so loved by Middle Eastern sheikhs.

The most important investments for the equestrian industry are in equestrian sports. Equestrian sport is a discipline fundamental to the Olympic Games and developed in many European countries, where the horse is a tradition. /See Table 1/

Table 1: The 5 top countries participated in the Olympic games for 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016 and in the World Horse competitions in 2006, 2010, 2014.

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
Germany	6	6	5
Holland	6	4	2
Great Britain	5	5	1
Denmark	0	1	2
USA	0	0	5

Source: Konnaya industria, <https://businessemirates.ae/content/pr/383/11638/>

According to data from different studies from "The European Horse Network", there has been made an estimation of the Horse sector in Europe, as follows from the table below:

Table 2: the Horse sector in Europe, Key figures for 2010

A year economic impact	100 billion euros
Full time jobs equivalent provided by the sector	400 000
Horses in Europe	6 million or more
Permanent grassland given over to horse grazin	6 million hectares
The growing of the number of horse riders	growing by 5% a year

Source: "The European Horse Industry in the European Regions", <https://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu/horse-industry/>

²⁵ The Equine Industry Structure, https://equine.ca.uky.edu/files/equine_industry_structure_1.pdf

²⁶ Vadim and Igor Bochkarevi, Konnaya arithmetika, vol. 2/69, 2017, <https://businessemirates.ae/content/pr/383/11638/>

The figures below give an idea of the size of the sector on a world base.

According to the FAOstat for 2014, there are almost 60 million horses in the world (58,832,221) which is expected to be pretty similar in present day. That means there is about 1 horse per every 120 people. In 2004, there were an estimated 58,419,322 in the world, meaning there has been an increase in over 400,000 individuals in 10 years. This positive figure proves that the attention to the horses is more than good and that the equine science has developed a lot. The data in details show the following picture: /See fig.1/

- North America has over 5 million more than Asia behind them. Their total comes in at 19,487,398. It means that almost a third of the entire world's horses lives in these two continents. Two countries – the Unites States and Mexico are leaders.

- The second largest continent is Asia with 14,322,137 horses in estimation. The reason for that is that it is not a secret that Asia is home to some of the most open landscapes on the planet. A large percentage of Asia's equine animals are wild due to having expansive open and fairly uninhabited spaces.

- Europe is far behind with the 5th lowest population (5,739,271). It could be argued that this would be expected as it is the second smallest continent in existence, with racing and eventing being so popular in Europe. 5 of the top 6 countries in relation to exportation value, are in Europe.

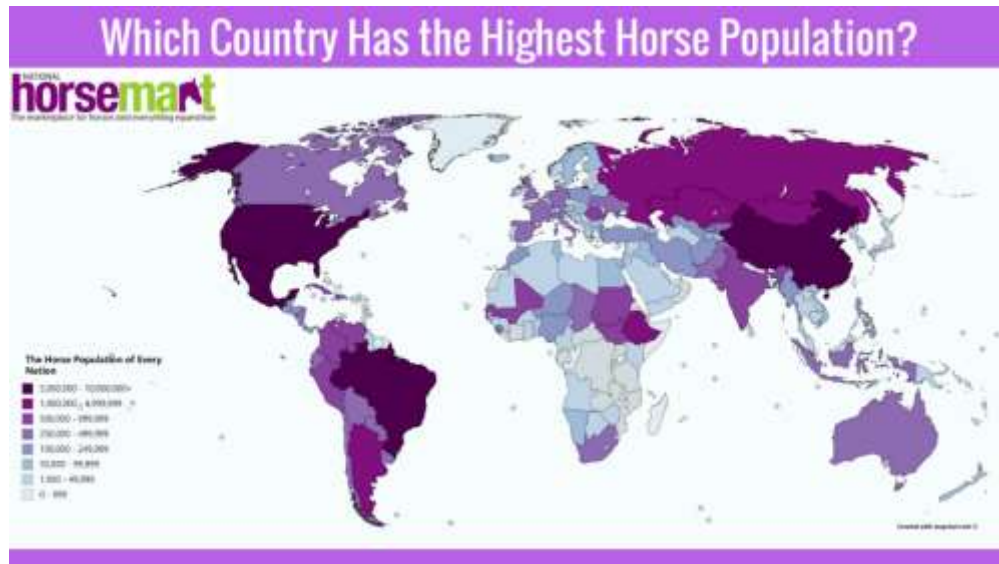
- Suprising is the fact that Oceania have 404,766 horses, although less than 1% of the world population live there²⁷.

Figure 1: Horse population by continents.



Source: 2018: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com>

²⁷ <https://www.horsemart.co.uk/community/news-events/which-countries-have-the-most-horses>

Figure 2: Top countries with the largest number of horses for 2018.

Source: 2018: <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/>²⁸,
<https://equimanagement.com/articles/trends-in-the-equine-industry>

From the information of the source / See figure 1/, it is evident that for 2018 the largest number of horses is in the USA - 10.26 million. The equestrian industry has a direct impact on the US economy of \$ 39 billion, with a total impact of \$ 102 billion. which also means a lot of costs. In addition, the equestrian industry provides 1.4 million full-time equivalent jobs. They possess around 18% of the world's horses (10,260,000) which is a staggering number considering there are 195 nations around the world. There are some nations in the top 10 however that might come as more of a surprise. Mexico are the second biggest horse owners with 6,355,000. This probably comes as a shock as they are not really known for their equine successes. However they do import over 130,000 horses each year, as seen in a FAO report. In third place is China with - 6.027 million. Two other nations that come as a surprise are Mongolia (2,995,754) and Kazakhstan (1,784,500).

Russia takes the ninth place with 1.4 million horses.²⁹

According to the publication "Equestrian Industry of Russia", the equestrian industry reflects the state problems and peculiarities of the equestrian business, for which key aspects are the racetracks - racetracks, equestrian sports, as well as purebred and half-bred horse breeding³⁰.

Today there are about 65 million horses in the world and 250 breeds are bred.

²⁸ Which Countries Have The Most Horses? <https://www.horsemart.co.uk/community/news-events/which-countries-have>

²⁹ Konnaya industria (Loshadi), /2019/12/2<https://www.tadviser.ru/index.php>, A

³⁰ «Konnaya industria Rossii», 2014, r. <https://foliant.su/konnaya-industriya-rossii>

Countries such as France, Germany, Spain and especially Russia are considered great horsepower. Until before the revolution, horses brought huge incomes to the Russian treasury. Horses are the pride of every civilized country, and horse breeding and equestrian sports bring not only joy, but also a lot of money. The main thing, however, is that from time immemorial, the horse has been as close to man as the cat and the dog - creatures that pay a man with love for love, and the role of the horse is a helper to adults and a teacher to children.³¹

Germany is a country where the importance of the horse has also declined in recent decades among the general population. While in 2009 about 16 million people were still interested in riding, today there are 14 million; out of a total of 4 million Germans who are engaged in equestrian activities in general, 1.34 million ride frequently, according to AVA survey for 2009 and 2019. According to a representative survey conducted in Saxony, /the Saxon Survey 2019/, on the entire German population, two thirds of the population approve of proposals related to horses for themselves or their families: carriage rides, therapeutic riding, riding holidays for children, riding as a healthy sport. The day trips on horseback are extremely popular in Germany³².

There are 238 horse bases or horse ranches in the region of Germany³³ and a lot of equestrian centers, among which is the Riesenbeck International, which is not only home of the local riding club, but also the European base of the Longines World Equestrian Academy³⁴.

Until the 20th century, the horse was closely associated with the army and transport, as well as with agricultural tasks. Throughout this century, as technology displaces these animals from their traditional functions, the horse has become increasingly important in sports practice, developing existing disciplines and creating new ones. All of them can be included in the term "Horsemanship". Activities such as Polo originated in Persia 500 years BC.

In England, the first horse races were held in the 16th century as a derivative of the classic fox hunting.

In Spain, horseback riding began its military boom in the early 20th century, with the 1920s and 1930s being considered the "Golden Age" of Spanish riding. The decline of military riding began in the 1970s, and riding reappeared in the 1980s and 1990s with the generalization of the practice of horseback riding in the civilian sphere. The first Gallop competitions in Spain took place in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and Madrid in the 19th century, the Lasarte Hippodrome (San Sebastian) was built in 1916 and the Zarzuela Racecourse (Madrid) in the 1930s.

³¹ Ecaterina Zabegina, Konnaya industria Rossii sevodnia i perspektivyi iyo razvitia, <https://www.zaryadyepark.ru/schedule>

³² The future market potential of the Germany equestrian industry <https://www.spogahorse.com/news/up-to-date/the-future-market-potential-of-the-germany-equestrian-industry>.

³³ Horse ranches in Germany, Outdoor active, <https://www.outdooractive.com/en/horse-ranches/germany/horse-ranches-in-germany/>

³⁴ Riesenbeck International, <https://riesenbeck-international.com/en/about-us>

Horseback riding companies supply the necessary riding equipment, such as saddles, bridles and stirrups. Helmets are usually issued, but for people who have decided to practice this sport, it is necessary to purchase a team that is fully adapted to the individual. Regarding the type of clothing or clothing that is needed, you need pants that fit as close to the legs as possible, but without being too tight. Ordinary sportswear, such as tracksuits and jeans, is not preferable and leads to rapid fatigue. Boots or shoes with a good sole and a small heel should be worn to prevent the foot from getting into the stirrup. It is important to wear clothing that covers the hands and feet for greater protection and, even gloves that are used by almost all riders, designed to avoid injuring the toes when the reins are rubbed.

Thanks to international organisations representing racing and and sport, the figures on the number of events is quite precise at a racing and International (FEI) level : 78 000 races a year and 10 000 national sporting events a year. However, this only represents in the sports horse sector the top elite and does not take into account the hundreds of smaller competitions being held every week throughout Europe in very many regions.

This dynamism of the horse activities is also shown by some figures representing the growth of this sector: as an example, the number of horse riders has grown +5%/year. While total revenues from farming have fallen around 60% from their peak income level in 1995 - market dynamics in agriculture and leisure are expected to amplify this further in future years, making the equestrian, horse racing and betting sector an important contributor for regional growth and a dynamic sector of interest for EU future economic development³⁵.

Factors that would hinder the development of the equestrian sector

The significant development of the sector observed in recent decades risks slowing down in the future. The number of horses in the suburbs can create growing problems of coexistence with other users of natural spaces such as cyclists, joggers, etc., which will inevitably lead to problems for the development of routes.

Difficulties may arise in accessing forests. In many parts of Europe, foresters and authorities are closely monitoring the protection of plantations. Not all riders who go out in nature have guides - instructors or are licensed riders, so measures must be taken to lead to a positive result.

The sector is a real economic factor that creates jobs all year round. It contributes to the vocational training of young people and meets both the needs for agricultural diversification and strong public demand for services. With an extensive farming system, the equestrian industry is a real opportunity for sustainable development, the environment, and to improve rural areas and their heritage.

The main weakness of the equine sector lies primarily in the fact that its strengths are neither known to the population nor recognized by politicians and the actors themselves in the sector. This shortcoming is due to the different and complex structure of the sector and

³⁵ Horse Activities, <https://www.europeanhorsenetwork.eu/horse-industry/horse-activities/>

the inadequate communication system for correcting the still elite image given by all activities affecting the horse. Training of carriers is also incomplete and does not make it possible to ensure the technical, economic and social development of the sector, in particular with regard to its sustainability and added value demand.

The concentration of horses in certain regions is likely to create coexistence problems between different users of natural spaces and thus may slow down the development of the equine sector. All stakeholders need to enter into a dialogue in order to find optimal solutions to the problems. The often conflicting legislative objectives of land use planning and animal protection also pose a risk.

The often contradictory goals related to land use planning and animal protection, defined on the one hand by the Agricultural Land Protection Act and on the other by the Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act, can also be a brake³⁶, as well as with regard to the equestrian industry, they must be linked to spatial planning and focus on animal welfare, in particular as regards the accommodation of horses and the space required for their movement.

Due to its diversity, the equestrian sector has not yet been sufficiently studied. There is not enough information for all participants in it, respectively, there are no statistics. To be competitive, it depends on the participants in it, their training and development and selection of effective tools that are engines for its development.

There is no way to predict what will happen and how the equestrian industry will develop in the future. Riders and enthusiasts can only hope that the economy will return to its former strength and the world of horses will continue to be strong³⁷, as they themselves.

Horse breeding and rearing must be part of regional and rural development policy, helping to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The equestrian industry offers many opportunities for the economy, especially the rural one. It creates jobs, provides training opportunities for young people and creates a social connection between the city and the country.

Without producing food, equestrian activities contribute to improving the competitiveness of agriculture, protecting the environment and biodiversity, reviving the genetic and cultural heritage of breeds and cultural heritage. Ideally, they also contribute to the diversification of agricultural activities by offering ancillary services in the field of equestrian tourism.

The intervention of public authorities through direct payments, financial support for breeding organizations, farms and horse farms must be a mandatory basis on which the sector must be able to develop its activities for the benefit of society³⁸.

³⁶ Zakon za sobstvenostta i polzuvaneto na zemedelskite zemi, www.mzh.government.bg ›ZSPZZ

³⁷ Looking Ahead, The Horse Industry and The Economy, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~swans20m/classweb>

³⁸ Quelques conseils de bonne conduite pour les cavaliers des forêts (Source: IMPACT ÉCONOMIQUE, SOCIAL ET ENVIRONNEMENTAL DU CHEVAL EN SUISSE Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007, www.avic.ch, pp 137

Horseback riding

Originating in antiquity, the art of riding is an integral part of the culture and history of many Balkan and European nations, a bridge between man and nature.

Analyses of horse teeth from Ukraine proves that the riding began 6000 years ago. /See fig.3/. The appearance of the horse and the riding changed the course of the history³⁹.

Figure3: The origin of horseback riding.



Source: The Origin of Horseback Riding, jstor.org

Horseback riding is also known by the term Equestrianism, from the Latin word equestr- or equus, which means rider or rider⁴⁰. The English term horse riding (British English) or the American horseback riding is often used.

There is much controversy about when exactly the first horses were domesticated, as well as when exactly the horse was first used for riding. Evidence suggests that horses were first ridden around 3500 BC. Other circumstantial evidence suggests that horses were first ridden and much later used as a towing and transport vehicle. There is evidence that around 3000 BC, near the Dnieper River and the Don River, the horse played an important role in human life, as evidenced by the remains of a stallion who was buried at this place, between the two rivers, in which there was a slight wear of the teeth, which in turn proves that it was not used for transport⁴¹.

³⁹ D. Anthony, Dim. Telegin, D. Brown, The origine of horse back riding, Scientific American, Vol. 265, No. 6 (DECEMBER 1991), pp. 94-101, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24938835>

⁴⁰ "equestrian" – definition of equestrian by the Free Online Dictionary, Thesaurus and Encyclopedia". Thefreedictionary.com.

⁴¹Chamberlin, J. Edward Horse: How the Horse has Shaped Civilization New York: Blue Bridge 2006 ISBN 0-9742405-9-1/

Referring to archeology, biology, art, literature and ethnography, Chamberlin traces the relationship between horse and man throughout history. A connection that dates from the Ice Age to the Post-Industrial Age, a period during which horses provided sustenance, transportation, status, camaraderie, and the opportunity to create and expand empires. A number of historical facts in the book prove that the early people of Asia and Europe not only used horses for hunting and food, but also painted beautiful horses on the walls of their caves.

According to Deb Bennett's, and Ph.D. in Paleontology, Director of the Equine Studies Institute, California, the horse has played an important role throughout human history around the world, both in war and in peaceful pursuits such as transportation, trade, and agriculture. Horses lived in North America but died out at the end of the Ice Age. The horses were brought back to North America by European explorers, beginning with Columbus' second voyage in 1493. She also points out that the most accurate early archaeological evidence of equidae used for work was horses. Chariot burials around 2500 BC represent the most direct hard evidence of horses used as working animals⁴².

Riding, as a sport, does not require any initial specific skills. It doesn't matter if a person is absolutely healthy or not. It has an extremely healthy effect on the nervous system of people - calms the psyche, prevents stress and trains muscles. The benefits of riding were also discovered by the ancient Greek doctors, who found that it strengthens the whole body doctors.

Hippocrates contributed to this by conducting research on sick and wounded people, finding that riding helped them recover quickly.

A number of scientists have also studied the benefits of riding, such as the Swede Celsius, who recommended the benefits of riding in the treatment of the gastrointestinal tract.

In 1751, the French philosopher Denis Diderot wrote a treatise on horseback riding and its significance.

The general conclusion among physicians is that riding has a positive effect on a number of systems such as the nervous, respiratory, digestive, endocrine and improves blood circulation⁴³.

Riding is especially important for children in many countries. Just as football is for Bulgarian children, so is riding for many Western European children. Horses with their calming effect are an advantage for children who accept them as friends. For children, the initial walks are mandatory, and the real ride begins after 6 months. As all muscle groups are formed, it is desirable to start riding at the earliest possible age to develop the body, coordination and orientation. Therefore, it is also recommended for children with autism⁴⁴.

⁴² Bennett, Deb (1998) 'Conquerors: The Roots of New World Horsemanship. Amigo Publications Inc; 1st edition. ISBN 0-9658533-0-6, p. 151/

⁴³ Ezdata – nachin da izrazish sebe si, 05.01.2015, <https://royalhorse.bg/bg/news>

⁴⁴ Nikolay Minev, Perfectniyat sport – ezda, 07.04.2014, Vsichko za ezdata, <http://horses-bg.net/ezda/ezdata-perfektniyat-sport>

Horseback riding is both an art, a hobby and a sport in which Man has his place by interacting with another living being, ie. as a partner of the horse, therefore, the two are the main subjects involved in horse riding. Horseback riding is known as a typology of equestrian tourism. It is associated with riding a horse or riding a horse for a specific purpose and for a specific time. For this reason, it is characterized by variables such as time and route. It is usually realized with the help of a guide.

Riding, as explained earlier, is one of the typologies of equestrian tourism and has some advantages in its practice. Going to a horse base for specific training has some requirements and more if you are engaged in riding, which may require several days, such as:

- Travel
- Accommodation and meals
- Equestrian activity

The sources of income with a large contribution are:

- Shops
- Restaurants
- Cultural centers and tourist trips
- Additional tourist excursions⁴⁵

All activities related to horses - breeding, breeding and care, sales, equestrian training, preparation and conduct of sessions in equestrian sports, equipment, transport, hippotherapy, veterinary services and any other services are subject to equestrian facilities. Equestrian bases are specialized facilities created for the purpose of breeding and rearing horses and can offer various types of services in the field of equestrian sports and equestrian tourism⁴⁶. The purpose of the horse bases is to build, educate and maintain care and welfare for horses.

Rural development programs offer funding for the construction of horse bases under measure 6/4⁴⁷. For the realization of the financing the sites must meet certain requirements.

To contain stables and staff rooms, furnished according to certain standards, their activity to be subordinated to the World Horse Riding and Sports Associations.

They must comply with the rules for feeding and watering the horses, to have mandatory ventilation, hygiene. There are also standards in the stalls and arenas to ensure proper training and normal life of the horses. /See fig. 4/

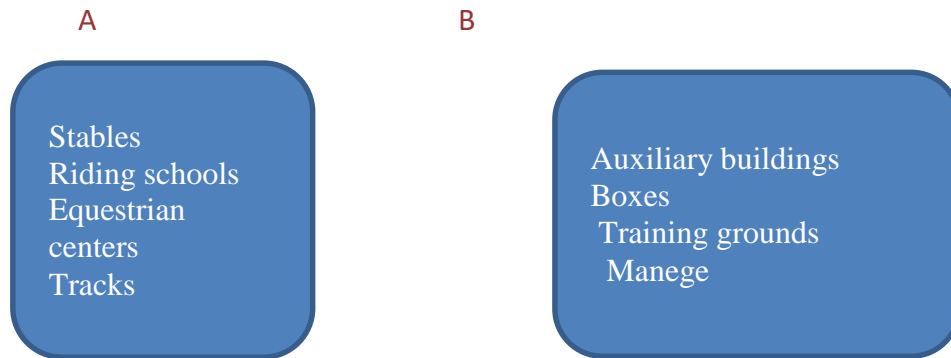
⁴⁵ <https://www.turismo-ecuestre.com/tipologias-del-turismo-ecuestre.html>

⁴⁶ Investitsia v konna baza, 27.10.2015 finansirane.eu.

⁴⁷ Programa za razvitie na selskite rayoni po iarka 6.4. Investitsii v podkrepa na zemedelskite deinosti, Finansirane.eu.

Figure 4: Horse base infrastructure

The infrastructure includes:



Source: Author`s idea

Stables, riding schools, equestrian centers and runways can be operated without state aid by private individuals or legal entities, or by the infrastructure owners themselves.

The buildings and training grounds are designed to accommodate and train horses.

The bases can cover several types of operations (training, rental of stables, horses or various equipment)⁴⁸.

The different horse bases, depending on the infrastructure and organization, may include different services:

- boarding of horses on a boarding basis;
- horse riding lessons;
- equestrian lessons;
- equestrian tourism with mountain riding, hiking and extreme hikes;
- Riding in the arena;
- Veterinary services;
- Equipment rental
- Transportation of horses;
- Additional services for breeding horses such as: grazing in open pastures, outdoor

training.

Offering these services facilitates equestrian tourism. In addition to being a starting point for equestrian routes, the bases host all events for the development of tourism through the horse.

⁴⁸ Impact Économique, Social Et Environnemental Du Cheval En Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007 <https://www.cofichev.ch/Htdocs/Files/v/5870.pdf>, pp 63

The activities offered by the bases in the second type of equestrian tourism / both types are explained in detail in the chapter Equestrian tourism - tourism on the back of the horse and tourism through the horse /, can be varied:

- themed dinners with show programs;
- horse and chariot racing;
- fighting horse skills;
- horse riding lessons for beginners and advanced;
- training of competitors in various disciplines;
- preparation and rehearsals of historical reconstructions from different historical periods - drawing of chariots, tour with Thracian chariots, cutting with swords from the back of the horse, etc.
- fairs and festivals related to traditions and mythology, folk epics, historical events.
- training camps;
- a place for seminars with lessons and demonstrations.

Horse routes starting from the bases can be of different duration:

- short - up to 2 hours;
- medium - from 4 to 6 hours;
- With a long duration - from 6 to 72 hours.

As the routes are realized entirely in nature and they can include additional services such as obstacles with extreme experiences, visiting natural and cultural - historical sites, such as mounds, rock formations, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, caves and more, they become objects of ecological, cultural and adventure or extreme tourism at the same time.

Horseback riding tips

The forest is a fragile natural environment, under strong pressure from people. Atmospheric pollution, mining, sports, logging, etc. In order to guarantee a complete forest for our descendants, it is necessary for everyone to make an effort to observe it. Here are some good driving tips for riders:

- Use only existing roads (depending on the available markings)
- Observe the signs during forestry work
- Avoid undergrowth and soft soil.
- Tie horses in such a way as to avoid damaging the trees.
- The banks of the streams deteriorate easily, they must be spared and the fordings must be observed.
- Respect private property (forest, fields)
- Access to protected areas is prohibited
- Remember to obey traffic laws and regulations
- Keep yourself pleasant to other users / Quelques conseils de bonne conduite pour les cavaliers des forêts⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Impact Économique, Social Et ENVIRONNEMENTAL Du Chevall En Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007, www.avic.ch, pp 105

Equestrian culture

Equestrian culture is a special kind of culture. Modern humanity owes a lot to the horse. Tens of thousands of years ago, the horse was used for food, then for transport, later in agriculture and in the meantime for military purposes. The Bulgarians came on the back of the horse, but the equestrian culture of the Bulgarians is at an extremely low level, despite the potential for the development of equestrian tourism, given the geographical conditions and the number of equestrian bases in the country. In Italy, France, Germany, equestrian traditions are part of everyday life and equestrian culture is up to standard.

The horse has played a significant role in the development of a number of tribes and societies, which initially perceived it as an aid in their lives. These societies are Scythians, Mongols, Turkic tribes.

The culture of the horse is hidden in the depths of time and its beginnings are rooted in nomadic tribes. They were the first to breed and use horses in everyday life in the regions of Eurasia.

The life of the nomads without the horse was unthinkable, with the help of which they changed their location, overcame long distances in a short time, developed trade, participated in hostilities. A number of facts confirm that the horse was brought from Europe to other continents, and in the 16th century horses began to be exported across the European continent from Spain.

Along with what was used on the horse was the care and attentive attitude towards it, in order to keep it in good health and preserve its strength and qualities.

Although the horse has long ceased to play the role of a vehicle, it continues to be used for horseback riding for recreation and entertainment.

Initially, horses roamed the world like other untamed animals. However, all this changed when the first man jumped on a horse and saw the world from this height. Today, horse racing is a multibillion-dollar industry that attracts athletes and breeders from around the world. However, horses and humans have a long history, although no one knows where or when they were first ridden or domesticated.

The history of horses dates back about 50 million years to an animal called Hyracotherium, which is native to North America. Historically, horses crossed from Asia to America during the Ice Age. However, the ancestors of all horses disappeared in America 10,000 years ago.

Exactly when the first horseman appeared is not proven.

According to a number of reliable evidences, it is assumed that horse riding began around 4500 BC. Many horse paintings date back to around 3000 BC. Chariots carved by horses can also be seen in caves tracing the time of the Bronze Age. However, it is believed that the earliest records of horseback riding in the tombs of Egypt date back to 1600 BC.

Horse-drawn carriages were used for transport and military purposes as early as 1600 BC by the Egyptians. Some people claim that the Brahmins of India were the first horsemen in history. According to Chinese culture, horseback riding has existed since 4000 BC.

During the Middle Ages, between the 5th and 15th centuries, horses were classified according to their use, not by breed - horses suitable for combat and horses for transport. Today's riding styles have been strongly influenced by ancient horse culture.

The basic elements of both the English and Western riding styles are similar, although the equipment and purpose are different. The western style of riding is thought to date back to the mid-1600s in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

While the English style originated in Europe and is considered a traditional way of riding a horse, the rider regularly communicates with the horse⁵⁰.

The world of horses has long been a protected place for men, but today in Europe women make up three quarters of riders. Young girls are especially numerous and have introduced a more sentimental approach and a new relationship with animals.

Across Europe, the horse is already approaching the family of pets, especially in German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries. Together with the dog and the cat, he now occupies a high place in the hierarchy of animals - domestic workers. This development does not go without consequences for the way it looks in European society. From that moment on, she took a very critical look at the brutality of some riders, the excessive use of the whip, doping, fatigue or poor security conditions. In this way, the welfare of the horse, both in the stable and during its use, becomes a major concern in all European countries⁵¹.

- The leisure horse activity has become a social marker for riders and leaders close to nature. He stands between the blood horse, often a symbol of high social status, and the drawn horse, an emblem of obedience, humility and hard work. Horse welfare is one of the current topics in animal welfare. While many people have basic knowledge, many newcomers ignore the basic principles that are essential to ensuring breeding that respects the needs of equidae. All actors in the sector agree that the lasting improvement of the situation of horses in Switzerland requires enhanced communication of knowledge about the needs of horses. However, with the gradual reduction of cavalry, as well as the reduction of the share given to horses in agricultural training, knowledge of horse care and care is no longer transmitted as effectively as before.

The world of horses has long been a protected place for men, but today in Europe women make up three quarters of riders. Young girls are especially numerous and have introduced a more sentimental approach and a new relationship with animals.

The Equestrian sport

Horseback riding marks the beginning of modern equestrian sport, which includes various disciplines and styles of horseback riding. The first historical records of the use, taming and riding of horses date back to the Bronze Age.

⁵⁰ A Brief History Of Horseback Riding, May 4, 2020 | Misc. Posts, Press
<https://www.horsesinthemorning.com/a-brief-history-of-horseback-riding/>

⁵¹ Impact Économique, Social Et ENVIRONNEMENTAL Du Chevall En Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007, www.avic.ch, pp. 126

The first horse races were organized in Rome, and in ancient Greece began the chariot races. Knights in the Middle Ages developed horseback riding as a sport.

Equestrian history has a rich and varied history, dating back to the ancient Olympic Games, when chariot races were one of the main spectacles from 680 BC. Only after the revival of the modern Olympic Games in 1896, in 1912 jumps, dressage and competitions are included. It was the inclusion of equestrian sport in the Olympic Games that led to the creation of the FEI in 1921, following the imposition of the need for internationally approved rules and qualification systems that are important for the integrity of competition⁵².

The Equestrian sport is a generalized concept that means different ways of riding, types of competitions, sports games and exercises using horseback riding and horseback riding.⁵³

In 1900, equestrian sports were first included in the Olympic Games⁵⁴, in which to this day participate 3 main disciplines - dressage, obstacle course and all-round riding. The traditional styles in the games are English style and Western.⁵⁵

The revival of equestrian sport, like all Olympic sports, has its social significance because of its contribution to strengthening peace, friendship and understanding between nations. According to the creator of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre De Coubertin, this is the main mission of the Olympic Games⁵⁶.

The main characteristics that distinguish equestrian sports, unlike other Olympic sports, are the following:

- there is no division between the sexes.
- a man competes with an animal.

In 1921 the International Equestrian Federation was established.

The most common variety is traditional horse racing. Equestrian sport is a beautiful, aristocratic sport that requires a lot of training and combines many elements characteristic of the horse and the rider - strength, skills, calmness, which is necessary for the harmony between the horse and the rider, but also between the riders themselves.

The Equestrian Handbook, published in French, builds the profile of the profession that is most important for equestrian tourism - the profession of Equestrian Guide or Riding Instructor. According to this handbook or guidebook, the mission of the practitioner of this activity is to:

- Organizes and monitors outdoor riding activities and all obligations related to it (equipment, room for riders and their horses, trails, etc.), within one or more days.

⁵² FEI, History, <https://inside.fei.org/fei/about-fei/history>

⁵³ D. Ya. Gurevich, G. T. Rogalev. Konnyi sport // Slovar- spravochnik po konevodstvu i konnomu sportu. — M.: Росагропромиздат, 1991. — С. 91. ISBN 5-260-00573-2.

⁵⁴ I. Bobyilev, K predstoyashtim XVI Olimpiiskim igram, Konnyi dvorik, " konevodstvo i konnyi sport " №3, 1956r. <https://olympteka.ru/olymp/archive/article/11.html>

⁵⁵ Konniat sport kato olimpiyska disciplina

⁵⁶ I. Bobyilev, K predstoyashtim XVI Olimpiiskim igram, Konnyi dvorik, " konevodstvo i konnyi sport " №3, 1956r. <https://olympteka.ru/olymp/archive/article/11.html> - A

- Checks and adjusts equipment.
- Manages and cares for horses and riders.
- Knows in depth the tourist or cultural features of the proposed routes.

In addition, the riding instructor must have a number of necessary skills and qualities, including:

- In-depth knowledge of horses, the audience and the environment.
- Skills for animation, interpersonal and group communication and management.
- Autonomy, listening skills, adaptation and initiative.
- Strong sense of direction.
- Proficiency in a foreign language⁵⁷.

There is also a profession "guide for equestrian tourism"⁵⁸ or "equestrian guide", requiring the qualities of a rider and animator⁵⁹. The rider and animator, or equestrian tour guide ATE - accompagnateur de tourisme équestre, conveys his passion for nature to amateur riders, the time of the trip, whether for a few hours or a few days. He adapts the route to the group and carefully prepares the stages. A good rider, guide, but also an animator, the ATE driver has several responsibilities. He leads horseback riding on certain routes for several hours or several days. Guarantee for the safety of the riders, he adapts the stands and stages to the profile of his clients (age, physical condition, inclination). Before leaving, he prepares the horses and the relevant equipment, sets the courses and takes care of the riders.

The guide helps to discover the regions crossed in all their aspects: natural, cultural, economic. The profession develops and practices especially from April to September, in a horse base or at outdoor entertainments⁶⁰.

The equestrian guide or escort organizes and controls outdoor activities or horseback riding, so his role is important.

Functions:

- Prepare and observe excursions and hikes;
- Welcomes the public and organizes its activities;
- He manages the horses and takes care of them;
- Develops the tourist and cultural aspects of the proposed routes;

Necessary skills and qualities:

- Relational skills, animation and management of groups of riders;
- Very good knowledge of horses, audience and environment;

⁵⁷ Guide équestre, <https://www.equiressources.fr/metiers-formations-metiers-details.aspx?id=21>

⁵⁸ «Guide de tourisme équestre» [archive], sur Les Haras nationaux (consulté le 28 janvier 2020), <https://www.onisep.fr/Ressources/Univers-Metier/Metiers/accompagnateur-accompagnatrice-de-tourisme-equestre>

⁵⁹ «accompagnateur / accompagnatrice de tourisme équestre » [archive], sur Onisep (consulté le 28 janvier 2020), <https://www.onisep.fr/Ressources/Univers-Metier/Metiers/accompagnateur-accompagnatrice-de-tourisme-equestre>

⁶⁰ accompagnateur/trice de tourisme équestre, <https://www.onisep.fr/Ressources/Univers-Metier/Metiers/accompagnateur-accompagnatrice-de-tourisme-equestre>

- Autonomy, adaptation and initiative;

The equestrian guide, if graduated, can be an animator and teacher, as well as a farm manager, managing and offering accommodation and catering services⁶¹.

The equestrian sports are based on the extant capabilities and institution system of the region. The main direction of developing is improving of efficiency of this institution system and developing of the following areas:

- Material (infrastructural investments in integrated approximation).
- Organizational (developing of organizational system and human resources).
- Services conditions in tourism, recreation, sport side at the same time (events, camps)⁶².
- The influence of horse sports on the environment
- Equestrian sports and the environment

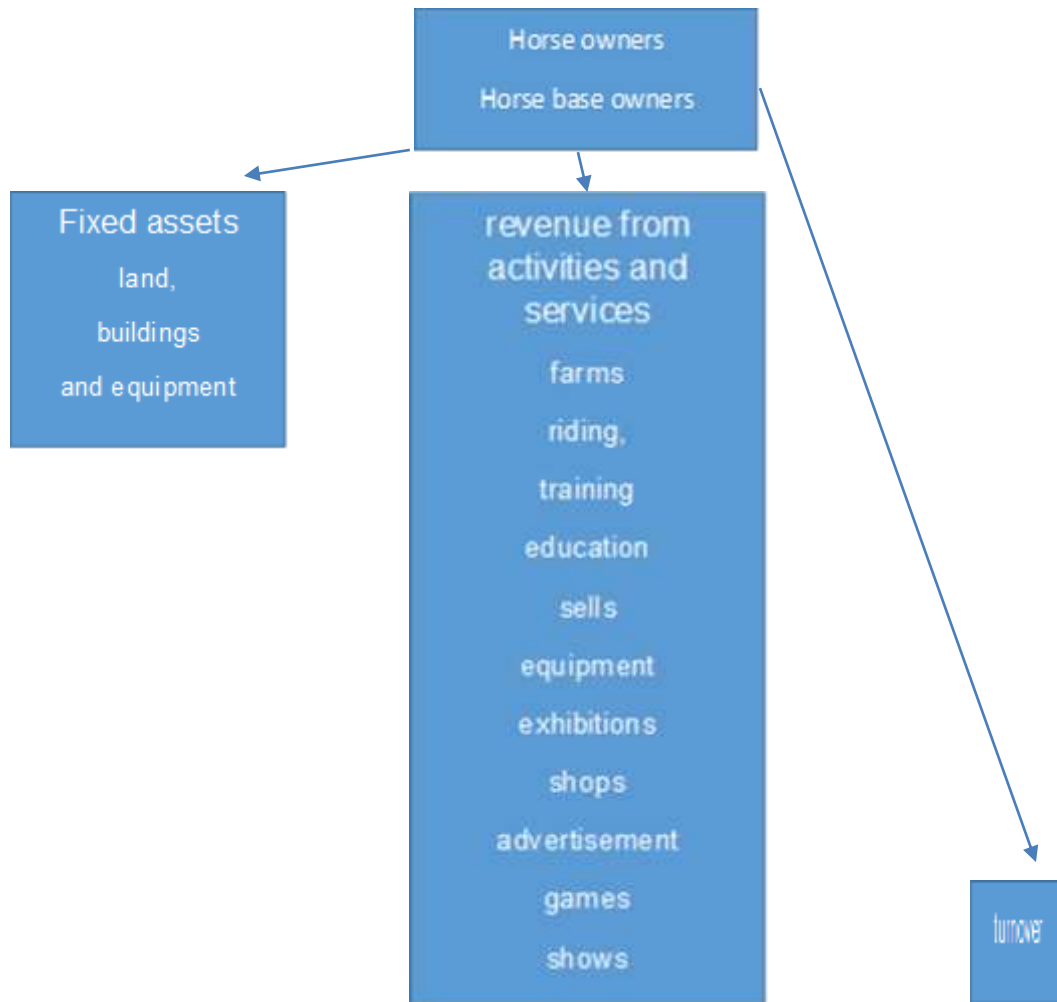
Most commonly practiced outdoors, equestrian sports, like many other hobbies, can affect natural resources, flora, fauna and forests.

Emissions are produced as manure or there is atmospheric pollution through motorized transport of horses, during various events. These side effects depend on the behavior of athletes and horse owners, as well as the intensity and duration of sports practice. In most cases, it is possible to combine the interests of environmental protection with sports, recreation and tourism. The equestrian industry and its various participants generate business in many industries such as breeding, boarding and trade in horses, equestrian training, trade in equipment for horses and riders, various magazines, books, equestrian exhibitions, advertising, sponsorship, media, games, etc.

In order to build a comprehensive picture of the finances of the equine sector, a data collection method is needed that covers the whole equine sector, including horse and horse owners. It can be realized through surveys and interviews. This will gather up-to-date information on fixed assets, types of turnover activities. /See figure 5/

⁶¹ Guide de tourisme équestre, <https://equipedia.ifce.fr/equipedia-tout-lunivers-du-cheval-ifce>

⁶² The importance of Equestrian Tourism Enterprises in Tourism Destination Management in Hungary. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46535766_The_importance_of_Equestrian_Tourism_Enterprises_in_Tourism_Destination_Management_in_Hungary [accessed Mar 19 2021]. pp. 1437

Figure 5: Extracting a key score by items by gathering data:

Source: Author`s compilation, based on different sources.

In this way the cash flows in the equestrian industry are established. Timely updating of revenues in the sector will identify the main economic benefits.

The status of the horse

The horse has always been preferred by men, but today the archetype of the average "horseman"⁶³ is a teenage city rider who rides in the countryside in his spare time. Therefore, the horse is no longer just an engine in the service of the economy and the army, but a living being with dignity that must be respected. In this way, an increasing number of

⁶³Paul Morand, *Néologisme: pratiquant l'équitation*. Utilisé, à notre connaissance, pour la première fois dans *Anthologie de la littérature équestre*, Paris, Olivier Perrin, 1966, pp. 10

horses no longer end their lives in the slaughterhouse, but are euthanized or housed in old people's homes such as the Roselet Reception Center (JU), the Darwin de Sesens (GE) shelter or Ebikon's Pferde-Engel (LU). There are now many expectations for the horse in society: the animal's natural needs must be respected, and the latter must fulfill people's aspirations above all in its spare time, revitalize the countryside and take on the function of heritage by participating in biodiversity. Today, the prerogative of equestrian knowledge is no longer in the exclusive hands of the military, the aristocracy, the wealthy bourgeoisie, the athletes or the peasants. The horse has entered the intimate emotional realm of riders, thus becoming a familiar animal, a movement that can eventually lead to zoocentrism claiming animal rights⁶⁴.

In this way, we are witnessing the development of a new equestrian culture known as leisure. The horse has become popular, but remains dependent on its breed, a symbol that allows people to clarify their social identity. In this way, the recreational horse has become a social marker for riders and leaders close to nature. He stands between the blood horse, confused with the often arrogant attributes of power, and, in contrast, the emblem of a workhorse for obedience, humility, and hard work⁶⁵.

Equestrian tourism

Equestrian routes



⁶⁴ Reagan Tom (1983): *The Case for Animal Rights*, Berkeley, University of California Press et Singer Peter (1990): *Animal Liberation*, New York, New York Review of Books/Random House.

⁶⁵ Impact Économique, Social Et ENVIRONNEMENTAL Du Chevall En Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007, www.avic.ch, pp, 88

Equestrian tourism

Tourism as we know it today was born with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, when the steam engine made it possible to create massive vehicles such as steamers and trains. This allowed the displacement of large masses of people outside of migration and war, but for recreation, shortening distances.

Return to origin or Nature tourism

One of the biggest trends is "return to origin" or nature tourism. In this category are:

- **Ecotourism:** Based on direct contact with nature.

- **Ornithological:** Can be considered a version of ecotourism, it is tourism dedicated to bird watching.

- **Agrotourism and agroecotourism:** Focused on showing the agro-industrial production processes and the participation of tourists in these processes.

- **Rural tourism:** it takes place in rural areas and attracts tourists interested in learning about its gastronomy, lifestyles, traditions and customs, crafts, among other things. This tourism depends a lot on the good treatment of rural residents.

- **Ichthyotourism:** Focused on sport fishing and diving.

- **Hunting:** Focused on safaris, observing animals in their natural habitat and its most rejected version, sport hunting of animals in reserves where animals are kept specifically for this purpose, as opposed to what ecotourism can be⁶⁶.

Today, tourism is an important economic activity for many countries. With this in mind, an innovative activity called equestrian tourism has been developed. Those who decide to mix business and leisure are quite generous in their expenses. In many countries, the development of the tourism industry is diversifying into many sectors, according to the growing variety of tourist preferences. Equestrian tourism is driven by the need to know new things, to learn, but also to gain experience⁶⁷.

The horse is part of all tourist services related to outdoor activities, known as green tourism, with all its environmental, cultural, socio-economic and sustainable development problems. Horseback riding with carriages, sporting or folklore equestrian events, museums and sites dedicated to horses and horse-drawn carriages can bring interesting added value to other tourist products. Some hotels also offer equestrian activities to their clients, especially those with higher incomes, known as "wellness".

Rural tourism is a major European phenomenon. Ireland and Austria are particularly encouraging the development of rural tourism to allow for better integration into the world of agriculture. In Switzerland, too, horse-related tourist activities are often carried out on

⁶⁶ Estudio Del impacto del sector equestre en España, Junio 2013, Javier Revuelta, Presidente de la Real Federación Hípica Española <http://www.federacio-catalana-hipica.cat/phocadownload>

⁶⁷ Rutas a caballo. Turismo ecuestre, <https://www.revistaviajeros.es/reportajes-antteriores/rutas-caballo-turismo-ecuestre>

family farms and consolidate their income. In general, they do not need significant infrastructure that can disrupt the typical appearance of the landscape and often include other services that seek to attract tourists such as agricultural holidays, regional crafts and local products. In this sense, the participants in equestrian tourism contribute significantly to the preservation of the soul of the rural landscape and the economic of the area⁶⁸.

In Switzerland and Austria, the horse is emblematic of many resorts

Horse-related tourism, for example, and the horse itself is an important emblematic element of the identity of the landscape of the long Jura, because it is part of the tradition and the specifics of this region. The Saignelégier Concours is an event of national importance and contributes significantly to the promotion of the Franches-Montagnes horse and its breeding. This event attracts between 40,000 and 50,000 spectators each year⁶⁹.

There are different definitions regarding equestrian tourism

Equestrian tourism is a set of tourist activities related to the horse, such as excursions, events, visits to museums and equestrian institutions or famous breeding farms or even exhibitions.⁷⁰

Equestrian tourism is an equestrian trip of varying length and complexity, a type of sports tourism in which interesting horse routes are passed, containing specific obstacles (forests, passes, gorges, rivers)⁷¹.

Equestrian tourism is a type of active recreation and sports tourism, which is realized with the help of one or more horses in a team, or other animals such as ponies, donkeys, camels, dogs, deer, elephants, etc.⁷²

The subject of equestrian tourism are horseback riding in the open air or horseback riding, equestrian routes (hiking, travel), distances (TREC), distances with sledges (TREC in harness), equestrian competitions races or horse races⁷³.

Equestrian tourism is difficult to characterize, both in terms of definition and statistics, as it covers recreational activities that are quite different from each other⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ Impact Économique, Social Et environnemental Du ChevalL En Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007, <https://www.cofichev.ch/Htdocs/Files/v/5870.pdf>, pp 108

⁶⁹ A, Impact Économique, Social Et environnemental Du Chevall en Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars2007, <https://www.cofichev.ch/Htdocs/Files/v/5870.pdf>, pp 108

⁷⁰ Tourisme et Cheval, une ressource au service des destinations, Tourisme et cheval – A tout France 2011, www.atout-france.fr › tourism.

⁷¹ Konnyy turizm <http://tour.ru/vidy-otdyha/konnyy-turizm>

⁷² Appaluz//Plza i vred verhovoy ezdyi. /http://appalooza.at.ua/publ/polza_i_vred_verkhovoj_ezdy/1-1-0-1/

⁷³ Osnovnyue poniatia konnogo turisma, https://studbooks.net/633469/turizm/suschnost_i_osobnosti_konnogo_turizma

⁷⁴ Henri Grolleau et André Ramus, Espace rural, espace touristique: le tourisme à la campagne et les conditions de son développement en France: rapport à René Souchon, ministre délégué auprès du ministre de l'Agriculture chargé de l'agriculture et de la forêt et Jean-Marie Bockel, secrétaire d'Etat auprès du ministre

According to the International Equestrian Federation, "The importance of equestrian tourism in the past, devoted solely to tourism, horseback riding, has now expanded, and equestrian tourism includes" all equestrian activities practiced by tourists outside their usual place of residence"⁷⁵.

Another definition of equestrian tourism is given by Kouchner: "all forms of recreation related to equidae (horse, pony, donkey) practiced by a person traveling outside his usual place of residence for a period of at least 24 hours and a maximum of 4 months"⁷⁶

According to some Russian authors, Equestrian tourism is a type of active recreation, which consists in crossing the tourist route on horseback or in a team sled outside the stable, overcoming local and distant obstacles.⁷⁷

According to Ampascachi it can be expressed "as a combination of horse riding passion, the desire to go horseback riding in nature and the interest to visit places from other provinces, other countries or other continents, in order to reach special and unique places, to which we can only get on horseback"⁷⁸.

Equestrian tourism is defined as performing horse activities in the natural environment, mainly marches along marked routes. It may include other suggestions related to the world of the horse, but the most attractive are, without a doubt, the routes related to going out in nature. This tourism has established itself and just as it allows us to enjoy nature, it allows riders to improve. Depending on the chosen route, mastered techniques and skills can be developed. In short, a delight for any traveler who is interested in nature and a form of learning and experience for the most experienced riders.⁷⁹

According to the electronic free dictionary Wiktionnaire, equestrian tourism is a recreational activity that allows you to discover different places and areas for tourism, thanks to the horse, either by horseback riding or just a horse ride. Very often this term equestrian tourism or tourisme équestre, is confused with the term tourism through the horse - tourisme à cheval. The first means tourism with the help of the horse, while the second - tourisme à cheval is associated with activities related to the horse⁸⁰.

Based on the definitions given by various authors and experts in this field, we can conclude that equestrian tourism is a combination of desire for horseback riding, desire to ride and walk in nature and interest in exploring new places - areas, regions, provinces, countries, continents; visits to special and unique places only by riding or by horse. All this in the form of an adventure, during which one has the opportunity to sleep in a campsite, tent, cross rivers and cross narrow mountain gorges.

du Commerce, de l'artisanat et du tourisme, La Documentation française, 1986, 381 p. (ISBN 2-11-001586-1 et 9782110015860, ISSN 0981-3764), p. 108.

⁷⁵ International federation of Equestrian tourism

⁷⁶ F. Kouchner., LE Borgone A. «Créer et commercialiser des produits de tourisme équestre», (2002), Editions Atout France,

⁷⁷ Gennady Semin. Konnyi turizm v Rossii, MOO Национальный центр конного туризма. MOO НЦКТ.

⁷⁸ WHAT IS EQUESTRIAN TOURISM? <https://ampascachi.com/en/horseback-riding-vacations>

⁷⁹ Turismo ecuestre mundo equino / noviembre 8, 2018

⁸⁰ https://fr.wiktionary.org/wiki/tourisme_%C3%A9questre

The development of this activity has made it possible to bring additional income to farms oriented to agritourism, in the form of rural huts or guest rooms.

The purpose of the equestrian tourism is to create and provide tourists with opportunities to get acquainted and see the sights of a country, region, destination, as a result of which to acquire knowledge about life, culture of the people of the visited country or the local population in the destination.⁸¹

From a tourist point of view, the main goals of equestrian tourism are as follows:

- to cultivate an attitude towards nature;
- to build and educate tourists in the right attitude towards the horse
- To restore the traditions related to the horse
- to expand the role of horse riding
- To promote equestrian routes.

Based on the activities listed above, we distinguish between different types of tourist products related to horse riding or equestrian tourism products.

“An equestrian tourism product is a tourist product in which the equestrian activity is the main motivation”. It should be also noted that this product must have, as we mentioned before, at least one overnight stay.

Some authors have made a distinction between Horse Riding Tourism and Horse-Based Tourism. The latter refers to tourist products that, although they are linked to horses, involve different activities such as horse shows or equestrian sports like polo, jumping championships, etc⁸².

The product of equestrian tourism is one in which the main motivation for its practice is a horse activity or an event related to the horse.

In order for an activity to be called a product of equestrian tourism or to be considered as such, it must be realized for at least 2 days or with at least one night - its main characteristic.

For the development of the equine product, **three main factors** influence:

- Well-developed infrastructure and logistics;
- Equestrian activities;
- Accommodation;

Some authors distinguish 2 concepts of equestrian tourism:

- Tourism, where the main tool is the horse;
- Horse-related tourism;⁸³

The first type is **tourism on the back** of the horse, while the second type includes **activities related to the horse**: participation in sports activities such as horse racing, horse racing, spectacles, mixed competitions involving horses such as polo, jumping, etc.

⁸¹ Sushtnost i osobennosti konnogo turizma, [https://studbooks.net/633469/turizm/suschnost i osobennosti konnogo turizma](https://studbooks.net/633469/turizm/suschnost_i_osobennosti_konnogo_turizma)

⁸² Different Equestrian Tourism Products, Equestrian tourism, <https://ampascachi.com/en/horseback-riding-vacations/what-is-it.php>

⁸³ ¿Qué es el turismo equestre? [www. Ampascachi.com](http://www.Ampascachi.com)

Equestrian tourism allows the rider to interact in different ways with nature and landscapes, while offering a new and ecological way to develop tourism promotion in the unconventional region so far. Countries such as France and the United Kingdom have developed this tourism product with great success both locally and internationally, as it has boosted the economic development of their territories as well as the level of acceptance by a growing number of consumers. This experience shows that although it is a highly specialized type of tourism, it is a feasible and successful offer in areas with optimal conditions⁸⁴.

According to *Le Tourisme - Equestre Elements Bibliographiques* of the British Equestrian Council, Equestrian tourism is a combination of favorable factors and is characterized by the following features:

- Global boom in horse riding in France.
- An exceptional regional heritage recognized worldwide: cultural, architectural and gastronomic heritage, as well as rich and diverse landscapes.
- Climate favorable for tourism throughout the year. There is no extreme heat or heavy rainfall that makes it impossible to ride horses.
- Equestrian tourism is a centuries-old tradition. In order to identify all the opportunities that the equestrian sector can represent for the tourism industry, it is necessary to extend the concept of equestrian tourism to equine-related tourism, taking into account not only the sporting activities, entertainment and discovery activities of the horse, but also all activities related to the horse, as well as site visits, events, traditional festivals⁸⁵.

Until 30 years ago, for many countries in Europe, this type of tourism was unusual. Horseback riding has been known and is popular in almost all of Europe, but few are the countries that have developed equestrian tourism until 1980. There is almost no country on the Balkan Peninsula and in Europe that is not historically connected to the horse. Such countries are Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, in Central Europe - Hungary, Austria, Germany. The countries with traditions in this sport and this type of tourism are France, Italy and Spain, which began to develop it in the 60s of the 20th century.

The offer of Equestrian tourism is intended for nature and horses lovers. Practiced in a club or outdoors, the various activities can be perfectly controlled only in the presence of qualified instructors⁸⁶.

In general, we can summarize that equestrian or equestrian tourism is classified as an active form of rural tourism and consists of discovering and enjoying the scenery of a horse's saddle within one or several days, which also allows, in some cases, access to places that are inaccessible to other means of transport.

⁸⁴ El Turismo Ecuéstre une países y continentes 2012 Antecedentes, <https://es.slideshare.net/horsetrailmexico/el-turismo-ecuestre-une-pases-y-continentes>

⁸⁵ Tourisme et cheval, Une ressource au service des destinations, A tout France, 2011 30 mars 2011 <http://www.atout-france.fr/publications/tourisme-et-cheval>

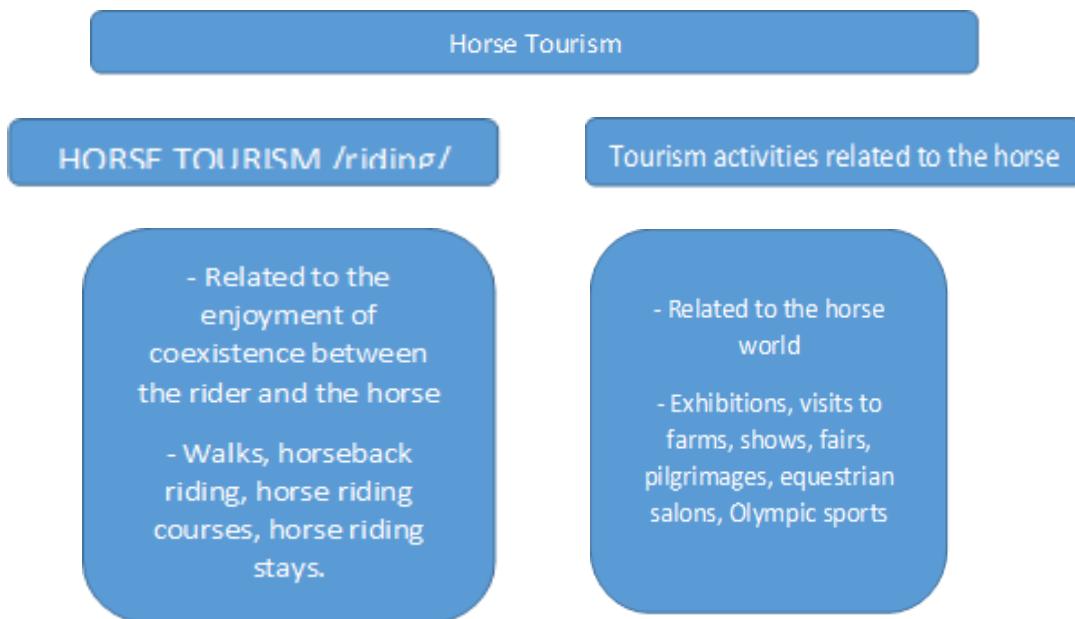
⁸⁶ <https://www.destinations-cheval.com/tourisme-equestre-france/>

These activities are dynamic and take place in a rural environment, where nature, adventure and sports alternate. In fact, there is a sport modality regulated by RFHE, TREC (field equestrian techniques), based on this activity.

According to the specialized website for equestrian tourism of the Ministry of Tourism in Spain RETOS DEL SECTOR EQUINO EN ESPAÑA, the Equestrian tourism is a specialized tourist typology, which bases its attractiveness on the world of the horse. When we talk in general about the equestrian tourism sector, we are talking not only about companies that provide route services, horse therapy, etc., but we are also talking about numerous accommodation in rural areas, which also include equestrian activities in order to add value to the basic accommodation offer, as well as numerous companies and transversal industries such as equestrian centers, livestock farms, saddlery, clothing, wagons, hat shops and all kinds of riding accessories⁸⁷.

The equestrian tourism encompasses two separate concepts within the global offer, namely equestrian tourism - horseback riding and horseback riding tours, or horse-related activities that provide different audiences and products. The authors consider two directions in terms of equestrian tourism and the differences in them, that is, the main differences between: Horse Tourism /riding/ and tourism activities related to the horse. /See Fig.6/

Figure 6. Two directions in terms of equestrian tourism:



Source: Author`s compilations

⁸⁷ Jornada sobre retos del sector Equino en España, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, Gobierno de España, <https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/ganaderia/temas/zootecnia/7turismoequestrejoaquinurita>

The equestrian tourism, at first glance, means horseback riding, but it is not such a simple activity because it requires a specific organization:

- reliable and identified routes, with organized stopping places,
- the stops allow the traveling riders to find to hydrate and feed the horse like themselves and even to relax in good conditions of comfort and tranquility⁸⁸.

Every year the equestrian tourism becomes more and more popular, attracting the attention of all categories of the population, thanks to the constant interest and love to the horses. The equestrian tourism **combines sports and leisure activities**, contributing to the spiritual and physical development of man. The horseback riding activates the metabolism, prevents excessive fat deposition, forms a beautiful posture, strengthens and trains the muscles of the human body. The complex of positive features of the equestrian tourism is largely determined by its proper organization, in which it is necessary to take into account the geographical, historical, cultural, economic and social characteristics of each region.

Equestrian tourism has many positive effects:

- healing - it affects the health state, as it involves practicing in nature, in fresh air.
- Aesthetic - plays a role in the development of the human values, generated by the careful treatment and care of the horse as a person.
- Physical stability - it also develops the qualities necessary for rapid response in the field conditions.
- Educational - affects the building of human culture to nature.

On the other hand, the energy of the horse affects the men. For this reason, it can be considered as a **subdivision of the recreational tourism**. The equestrian tourism is also an integral part of **ecological tourism**. The organization of equestrian tourism requires a suitable base, properly trained horses and saddlery for riding, a school for instructors and methods of training tourists to care for horses and how to deal with them, organizes training for tourists to ride, making routes with stops, preparation of food for horses. Equestrian tourism in Ukraine is developing, gaining more and more followers. This type of active tourism enjoys a well-deserved popularity among horseback riding enthusiasts in natural, ethnic, historical, extreme, pilgrimage, hunting, fishing and mountainous areas. The equestrian tourism is an attractive way to spend time and learn from the inside the life of the people of the country.

The practice of equestrian tourism provides an opportunity to get to know new places, rare tourist attractions in smaller regions and get acquainted with the culture and customs of the local population. Therefore, it is considered as **cultural - cognitive tourism**.

Horseback riding is a sport whose feature is the interaction with another living being. It also helps to establish an affective and emotional connection between the horse and the rider. Excursion or horseback riding allows the participants to **socialize with each other** (regardless of nationality and possible problems with the oral communication), to strengthen the friendships and, above all, to share experiences. If during a trip or a horse

⁸⁸ ¿Qué es el turismo ecuestre? <https://www.turismo-ecuestre.com/que-es-el-t>

trip you are lucky enough to be accompanied by a valid and prepared horse riding instructions, there will be times for the participants to rediscover the ancient cultural and the food and wine traditions⁸⁹. A kind of intercultural communication based on shared experience and foreign practices.

The core of this research is equestrian tourism, but such tourism cannot exist without **pre-planned and drawn routes**.

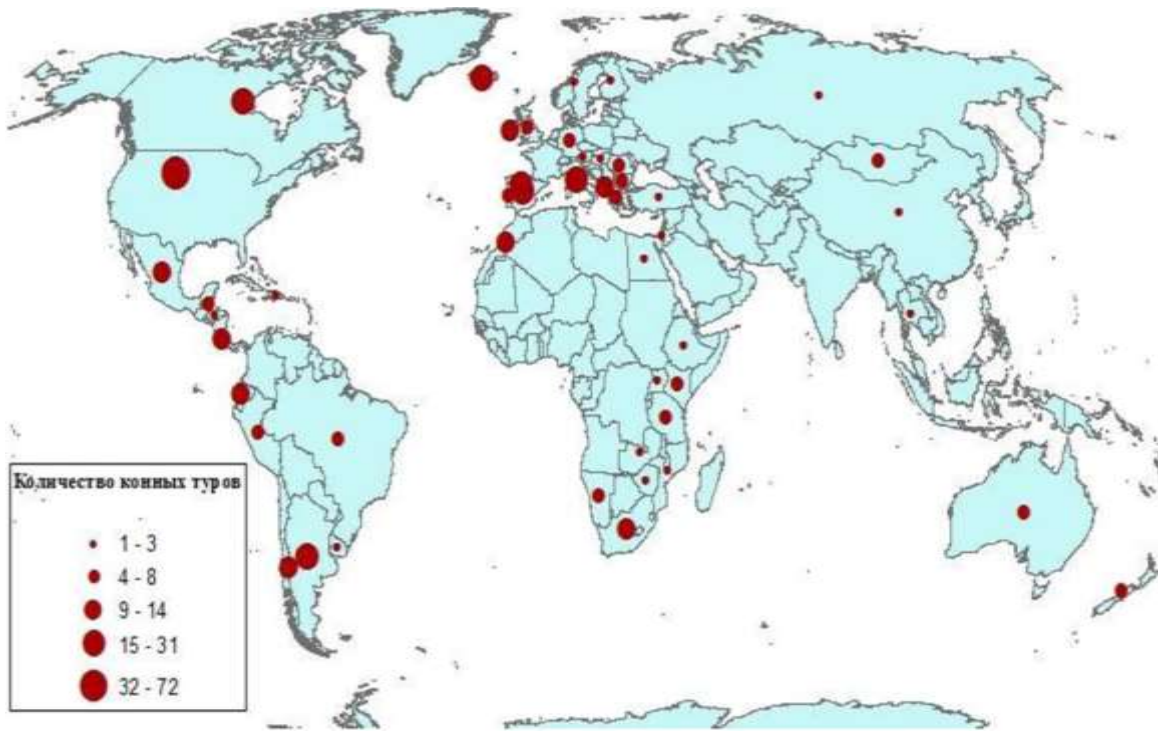
In equestrian tourism, the main idea is walking in fresh air, in open nature. It requires love and care for the horse. And most importantly, it is a sport, available for all ages without restriction. It is the love of the horse that becomes the main reason for laying the foundations of the horse routes. One of the first countries is Russia. As early as 1899, a Russian officer rode his horse from Poltava to Paris in 33 days, traveling 2,633 km. One of the first equestrian routes was established in the Altay mountains in 1971. To this day, equestrian tourism is practiced in Russia in various regions, such as Chuvashia, Central Russia and Siberia, where the horse is a tradition.

The main feature of the horse routes is that most of them pass through nature reserves and national parks, mountain and forest trails. This is a good opportunity to get acquainted with the nature of the different regions and study them. There is no other way to get to know the nature in details, except on horseback, and this is the **advantage of the horse route**.

In a number of European countries such as France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Iceland, as well as in the United States and Canada, this type of tourism is well developed. And each country is characterized by a specific feature and peculiarities of the organization of horse tours. It is these countries that offer tourists in large quantities highly organized and interesting equestrian routes. And the most promising countries for the development of equestrian tourism are Mexico, the United States, Argentina, Russia, India, France, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Italy and Ethiopia in the African region. These countries have the main factors for the development of the tourism industry, namely natural historical resources, which largely attract tourists. It is these countries that in the near future can become centers of equestrian tourism, if the strategy for the development of equestrian tourism is properly developed.

⁸⁹ Francesco Fravolini, Il turismo equestre è un'opportunità economica da valorizzare www.linkiesta.it/blog/2018/05/il-turismo-equestre-

Figure 7: Number of horseback riding tours around the world (per 1000 people, 2010)



Although the horses were brought to America by the Europeans, it is clear that North America is developing a lot of equestrian tourism. The horseback riding tours are common in western parts of South America, East Africa, and very few in Asia, Australia and Oceania. Mostly the equestrian tourism is being developed in Southern and Central Europe and on the Balkan Peninsula.

Horse trail nets

The hidden trails offers you the chance to discover Europe on horseback - the best way to explore and truly get to know the different regions and countries, that are so diverse and offer so much history, culture and nature. Exploring Europe on horseback provides the adventurous traveler with a viewpoint not often experienced⁹⁰.

⁹⁰ <https://www.hiddentrails.com/continent/Europe.aspx>

Figure 8: Map of the hidden trails in Europe.



Source: <https://www.hiddentrails.com/continent/Europe.aspx>

For the cost of horses, most consumers prefer paths that exist in nature (trails, forest roads,). They must be marked.

In certain regions, following the example of some countries in Europe, networks of marked horse trails can be set up for this activity by regional equestrian associations in cooperation with municipal authorities and tourist offices. These horse nets allow certain sensitive areas to be relieved from too frequent visits and to make riders aware of the richness and the fragility of the natural environment. For example, in the forests of Jorat mountain, in Switzerland, near Lausanne, markers indicate:

- whether
- the trails can be used all year round,
- whether access is restricted due to weather conditions or
- whether access is prohibited throughout the year⁹¹.

These trails are long and can offer routes of several kilometers. Many municipal strategies for tourism development are desirable to rely on these trails in relaxation areas near urban areas. The population would benefit from them on weekends, as well as in all seasons, which will certainly help the development and attractiveness of their territory.

The organization and management of horse routes and excursions are carried out by equestrian companies. These companies monitor the organization of the route, the provision of fully equipped horses, the provision of a guide, accommodation and food, insurance, liability and accident insurance, and more. The more attractive the route, the more customers it will attract.

The positive advantages of equestrian tourism, listed so far, as well as its specifics, determine its organization. First of all, in order to develop, you need to:

⁹¹ Impact Économique, Social Et Environnemental Du Cheval Ee Suisse, Rapport du Groupe de travail Filière cheval, Avenches, mars 2007 <https://www.cofichev.ch/Htdocs/Files/v/5870.pdf>, pp. 65

- to determine the geographical, historical, economic, cultural and social characteristics of the region.

- The support of the state is also needed.
- Proper route planning.
- Training of professional specialists.
- Priority should be given to the necessary information related to the regional cultural and historical heritage, knowledge of the life and culture of the local population.

There are many issues related to the requirements for the proper organization and conduct of the equestrian route. If they are not followed, obstacles can arise that can seriously hinder the development of equestrian routes. **The requirements** can be grouped into two groups:

A / Related to the organization:

- The equestrian route is done with the help of horses, which means constant care for them.
- A preliminary analysis of the preferences of tourists is needed.
- Constant awareness and constant updating of the information platforms for the equestrian and tourist industry.
- Development of thematic events

B/ Technical:

- Insufficient and incorrect instruction by the instructor or driver to the rider.
- Lack of safety equipment
- If the route passes through an agricultural road or private property, this may delay or impede its development and operation.
- Poorly developed infrastructure and transport security to the village.

Given the specifics of equestrian tourism - constant horse care, maintenance, equipment, requires thorough development, proper planning and strict organization in the implementation of routes. All this requires a lot of money, which makes it an expensive type of tourism. This determines its disadvantages:

- Requires a lot of maintenance;
- maintains high tariff prices;
 - improper use of horses;
 - Insufficient advertising in different regions;
 - Lack of additional services included in the tour;
 - Relatively high prices for riding training;
 - compulsory insurance;

To create and develop a good concept for equestrian tourism, respectively equestrian routes, is of great importance for its promotion and validation. First of all, the following should be emphasized:

- The natural resources of the region
- The cultural potential of the region
- the cultural-historical factors
- to restore traditions

- to analyze the economic potential
- well-developed infrastructure
- to provide transport security
- good planning, control and organization
- regulation of the motivation of tourists
- Connection with other types of tourism when supplementing the service
- the participation of all stakeholders - those employed in the equestrian industry, state support, enrichment of the tourist offer by nature operators
- good awareness through systematic information about the condition of the bases and routes

Methodology for creating horse routes

In previous chapters, we have listed a set of requirements that equestrian routes must meet, as well as some recommendations and suggestions that can be included to make the equestrian route commercially attractive, safe and dynamic for the regional economy.

When we strive to develop equestrian routes, we can organize our actions to systematize the work and ensure that all the necessary points are covered.

The following is a methodology that can be used to develop equestrian routes in a region.

1. Exploring the characteristics of the region and its main tourist resources: in-depth knowledge of the region where you intend to prepare the route is needed to ensure that it passes through the most interesting places and that it presents the region correctly. It is also important to assess the possibility of access by horse to the most important tourist resources and how they can improve the route. It must avoid resources in a densely urbanized environment;

2. Identification of equestrian equipment in the region: if you do not have your own resources, especially horses, to carry out the route, it is important to find a partner to provide this service to customers. This previous selection allows us to identify and characterize the means that we will have at our disposal and to adapt the route to any conditions that may arise. The inventory of equestrian equipment also makes it possible to identify possible reference points for the route;

3. Characterization of the user profile: identify the target audience of the route, know its preferences and build the route to attract as many customers as possible. The motivation and profile of equestrian tourism clients may vary depending on the market they come from;

4. Identify other routes in the region: Look for other routes that exist in the region that may make the job easier. You need to identify possible equestrian routes and assess their potential use (they may be exclusive to other agents), inventory other existing routes (pedestrians, mountain bikes, TT) and assess the possibility of their use in equestrian sports;

5. Identification of accommodation places: inventory the accommodation possibilities for horses and riders and assess their suitability for the requirements that this type of infrastructure must provide;

6. Determine the type and duration of the route: before you start creating / designing routes, you must decide which type (star, petal, line or circle) and the duration of the route (number of days);

7. Draw an initial outline: once the criteria have been defined and the resources have been identified, you need to provide a map (1: 50,000 or 1: 100,000) and draw an outline of the route, passing it through the resources you have identified as the most -important for the route and make sure to start and finish the steps as close as possible to the accommodation. This sketch gives us an overview of the route;

8. Defining the paths: after the sketch you have to divide it into small plots and work each one separately. In each plot you must determine in detail the route (GPS or map 1: 25.000), meeting all the requirements and recommendations, as well as defining the possibilities for accommodation of horses and riders.

9. To define the route, visualization, map identification and subsequent validation of the ground for width estimation, reference points is recommended;

10. Route definition: When the horse route is defined and the main services are included: accommodation, meals, additional activities, any transfers, additional services are added to create the desired tourist product.

11. Route validation: all equestrian routes must be properly tested by equestrian specialists. No rules or requirements replace the experience and knowledge of a professional in the sector. Validation is desirable to be performed by professionals in order to better identify aspects for improvement;

12. Commercialization of the route: after validation by professionals and all identified corrections made, the route can be discovered and put on the market.

A very important point is **the signaling or marking** of the route. It is extremely important for recognizing and identifying the route. There may be many walking routes in a region, but they will not be profitable if they are not marked and maintained. To this end, all paths and dirt roads must be examined and analyzed and it must be determined whether they meet the necessary conditions for a horse path.

The fact that the practice of equestrian tourism takes place in nature, in open spaces, in an ecologically clean environment, it can be called a "green" type of tourism.

It is important to note that in equestrian tourism the potential of the territories can be "consumed" in all seasons, which further enhances the importance of equestrian tourism as a sustainable type of tourism for the development of each region.

The issue of sustainable development is the main focus of all economic processes, especially in the field of tourism. This imposes the need to link the investment and production projects of the local community with the protection of the environment and the biological and cultural diversity of the tourist areas. This commitment will influence the proper development of equestrian tourism by preparing tourism programs based on the orientation of tourism to ecologically distinctive destinations with an emphasis on the practice of creative and recreational tourism behavior without compromising the quality of the environment. A key element in the tourist activity is the tourist, so it is important to accept and make sense of his ideas and suggestions when compiling the offer. This would

also affect tourism companies, which will increase and try to keep the potential tourist flow by increasing the level of satisfaction among tourists.

Conclusions

The equestrian tourism uses the horse as a resource⁹² (Figueira, 2007), i.e. tourists travel using the horse as the main means of transport and as a tourist activity for recreation and entertainment (APPCE, s.d.). People are motivated by participation in sports or leisure competitions, picnics, training and internships. The main reason for moving is the desire to ride a horse. The development of horse routes means search and development of new destinations, respectively, which leads new customers.

Tourists would be happy to replace the long and tiring route with a vehicle that always runs the risk of an accident, confidently changing their attitudes towards seeking a holiday in nature;

Horseback riding means more and different experiences and greater customer satisfaction.

Horse tourism in Europe



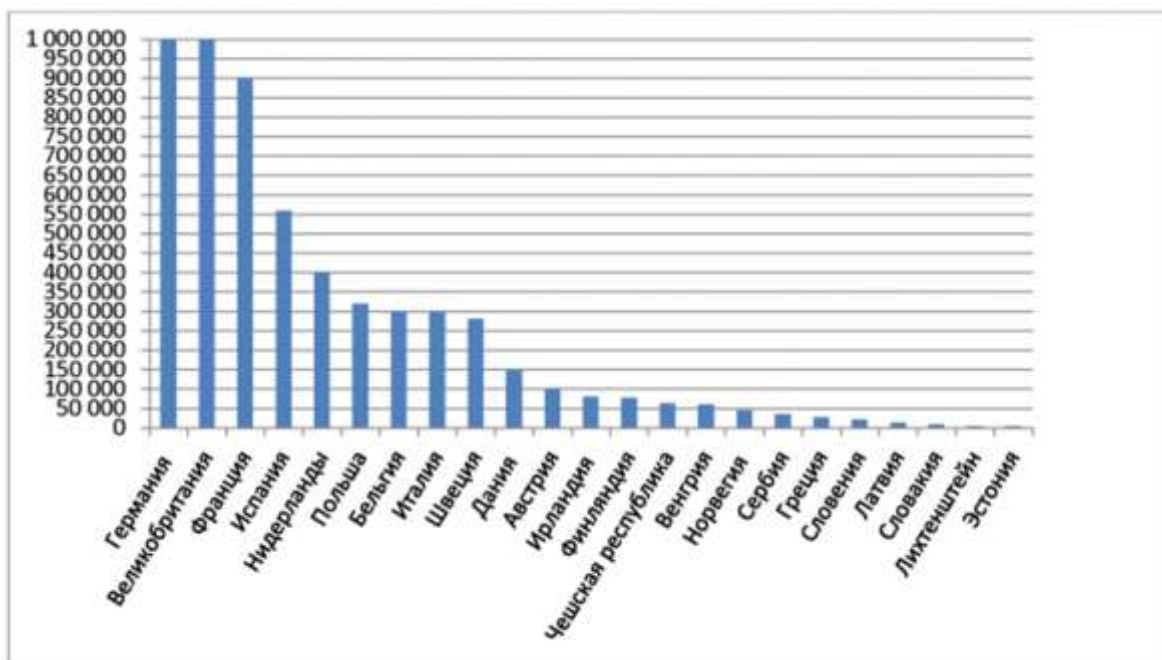
⁹² L. M. Figueira, Desenvolvimento do turismo equestre: Mitos e realidades. Estudo de caso na região de influência do Município da Golegã. Artigo apresentado no Congresso Internacional 'Turismo na região de Leiria', Instituto Politécnico de Leiria – Escola Superior de Tecnologias do Mar de Peniche, (2007, 27 Julho).

The horse and the European society

The horses in Europe are part of our common history. Different breeds have developed in different parts of Europe depending on the environmental conditions and the purpose of the breed. There are no boundaries for horses, the same breeds and activities related to the horse are found all over Europe. The differences are in the practiced sports, events and their organization, the participation of the state to support the sector. This makes the equestrian industry in Europe very diverse.

In all countries where horses are bred, /See fig 8/, the equestrian tourism can be developed, and yet, it is at an early stage of its development.

Figure 9: The number of horses in some European countries (2007).



Source: Statista, 2007

The statistics in the raw numbers is based on average estimates and do not reveal the full story. On a per capita basis, Belgium is the clear leader, with 47.8 per 1,000 people living there. Under this metric, Romania and Ireland come in second and third place respectively. Slovakia has the lowest per capita horse population, with around one horse for every 1,000 people, and the Czech Republic comes in second bottom position.

According to Statista data, for 2018 /See Number of horses in the European Union and the United Kingdom in 2018, by country (in 1,000s)⁹³, Bulgaria takes the 13th position,

⁹³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/414913/eu-european-union-number-of-horses-by-country->, the leadres

and last is Malta. Changes for Romania and Bulgaria are absent in these statistics during that period. Progress shows Italy, which from eighth goes to 5th place.

For the year 2015, according to *The guardian*, the statistics follows:

Estimated equine population, Based on average of estimates featured in the report.

Table 3: Horse population per capita

France	840,259
United Kingdom	796,000
Romania	728,814
Spain	681,331
Belgium	535,897
Germany	480,500
Italy	468,851
Netherlands	293,500
Poland	276,188
Sweden	229,000
Portugal	159,200
Ireland	159,200
Denmark	121,500
Bulgaria	109,575
Austria	103,250
Hungary	77,180
Finland	74,100
Greece	70,443
Czech Republic	33, 175
Lithuania	26,803
Croatia	24,300
Slovenia	23,000
Latvia	11,000
Estonia	8,250
Slovakia	7,372
Cyprus	7,350
Luxembourg	4,887
Malta	1,860

SOURCE: WORLD HORSE WELFARE AND EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS

The number of horses per capita has remained relatively constant in Europe over the last 15 years. Although the exact number of horse-related enterprises is not yet available in national statistics, the impression from the questionnaires for this report is that the diversity of horse-related enterprises has increased over time. In the future, there is likely to be a trend towards further diversification into new markets in the equestrian industry. The business innovations and opportunities in terms of services and equipment provided to both horse owners and horses seem huge. The economic importance of the horse is not expected to diminish in the future.

To talk about Europe as a Horse Riding Vacation destination is to talk about the origin of this activity, because it was in Europe where this concept of equestrian trips was born.

There are several factors made Europeans develop this Horseback Trip modality – a growing personal well-being culture, mass tourism and, mainly, an increase in the purchasing power. All this contributed to the emergence of this new activity for horse lovers, in all its disciplines⁹⁴.

As it is evident from the graphic below, created by *The Guardian*, it illustrates that, there are also a lot of wild horses in Europe, predominantly in Central and West Europe and UK. They are not so many in the countries on the Balkan peninsula.

Figure 10: Wild horses in Europe.



Source: World Horse Welfare and Euro group for Animals

According to the authors of World Horse Welfare and Euro group for Animals, “No data has been received from some member states, and varying figures from others. There appears to be no standard method for data collection, and in general there is little information available.”

In sport the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) organizes about 250 international competitions annually, which involve extensive sport horse transport within EU⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ Europe: History, Culture And Nature, <https://ampascachi.com/en/horseback-riding-vacations/>

⁹⁵ Carolina Liljenstolpe, Horses in Europe, Sweddisch University of agricultural studies, 2009

Horses are multifunctional animals used for many purposes: they perform economic, agricultural, sporting and recreational functions. Horses have a significant economic, environmental and social impact. There are general European figures and estimates on the value of the sector, the number of equidae and the number of jobs in the sector, but there is a lack of sound and specific statistics on the number of horses per Member State and their distribution within the sector.

Detailed figures are needed not only to get a good overview of the sector, but also to identify shortcomings, which should lead to better decision-making through targeted measures.

1. Can the Commission provide figures on the number of horses per EU Member State per function (agriculture, professional use, recreation, therapy, private use, slaughter)?
2. Why are horses not included in Eurostat statistics?
3. What view does the Commission take of the proposal to commission a study to collect figures on the horse sector?
4. Is the Commission planning such a study in the near future? Statistics on horses

Unfortunately, the European Commission does not keep statistics for the equestrian industry.

Nobody is sure exactly how many horses live in the fields, meadows, paddocks and barns of the EU (despite European commission regulations requiring the identification of kept Equidae). Nevertheless, an attempt to estimate how many horses are in the EU has been made in a new report published by the World Horse Welfare and the Eurogroup for Animals. Removing the Blinkers, which aggregates existing studies, gives an average estimate of 6.99m animals, although one source used in the analysis says the population could be as high as 7.74m⁹⁶.

Until 30 years ago, for many countries in Europe, this type of tourism was unusual. Horseback riding has been known and is popular in almost all of Europe, but few are the countries that have developed equestrian tourism until 1980. There is almost no country on the Balkan Peninsula and in Europe that is not historically connected to the horse. Such countries are Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, in Central Europe - Hungary, Austria, Germany. The countries with traditions in this sport and this type of tourism are France, Italy and Spain, which began to develop it in the 60s of the 20th century.

Always well anchored in the European agricultural world, the horse has discovered, with the democratization of equestrian practice, new applications in the service of recreation, health and culture. Motivated by the attraction to this animal, contact with nature and the need to relax, the tourists search new practices.

Reading the various studies shows that the equine sector has three main functions in European countries. In rural areas:

- It first plays an ecological role, as it is widely cultivated and contributes to the maintenance of the natural environment in which it lives.

⁹⁶How many horses are there in the European Union?
<https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/jun/12>

- The horse plays a social role as an animator of the countryside and a link between the city and the countryside. In this context, several countries emphasize their contribution as a partner in supporting the integration or social reintegration of young people who have failed school or are separated from their families, as well as people with physical or psychological disabilities.

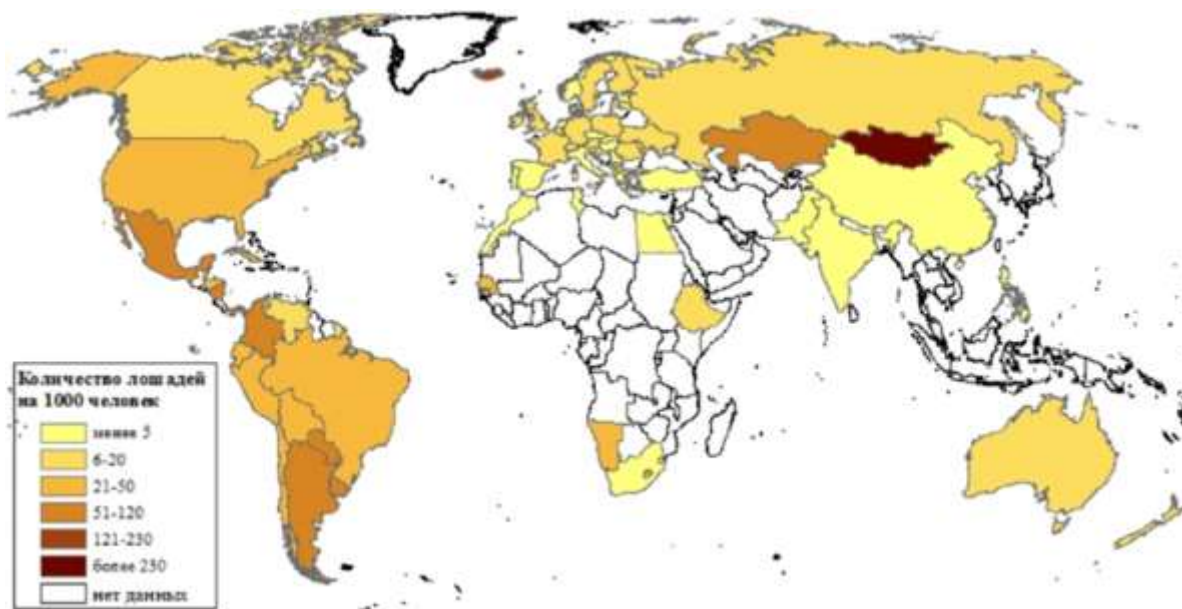
- Finally, and this is not the least of his missions, the horse contributes to the economy with its numerous assessments in the fields of recreation, tourism, sports, competitions and services.

The equestrian industry in the European Union is of economic importance to all countries. Today, the European Union consists of 28 Member States, and the total number of horses in the region is estimated at over 5 million. In the past, horses were vital in industry, agriculture, transportation and the military. Today, horses can be a leisure or sporting activity, a way of life, a working companion or food.

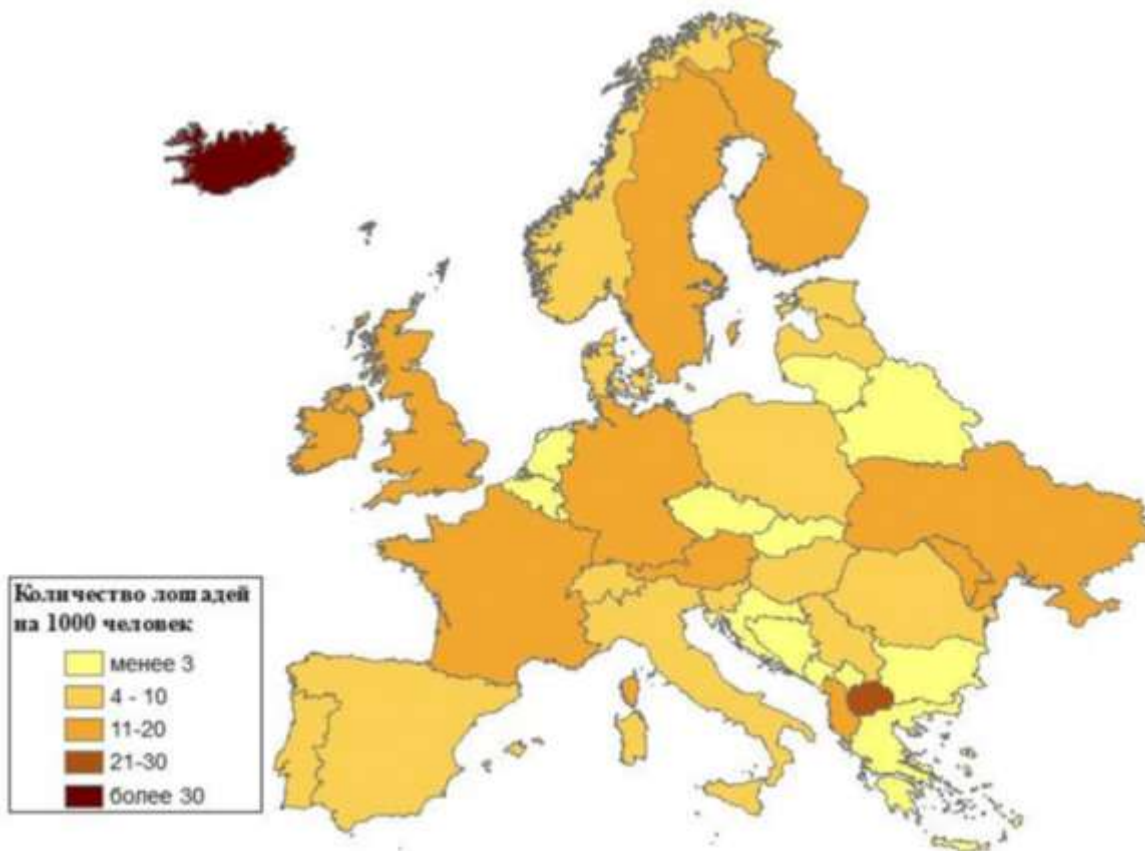
In all countries where horses are bred, equestrian tourism can be developed, and yet, it is at an early stage of its development.

According to FAO Statistics Development Series 2010, more than 77 countries around the world have a certain number of horses. The highest number of horses per 1000 people is in countries such as Mongolia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Colombia /See fig. 9/

Fig 11: Number of horses in the world (per 1000 people in 2010)



Source: FAO Statistics Development Series 2010

Figure 12: Number of horses in European countries (per 1000 people)

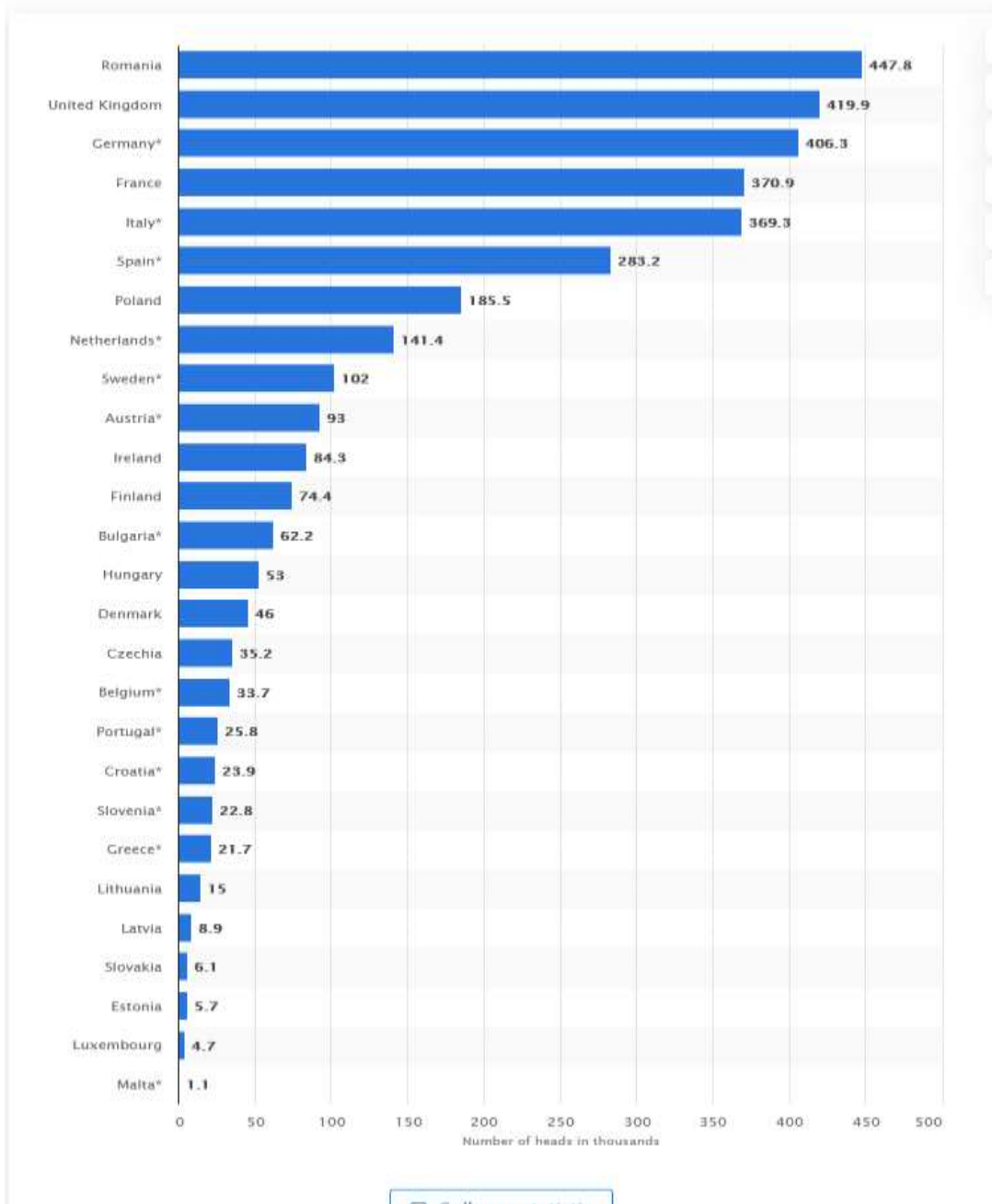
Source: FAO Statistics Development Series 2010 - 2011 - Food and ...www.fao.org

Surprisingly, according to this map, the country with the highest number of horses per 1,000 people is Iceland, followed by Northern Macedonia in the Balkans.

The number of horses per capita has remained relatively constant in Europe over the last decade. Although the exact number of horse-related enterprises is not yet available in national statistics, the impression from the questionnaires for this report is that the diversity of horse-related enterprises has increased over time. In the future, there is likely to be a trend towards further diversification into new markets in the equestrian industry. The business innovations and opportunities in terms of services and equipment provided to both horse owners and horses seem huge. The economic importance of the horse is not expected to diminish in the future.

According to the estimates published by the Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations (FAO), Romania, the United Kingdom (UK), and Germany had the highest number of horses among the countries of the old 28 country strong European Union./See table 4 /

Table 4: Number of Horses in the EU by country for 2018
Number of horses in the European Union and the United Kingdom (in 1,000s)**



Source: Statista 2021⁹⁷

⁹⁷ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/414913/eu-european-union-number-of-horses-by-country>

In 1998 the voluntary professional qualification, called “the horseshoe qualification system” started in Europe. The major qualification guidelines are:

- Environmental factors
- Horse keeping, aptitude factors
- Equestrian service factors
- Human factors
- Other programmes and opportunities⁹⁸

Countires with traditions in the horse tourism development

Spain



The importance of the equine sector in Spain is closely linked to the history of Spain. Traditionally, the relationship with horses was determined by their use in wars and their use as a work tool in Spanish fields. With the passage of time (and with the Industrial Revolution as a backdrop) this relationship has changed, although it has not become less profound for that. It has simply evolved as the economy and society did, going from participating in wars to being in the fields, on farms or farms, and from being used as work tools to being stabled in clubs and dedicated to uses eminently social and entertaining.

Contrary to some opinions, more or less widespread, horses are not only a reflection of a high social stratum, or used by great athletes in international events. There are very many towns and cities throughout Spain that employ the horse in the celebration of their patron saint festivities, or in fairs or pilgrimages. In these celebrations the horse can act either as its main axis, such as the horse races in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, or the celebration of the San Joan festivities in Menorca, or as another element of the festivities, such as the Feria de Abril de Sevilla or a tradition as intrinsically Spanish as bullfighting.

⁹⁸ The importance of Equestrian Tourism Enterprises in Tourism Destination Management in Hungary. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46535766_The_importance_of_Equestrian_Tourism_Enterprises_in_Tourism_Destination_Management_in_Hungary [accessed Mar 19 2021]. 4th Aspects and Visions of Applied Economics and Informatics March 26 - 27. 2009, Debrecen, Hungary 1437, pp. 1436

The Venaria Reale Riding School was founded by Carlo Felice on 15 November 1823 and transferred to Pinerolo in 1849. It was considered the centre of horse riding in Italy, both civilian and military, at least until 1943. The equestrian sport, in the most modern sense, started in Italy with the establishment, in 1891, of the Tor di Quinto School in Rome.

Active tourist activities in nature follow a growing trend for the development of rural tourism, sports activities, ecotourism, agritourism and others. Equestrian tourism is part of this type of activity. These are activities aimed at enjoying nature in different ways, where horses are not only the center of the activity, but also the means to carry it out. Efforts to develop it with minimum quality and safety standards have recently been stepped up. Various agents are involved, both nationally and transnationally. It is necessary to distinguish two large blocks in the analysis of equestrian tourism:

Spain offer to the tourist a combination of horse riding with Flamenco music and dance, bull-fights and fantastic beaches. It is not by chance that the country is famous as the cultural centre of Europe. There are endless tracts of wild and crinkled sierra to explore and one of the best ways to explore this diverse countryside is on horseback. Some of the famous horse routes are Almeria, Epona Dressage and Trails, Andalusia Trails, Extremadura Trails, Catalan Pyrenees, Catalonia, Sierra Nevada, Costa de la luz etc⁹⁹.

Picture 3: Horse riding in Costa de la luz, Spain.



Source: https://www.farandride.com/riding-holidays/spain/costa_de_la_luz/

⁹⁹ Horse Riding Holidays, Spain, farandride.com

The Spanish Andalucian horse is believed to be the most ancient riding horse in the world and Spanish experts maintain that it does not owe a single feature of its make up to another breed. In the sixteenth century the horses were taken to Austria to found the Spanish Riding School of Vienna and its Lippizaner horses and the Portugese Lusitano have evolved from the Spanish Andalucian. Consequently, the Spanish are justly proud of their history with the horse and today you will find this wonderful breed all over Spain justly admired for its temperament and empathy with the rider. If you ride in Spain you may well be riding one of these lovely horses.

1. Homologation and construction of horse routes. / In 2011, RFHE launched the process of homologation of equestrian routes in Spain. To date, there are 39 approved routes, under construction or in project, with a total of 1206 km and an economic impact of 451,300 euros /.

2. Horseback riding activities are becoming more numerous throughout Spanish geography. Many of them are also related to the approved equestrian routes, which are promoted by the Royal Spanish Equestrian Federation. In general, these activities consist of traveling routes accompanied by a responsible monitor at all times. This sector has great potential in Spain due to the complex orography that exists in many places and which makes many of the most beautiful landscapes accessible only on foot or on horseback. In addition, these activities represent the first contact for many people with the world of horses, which could be used as a starting point for an attempt to expand this connection.

Based on a series of surveys and interviews conducted in Spain, it was found that the average number of horses available to companies engaged in recreational activities on horseback is 12.7. The average income received from the activities in which these horses participate is 50 euros per day. The economic impact of this sector is therefore almost EUR 50 million, most of which is generated in Andalusia, Castile and Leon and Catalonia¹⁰⁰.

There are several areas where horse rails are concentrared: /See the map below/

Olviedo – to the north

A Coruna - to the northwest

Segovia – in the heart of the country, Real Sitio de San Ildefonso

Burgos – to north of Madrid

La Rioja - to the northwest

Valencia – to the Southeast

Alicante – to the southeast

Caseres – to the south

Cadiz – to the south

¹⁰⁰ Estudio del impacto del sector Equestreen España, Junio 2013, Javier Revuelta, Presidente de la Real Federación Hípica Española <http://www.federacio-catalana-hipica.cat/phocadownload>

Figure 13: Horse trail regions in Spain.

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+horse+trails+spain>

The richest “horse trails” region is near Rioja, not far from the French border. Among the top routes in Spain, there are:

Ermita de Brugers - Castillo de Erampruný - GR 92 - Camí Medieval is a 12.9 kilometer loop trail located near Gavà, Barcelona, that features beautiful wild flowers and is rated as moderate. The trail is primarily used for hiking and horses and is accessible year-round. Horses are also able to use this trail¹⁰¹.

The route of the lakes: Prullans - Porta - Porté Puiymorens - Lac du Passet - Lac Matemale - Formiguères - Puicerdà is a 145.0 kilometer loop trail located near Prullans, Lleida¹⁰². /See the map below/

Figure 14: The route of the lakes:

Source: <https://www.spain.info/en/top/horse-riding-spain-passion-horses>

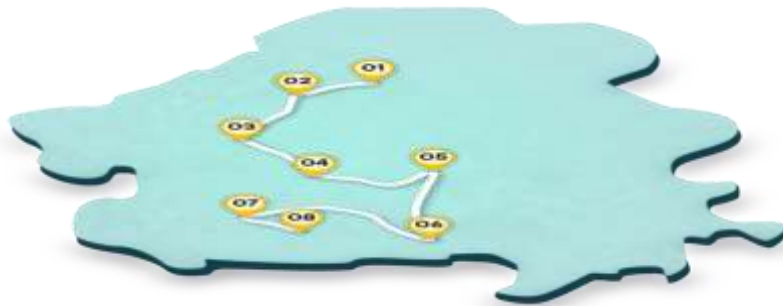
¹⁰¹ <https://www.alltrails.com/spain/horseback-riding>

¹⁰² Original routes, <https://www.spain.info/en/top/horse-riding-spain-passion-horses>

There more than 40 Certified Equestrian Routes in Spain include routes for all tastes, and some are very original. Tthe “Don Quixote on horseback” route will take you through some of the natural spaces that form part of Cervantes’ famous novel, such as the Lagunas de Ruidera Natural Park. Furthermore, the “Volcanic Route” /See the map after the text/, will give you the chance to access the Cerros de Agras Volcano – the only accessible volcano in the region of Valencia¹⁰³.

The volcanoes trail of La Palma crosses the main volcanoes area of the canary island.

Figure 15: The Don Quixote Route



Source: <https://www.spain.info/en/route/don-quixote/>

Figure 16: Map of The Volcano horse route in Las Palmas



Source: Volcano route, <https://hikinghighlights.com/project/la-palma-volcanoes-trails>

¹⁰³ Original routes, <https://www.spain.info/en/top/horse-riding-spain-passion-horses>

Italy



Italy is characterized by its style, exquisite countryside, long-held traditions, rich cultural heritage and cuisine. The Italian horse rides aim to capture the essence of Italy – explore the vineyards and cellars of Tuscany, the coastlines of Campania, the castles of Lazio, and the volcanic landscapes of Sicily¹⁰⁴.

Italy is a nation "rich" in horseback riding activities, passion, events, gatherings and popular festivals, all with one denominator "horse". The large number of parks and peripheral historical landmarks make it a top achievement in the panorama of international equestrian tourism. There is a portal Fitetrec-Ante¹⁰⁵, which gives visibility to all that, in which the main role is played by the world of the horse, composed of guides, excursionists, equestrian centers, reins, travels, hikes, parties and rallies; certifies and reports to the Federation of professionals working there and the facilities that support the practice of this fascinating activity called equestrian tourism.

Italy is characterized by its exclusive Equestrian Tourism style. As regards horseback riding vacations, it has an impressive countryside where you can go for a ride around the vineyards and cellars in Tuscany, or the coastline in Campania. You can also go riding along the castles of Lazio and the volcanic landscapes of Sicily¹⁰⁶.

Italy is crossed by many unusual itineraries of gentle and slow mobility that immerse the tourists in authenticity places, where the local residents still preserve their culture and traditions. Among the most famous horse routes or trails, the most remarkable are:

- Horse Trails in the Valle d'Aosta
- Horse trails of Veneto
- Horse trails of Tuscany
- Gran Sasso horse trail in Abruzzo
- Horse trails of Puglia

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.hiddentrails.com/country/Italy.aspx>

¹⁰⁵ Fitetrec-Ante, www.fitetrec-ante.it

¹⁰⁶ Italy: "Mediterranean in All its splendour", <https://ampascachi.com/en/horseback-riding-vacations/europe/italy>.

- Horse trails of the Cilento, Vallo di Diano and Alburni National Park in Campania¹⁰⁷.
/See the map below/.

Figure 17: Map of Horse trails net, Italy



Source: <https://www.alltrails.com/italy/horseback-riding>

The region that abounds in horse routes in Italy is Tuscan famous with its` open fields and forest trails while passing by historic churches, farms and homes that date back centuries¹⁰⁸.

Figure 18: Horseback riding trails in Tuscany



Source: [Tuscany maps.google.it](https://tuscany.maps.google.it)

¹⁰⁷ Visit Italy on horseback: 6 horse trails not to be missed, <https://www.lifebeyondtourism.org/visit-italy-on-horseback-6-horse-trails-not-to-miss>

¹⁰⁸ Horse Riding in Tuscany, Tuscany, Italy, <https://www.viator.com/tours/Arezzo/Horse-Riding->

For the Italians, the horse /trails/ are a special way of travelling, a new of contact with the nature with a respect to the territories and local culture¹⁰⁹.

France



France has a very long horse riding tradition and they have coined a word for Equestrian Tourism, “randonnée”, which was actually the original definition of “ride”.

It has an extraordinary network of equestrian routes, including trails, and an endless number of opportunities for relaxing, enjoying and experiencing the French culture on horseback. The gastronomy is a main attraction on the riding tours. French cuisine is world famous. And for longer riding tours, France offers accommodation in cosy inns and picturesque castles.

The horse routes net in France offer to the tourist the following trails;

- 1) The Alps;
- 2) Bordeaux wine country;
- 3) The Camargue through the glorious marshes of the Rhône delta, where the tourist have the chance to ride a true French icon: the Camargue pony.
- 4) The North- West Coast, where the biggest ‘sand castle’ can be seen – The Mount S. Michel;
- 5) The Loire Valley – perfect combination of horse riding among castles.
- 6) The Dordogne – combination of horse riding, drinking wine and food;¹¹⁰

May be the most remarkable option for riding tours is *The magic trails* of Loire, which are immensely popular in France. In this region, they offer riding tours around the magnificent Renaissance castles. A very good choice is Cheval & Châteaux¹¹¹. Regarding the horse routes, the most attractive as far as it concerns the development of horse tourism, this is the Napoleon’s route. Historically, this is the closest itinerary followed by Napoleon¹¹². It consists of 4 parts: The Napoleon return from Elba Island, Alpes de Haute-Provence, Hautes Alpes, Iserre. /See the figure 15 of 4 maps/.

¹⁰⁹ Visit Italy on horseback: 6 horse trails not to be missed. A, <https://www.lifebeyondtourism.org/visit-italy-on-horseback-6-horse-trails-not-to-miss>

¹¹⁰ Helen Parkinson, Saddle up! 6 dreamy horse riding holiday destinations in France 06 March 2019, <https://www.completefrance.com/travel/holiday-ideas/6-horse-riding-holiday-destinations-france>

¹¹¹ The-best-Horse-Riding-Holidays-in-Europe.pdf, <https://ampascachi.com/en/pdfs/Ebooks/> pp. 27

¹¹² The Napoleon RouTe on Horseback, A brief Story, pp. 5, <https://www.crte-region-sud.fr/sites/default/files/itineraires/carnet-de-route/roadmapnapoleon>

Figure 19: The Napoleon route



Source: Napoleon route <https://www.crte-region-sud.fr/sites/default/files/itineraires/carnet-de-route/roadmapnapoleon>

Another route, or an equestrian itinerary, which is an initiative of and in full concordance with the support of the European Union and European Cultural Itineraries along with promotion efforts of cultural and historical roads, this is **The European Road of d'Artagnan**. It was launched by the FFE through the label "Long Equestrian Itinerary." *The European Road of d'Artagnan* will link Lupiac in the Gers, the birthplace of the musketeer, to Maastricht and then Holland, where d'Artagnan died. It follows the footsteps of the musketeer, between the fiction as narrated in Alexandre Dumas' novel and historical reality. The European D'Artagnan Road has two major routes, via Paris and Bourgogne, providing six theme-based itineraries, with extensions to Spain, Italy, and Germany, via Belgium and Holland. /See figure /The European Road of D'Artagnan is an innovative touristic product that fuses unique historical themes, connection with nature, discovery of historical heritage, and encounters with the local inhabitants.

Figure 20: D'Artagnan's Road, France.

Source: D'Artagnan's Road (France): a horseback riding trail to be born in 2017

The route will help to promoting the equestrian tourism at a European level on the basis of a long-term project, with all of the necessary logistics to meet the expectations of leisure riders from around the world¹¹³. In order to improve the development and promotion of equestrian tourism, respectively, equestrian routers in the period 2005-2007, four European countries – England, Portugal, Iceland and Spain, developed the PEGASO Project in order to turn the territories with suitable conditions into equestrian destinations.

¹¹³ <https://www.tourmag.com/D-Artagnan-s-Road-France>, <https://www.tourmag.com/D-Artagnan-s-Road-France-a-horseback-riding-trail-to-be-born-in-2017>

The project is comprehensive and can serve as a strategy for the development of equestrian tourism in each region. /See Appendix 8/.

Hungary¹¹⁴



In the history of the Hungarians the peoples' shaping effect of horse, horse riding, and horseback migrations can be felt even today. Many people still keep horses and use them in their spare time. The equestrian sports are traditional and have become increasingly popular. The love to the horses, the animal husbandry, the cohabitation are among the forms of life of Hungarians`ancestors, and can be traced back to the period of constant moving and the nomadic culture¹¹⁵.

Hungary is a land with a great historic tradition with horses. As regards Equestrian Tourism, it offers perfect trails for every different type of Horseback trip. Hungary is a country with a very well differentiated and stablished equestrian heritage¹¹⁶. Having deep routes in the equestrian culture, the Hungarians are considered as one of the oldest riding nations in Europe. Furthermore, several inventions and innovations in the world of riding are linked to Hungary. For tourists visiting the country, riding attractions, such as “csikós” riding shows in the “puszta” (plain regions of Hortobágy and Bugac) have always been of special interest¹¹⁷.

Hungary is the pioneer of the European Equestrian Tourism. Thousands of foreign tourists started visiting Hungary in the early 60`s and 70`s for participating in specific equestrian programmes. A number of holiday tourists visited equestrian shows and

¹¹⁴ <https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/hungary-map-vector>

¹¹⁵ Historical overview of the development of Hungarian horseback riding and horse breeds, 22.07.2014., <http://www.panonatours.com/en/texts/nature/historical-overview-of-the-development-of-hungarian-horseback-riding-and-horse-breeds>

¹¹⁶ The best horseback riding holidays in IN Europe | Hungary, <https://ampascachi.com/en/pdfs/Ebooks/>, pp. 50

¹¹⁷ Piroska Béki, Tímea Vágó & Dóra Lasztovicza , The present of equine touriSm in hungary in reflection to an empirical research Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce – APSTRACTAgroinform Publishing House, Budapest, pp.19

programs organised in different areas of Hungary¹¹⁸. The equestrian tourism enterprises are well represented all over the country. They are well organized and 80% of them are integrated by the Hungarian Equestrian Tourism Association. From the beginning of the 1990s equestrian enterprises (pensions, stables, specialized equestrian services) have been established¹¹⁹.

Picture 5: King`s Mathias horse statue, Budapest



The flat geographical position of the country influence the availability and planning of horse routes almost on the whole territory of the country./See figure 17/. The good organization of the horse routes made possible the creating of a chain of Horse trails net. /See figure 18/.

¹¹⁸ Erika Konyves, Eva Suta, The importance of Equestrian Tourism Enterprises in Tourism Destination Management in Hungary September 2009, Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce 3(3-4), pp. 1432

¹¹⁹ The importance of equestrian tourism enterprises in tourism destination management in Hungary, 4th Aspects and Visions of Applied Economics and Informatics, March 26 - 27. 2009, Debrecen, Hungary, pp. 1432

Figure 21: Planned European routes for equestrian tourism



Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283351497>, Csilla Obadovics, Laszlo Kulcsar, Horse Industry in Hungary The Rebirth Through Tourism And Leisure/figures?lo=1

According to Viator travelers the best Horseback Riding in Hungary are:

- Horseback Riding in the Hungarian Puszta, takes you far beyond your expectations
- Private Horse Riding near Budapest
- Private Horse Riding near Budapest with lunch and transport¹²⁰

Figure 22: Best trails in Hungary.



Source: alltrails.com

¹²⁰ Top Hungary Horseback Riding, <https://www.viator.com/Hungary-tours/Horseback-Riding/>

The Hungarian horse breeds are well suited for leisure and hobby riders' expectations. These horses are calm in nature, kind and service-minded, reliable, while also imposing and stylish in appearance. Thus, the Hungarian horse breeds are ideally suited for tourism to benefit them¹²¹.

Romania¹²²



Romania is one of the last countries in Europe where the horse has not been yet replaced by the modern technology. The horseback riding trails pass through Transylvania and the Carpathian Mountains. Home to one of the last primeval forests in Europe, this area is a paradise for large mammals such as wolves, bears and lynx. Tourists have the opportunity to go back in time amidst majestic nature and fresh air. The country has a well-developed horse network, as well as level accommodation in converted farms and local rural houses¹²³. /See figure 19 /

¹²¹ Historical overview of the development of Hungarian horseback riding and horse breeds, 22.07.2014., <http://www.panonatours.com/en/texts/nature/historical-overview-of-the-development-of-hungarian-horseback-riding-and-horse-breeds>

¹²² Romania Maps - World Atlas. worldatlas.com

¹²³ <https://www.equus-journeys.com/equestrian-destinations/europe/romania>

Figure 23: Map of horse trails Romania

Source: Best trails in Romania | AllTrails, alltrails.com

Romania is famous all over the world thanks to Transylvania where the famed Count Dracula's castle is. Actually, Transylvania is a mountain and forestland, surrounded by its local customs and traditions, its hospitality and mystery. For many Europeans, Transilvania is considered to be best kept secret in Europe¹²⁴. This mysterious area is most famous for the equestrian tourism in Romania.

The horse in the country is still use in the farming, as a motor vehicle and for riding in an open nature. The horse routes there can be combined with folklore evenings and remarkable typical dishes. The organization of the routes is a work of "a 100% Romanian team of local guides who are happy to share their passion for their country", who have prepared a program, including:

- The untouched nature of Transylvania and the rural way of life where the horse is stil king;
- Some nights to spend in beautifully restored properties once belonging to princely families of Transylvania;
- Chance to spend a night or two with Romanian families;
- Unique architectural heritage with many preserved medieval villages;"¹²⁵

¹²⁴ The best horseriding holidays in Europe, Romania, <https://ampascachi.com/en/pdfs/Ebooks/>, pp. 89

¹²⁵ Riding through the mountains of Romania, Itinerary, highlights, <https://www.equus-journeys.com/riding-holidays/the-riders-of-transylvania>

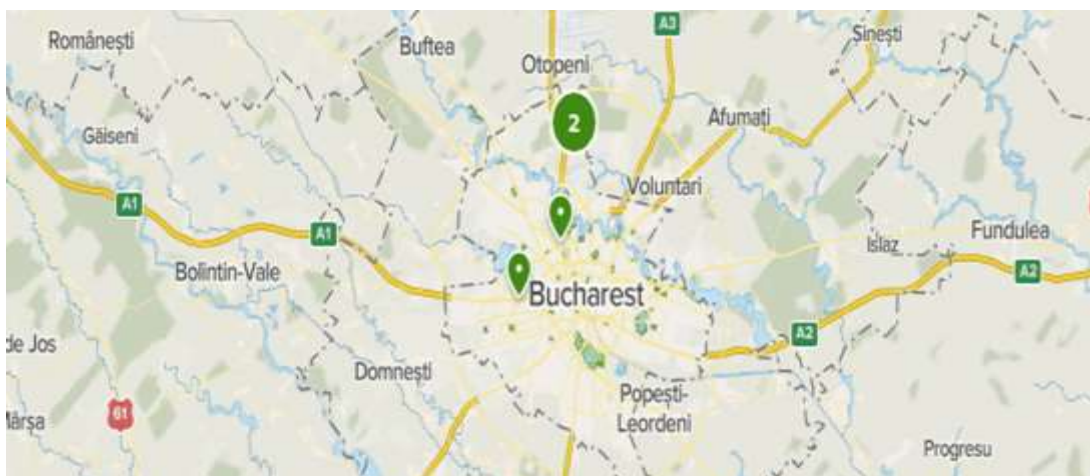
Picture 6: Horse tourism in Transilvania



Source: <https://www.equus-journeys.com/photos/600x400/horses-and-local-in-transylvania-romania>

The most developed horse trail net is around Bucurest, /See the fig.20/ in Suchava, Vranca, Valachia and Kluzh.

Figure 24: Map of Bucurest Trails



Source: Best trails in Romania, Bucurest Trails, alltrails.com

Turkey¹²⁶



Turkey is famous with its various landscape, compared with a colourful carpet, woven with the patterns of the centuries. The geographical position of the country abounds in high mountains, flats, lakes, rivers, natural beauties and all these give the tourists the opportunities to reveal a lot of hidden and unknown nature places, picturesque villages, caves, forests, waterfalls, vast coastline. The country has deep traditions in horse breeding and riding.

Horses have been important to the Turks and Turkey for more than 5000 years.

First used as food they were then used in war as cavalry and draught animals, then in agriculture and for transport and now largely for leisure and sport¹²⁷.

The horse was the most important means of travel and battle among the Turkish tribes of Central Asia for millennia. They were bred for speed, strength, calmness and intelligence, among the attributes required at various times¹²⁸. For the century old traditions in horse breeding, riding and racings still witnesses the hippodrum in Istanbul, an absolutely worthvisiting place in the city and one of the tourist and historical embelms of the city.

There are two famous places to go Horse riding in the country:

Cappadocia: Cappadocia is an exotic place to explore its lunar-like landscapes on horseback. With its interesting geographical shapes, historical and cultural assets, Capadocia offers a fairytale holiday to the tourists who want to explore it on horseback. The tourists can meet Turkish people still living a traditional lifestyle in interesting villages, or camp out under the stars, stay in family pensions and cool cave hotels, or taste local delicacies.

¹²⁶ <https://www.hiddentrails.com/country/Turkey.aspx>

¹²⁷ A Brief History of the Turkish Horse May 3, 2016 <https://www.volkansadventures.com/history/brief-history-turkish-horse>

¹²⁸ Niki Gamm, The Ottomans and their love of horses, April, 26, 2014, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-ottomans-and-their-love-of-horses>

Uludag: The mountain region of Uludag is proud with its` equestrian center established on the eastern skirts of Uludag. It offers horseback riding in a unique nature landscape. The facility, which has 40 horses of different breeds, hosts many domestic and foreign tourists¹²⁹.

Turkey has 22 official cultural routes, including horse riding and trekking.

Generally, the routes are developed by individual initiative. The mission of the driving routemakers is to demonstrate to curious visitors a different side of Turkey on a horseback, thus to create a sustainable tourism system that will reinvigorate rural economies. Over half the routes are waymarked to European standards; all have GPS files available. The accommodation options along the routes are very varied, and rapidly improving as more travelers follow them.

The routes are concentrated mainly in the area of Antalia, Capadokia – Gyoreme region and near Isatnbul and the Black Sea Coast. /See the map below/.

Figure 25: Map of Horse trails net of Turkey



Source: <https://www.alltrails.com/turkey>

The horse routes in Turkey have a seasonal character, as they are counted in the table below.

Table 5: The horse routes, according to the season.

In the spring	In the summer	In the autumn
Lycian Way	Between Two Seas	Evliya Celebi Way
Carian Trail	Kackar Mountain Trails	Phrygian Trail
Idyma Way	Mount Ararat,	Gastronomy Route
Abraham's Path	Via Egnatia	Kure Mountains Trail
Hittite Trail	Independence Trail	Yenice Forest Trails

Source: Author`s work, according to the information from <https://www.goturkeytourism.com/things-to-do/cultural-routes-of-turkey.html>

¹²⁹ <https://www.goturkeytourism.com/things-to-do/horse-riding-in-turkey>.

Lycian Way, Carian Trail, Idyma Way, Abraham's Path and Hittite Trail are recommended in the spring. Evliya Celebi Way, Phrygian Trail, Gastronomy Route, Kure Mountains Trail and Yenice Forest Trails are recommended in the autumn. Mount Ararat, Between Two Seas, Kackar Mountain Trails, Via Egnatia and Independence Trail are recommended in the summer¹³⁰.

Among these 15 trails, developed through the whole territory of the country, two deserve the “horse” tourists` attention – **The Saint Paul`s trail** and **The Evliya Celebi route**.

Saint Paul Trail

Saint Paul Trail is the second long distance trail exploring more remote mountains and lakes of southern and central Turkey.

The trail is a 500 km 27-day waymarked footpath from Perge (10 km east of Antalya province) to Yalvac (northeast of Lake Egirdir). There is a second branch starting at Aspendos, 40 km east of Antalya and joining the first route at the Roman site of Adada./See fig. 26/

Figure 26: Map of Saint Paul` trail.



Source: <https://cultureroutesinturkey.com/st-paul-trail/>

¹³⁰ <https://www.goturkeytourism.com/things-to-do/cultural-routes-of-turkey.html>

Saint Paul Trail offers trekking enthusiasts insight into the countryside that Paul traveled on his first journey through Anatolia¹³¹.

Evliya Çelebi Way /The Ottoman Pilgrim's Way on horse/

The Evliya Çelebi Way is a must-do trail for walkers and bikers, and *Turkey's first route for horseriders*. It offers a mix of history and nature, adventure and relaxation, combined with sightseeing in the towns and cities Evliya visited./See fig. 27/.

Figure 27: The Evliya Chelebi way.



Source: <https://cultureroutesinturkey.com/wp-content/uploads/2014>

¹³¹ <https://www.goturkeytourism.com/things-to-do/saint-paul-trail-first-cultural-walking-route-of-turkey.html>

The Way was opened on the quatercentenary of Evliya's birth, when UNESCO declared 2011 a year of celebration of his life and work. It follows the early stages of his journey to Mecca in 1671, when he at last found the opportunity to undertake the pilgrimage¹³².

For the tourists that prefer short distance routes, there is another route, developed near Istanbul, including a visit of Black sea coasts. The destination includes visits of villages, lakes, the famous Forest Belgrad to the sandy beaches of the Black Sea¹³³.

The horse routes in Turkey differ with their perfect organization, in a form of organised trips, during which the riders are accompanied by expert guides who help inexperienced riders learn everything from the names of the equipment to how to show the horse affection. The tourists are offered indoor riding, riding trips for the experienced and for beginners, plus opportunities to hire a horse by hour.

Figure 28: Map Horse route Atlitur Isatnbul – Belgrad forests – Black Sea coast.



Source: <http://www.istanbullife.org/tours/horse-riding-tour.htm>

Conclusions and recommendations for a good “equestrian tourism” offer

The development of equestrian tourism in Europe and the practices so far prove that this type of tourism offers a variety of good and quality offers with developed equestrian routes and quality professional services related to food and accommodation.

In countries such as France and Italy, several route-related projects have even been developed. The Regional Council of Brittany (France) proposes, together with all tourism partners, to create a development strategy that includes three areas of work¹³⁴:

¹³² <https://cultureroutesinturkey.com/wp-content/uploads/2014>

¹³³ Horseriding tour in Istanbul, <http://www.istanbullife.org/tours/horse-riding-tour.htm> /See map/

¹³⁴ <https://www.google.com/search?q=The+Regional+Council+of+Brittany++Horse+routes+p>

- Mobilizing stakeholders to optimize the structuring of the tourist offer.
- Communication and promotion of the tourist offer.
- Support for marketing of tourist and equestrian leisure-time offers.

Also, in order to structure and offer *a good offer for equestrian tourism*, it is necessary to take action to develop activities, services and training to help strengthen the sector, namely:

- Development and increase of the number of equestrian "visiting sites".
- Support of equestrian centers in their professionalization and investment.
- Development of specialized "tourist accommodation bases (only for equestrian tourism)".

In addition to foreign customers and those coming from other regions of France, it is important to note that only in Breton during the year 2011 there were 36,934 licensees, including 3,005 tourist arrows, as well as riders who are not members of FFE, estimated at 1 million.

The infrastructures are very controversial in Brittany and although many equestrian centers offer equestrian tourism products, there are few equestrian centers marked and able to meet all the requirements.

Following the example of the project in Breton, France, a strategy can be developed that includes three areas of work:

- To prepare an exhaustive list of equestrian centers, riding schools, horse farms, guides
- List of accommodation establishments and chalets to provide information about the routes, situated in different distance each other.

Details related to each accommodation should be available on the sites through presentations, photos, accommodation capacity, prices, contacts, link to the website, if any.

- Mobilization of stakeholders to optimize the structuring of the offer,
- Communication and promotion of the tourist offer,
- Support for marketing of tourist and equestrian leisure offers.

Also, in order to structure and offer a good offer for equestrian tourism, it is necessary to take action to develop activities, services and training to help strengthen the sector, namely:

- Development and increase of the number of equestrian "visiting sites"
- Support of equestrian centers in their professionalization and investment
- Development of specialized "tourist accommodation bases (only for equestrian tourism)"

The benefits of equestrian tourism

Currently, equestrian activities are practiced in different parts of the world and have many economic benefits, as they improve the development of tourism and also benefit the environment. As a kind of sports tourism, it has its role in the development of the personality under the direct influence of nature and its healing effect. In addition, due to the perceived energy of the horse, it has a calming and anti-stress effect.

The health significance, as mentioned in the previous chapters, is expressed in the overall development of the human body. Given the fact that the horse is an animal with a character not different from that of man, the tourist may find himself in extreme situations in which he must build and have specific skills, horseback riding builds self-control and controlled behavior.

It is a sustainable activity that respects the environment and helps to restore roads and paths.

It helps to improve the culture and natural heritage of the territories due to the increase of tourists in the wild areas.

It contributes to the development of rural areas and complements the development of the rural tourism in the area.

The development of this activity helps to strengthen the cooperation between the small businesses in the region.

It contributes to the all-year-round demand and supply of products to diversify tourism, thus helping to overcome the seasonality.

It can be developed in non-traditional tourist destinations or be useful in addition to the most common destinations.¹³⁵

It is certainly a different way to get closer to the horse, to live a wonderful adventure in the company of an animal, whose history has been closely linked to that of men for millennia. The equestrian tourism helps the revival of the rural way of life, to diversify its activities, to open new perspectives. This is not just a way to improve the environmental heritage, as it is also becoming a job creator. This kind of tourism for sure is a source of socio-economic opportunities for new tourism for all the countries.

Every horseback ride or tour is interesting and exciting and that is why every potential "horse tourist" can find and extract the positive while riding. In addition, the horse is a unique live trainer. It is thanks to this ability that the method of therapeutic riding or hippotherapy emerges, which is becoming one of the most effective ways to rehabilitate the disabled.

¹³⁵ Beneficios del turismo ecuestre, <https://www.turismo-ecuestre.com/tipologias-del-turismo-ecuestre.html>

Figure 29: Benefits of riding



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/56/0f/e8/560fe8cd127d4ae1f0fa9b7ce416ec5e.jpg>

Lots and important for the man`s structure, organism and mind are the benefits of the horseriding from improving the coordination and posture to improving the mood owing to the realizing of the serotonin – famous as the hormone of happiness.

In her article Rachael Weiss presents five benefits of riding a horse

- It is highly physical
- It teaches responsibility
- It is a great motivator
- It improves mental health
- It learns to develop teamwork¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Rachael Weiss, March 16, 2020 Five Benefits To Horseback Riding, Publisher ~ Union County Macaroni Kid <https://union.macaronikid.com/articles/5e6e8a7d6f9ec>

Benefits of Equestrian Tourism for the Territories

- It is a sustainable activity, respectful for the environment and helps to restore roads and trails.
 - Collaborates to improve the culture and natural heritage of the territories due to the increase in tourists in the wild areas.
 - Contributes to the development of rural areas and complements rural tourism in the territory.
 - Strengthens the collaboration of small businesses in the area.
 - Helps to diversify the supply of tourism products. Being very important to break the seasonality of the destination.
 - It can be developed in non-traditional tourist destinations or it can be useful as a complement to the most common destinations.

The online edition of the Third International Equestrian Fair in Cordoba, Spain, outlines the following benefits of equestrian tourism and the opportunities in the tourism sector.

- It is positioning itself as an Experiential and Complementary Activity to traditional tourism.
 - Popularization of the practice of horse riding.
 - Regarding the horse tourism modality, the attendance to shows and equestrian events that are offered as complementary activities within more or less traditional tourist packages stand out.
 - Large increase in equestrian tourism trips through intermediaries¹³⁷.

Every year the equestrian tourism becomes more and more popular, attracting the attention of all categories of the population, thanks to the constant interest and love to the horses. The equestrian tourism combines sports and leisure activities, contributing to the spiritual and physical development of man. The horseback riding activates the metabolism, prevents excessive fat deposition, forms a beautiful posture, strengthens and trains the muscles of the human body. The complex of positive features of the equestrian tourism is largely determined by its proper organization, in which it is necessary to take into account the geographical, historical, cultural, economic and social characteristics of each region.

Equestrian tourism has many positive effects:

- **Healing** - it affects the health state, as it involves practicing in nature, in fresh air.
- **Aesthetic** - plays a role in the development of the human values, generated by the careful treatment and care of the horse as a person.
- **Physical stability** - it also develops the qualities necessary for rapid response in the field conditions.
- **Educational** - affects the building of human culture to nature.

Having in mind the advantages and the benefits of the horse tourism, we can conclude that:

¹³⁷ El caballo, seña de identidad cultural de Córdoba, generador de tradición y desarrollo sostenible, se convierte en el eje central de <https://feriainternacionaldeturismoecuestre.com/es>

It is a sustainable activity that respects the environment and helps to restore roads and paths.

It helps to improve the culture and natural heritage of the territories by increasing the number of tourists in the wild areas.

It contributes to the development of rural areas and complements rural tourism in the area.

The development of this activity helps to strengthen the cooperation between the small businesses in the region.

It contributes to the supply of products to diversify tourism.

It helps break the seasonality.

It can be developed in non-traditional tourist destinations or can be included as an additional service in already developed traditional destinations.¹³⁸.

BULGARIA

Horse tourism development in Bulgaria

Tourism has been deeply affected by the global economic crisis, which has affected much of the world's markets. And this results in the loss of traditional tourist markets. After the crisis, the Corona virus appeared, which tested not only the health and social systems of all the affected countries, limited social contacts. It took people out of the economic space. The most severe restriction was experienced by the transport, without which tourism is unthinkable - it cut off travel, cut off access to mass tourism sites. The population was forced to contact and work only online, without live contacts. Even in urban environments, people are doomed to keep their distance, which restricts not only access to gradually opened accommodation, but even ordinary walks in the fresh air. And the lack of sun and air, the main sources of vitamin D in the body, has affected their psyche as well as the immune system. In this complex situation, it is necessary to look for a substitute type of tourism in which all these restrictions are not an obstacle to the organization of people's free time and to enable them to be outdoors, to unload and strengthen their health and physical strength and at the same time to maintain some social contacts.

After all these restrictions and interruption of tourist activity, the trend is focused on alternative forms of tourism, through which to overcome the negative consequences in traditional tourism. One such alternative form is equestrian tourism, the practice of which does not restrict the freedom of the population, as well as spending free time in nature.

Something more than ordinary attitudes is the connection between man and horse, and the animals on his farm in general. The lack of friendly contacts in the social environment can be largely compensated by contacts with another living being that accompanied man in different historical periods - the horse.

¹³⁸ Beneficios del turismo ecuestre, <https://www.turismo-ecuestre.com/beneficios-del-turismo>

Bulgaria is situated in the southeast of Europe and borders Romania to the North, Turkey to the southeast, Greece to the south, Serbia to the west, and the North Macedonia to the southwest. This is the land of the ancient Thracians – who had a strong link with the Roman Empire – excellent cuisine and exceptional landscapes. It also has crystal clear rivers, lakes with an abundance of flora and fauna, including wolves and bears, and vast extensions of open space where you can ride freely. In Bulgaria there are unequalled roads and tracks for equestrian tourism, starting at the Balkan Mountains that reach across the country and into the Black Sea¹³⁹.

The horse is an animal related to the Bulgarian from antiquity and wrote the beginning of the history of the Bulgarian people. In ancient times, which was an integral part of life, used as a means of transportation, for military purposes, for agricultural purposes, but hardly people in different historical periods were inclined to raise horses or rent horses for walking or just spending some time in nature. Equestrian tourism is a type of tourism that has been developing in the last 20 years, but it is not so well known in our country as a mass type of tourism, as it requires maintenance of facilities - equestrian facilities, riding skills, equipment, knowledge of the territory and most of all attitude to the animal, in this case the horse.

Bulgaria ranks 13th in Europe in the number of equidae - horses, donkeys and crosses between them. After us are even Greece and Hungary, where ungulates are traditionally bred. The number of controlled horses in our country in almost all breeds has increased in 2017, according to data from the Executive Agency for Selection and Reproduction of Animals¹⁴⁰.

The topic of this study is relevant because equestrian tourism is a prerequisite for the development of domestic tourism, not just the international one. Although today almost the whole world lives in unstable geopolitical conditions, equestrian tourism is among the types of tourism in demand around the world. In the context of a crisis caused by the spread of the Corona virus, /Covid 19/, this type of tourism can be safely practiced without restrictions, mainly because it does not require the accumulation of many people in one place.

Unfortunately, this type of tourism, although popular in Bulgaria, has not yet received sufficient support from the institutions responsible for it. The best practices for its development have not been reached and developed as much as possible in our country. The present study traces the development of equestrian tourism in some of the European countries with traditions in the field of horse riding and tourism, the development of equestrian routes as a major tool for practicing equestrian tourism and the prospects for their development.

The domestic equestrian tourism has enough problems, including a lack of state support, an insufficient number of developed equestrian routes and a shortage of qualified

¹³⁹ The-best-Horse-Riding-Holidays-in-Europe.pdf, <https://ampascachi.com/en/pdfs/Ebooks/>, pp.23

¹⁴⁰ Na 13-to miasto sme v Evropa po broya na kone I magareta 18.02.2017 <https://agrozona.bg/na-13-to-myasto-sme-v-evropa-po-broi>

specialists. The equestrian tourism plays an important role in solving the social problems of any region. The positive aspects of its development include job creation, raising incomes and living standards of the population, ensuring a healthy lifestyle and environmental education of people, increasing the attractiveness of the region.

Horses are large, powerful and charismatic animals and humans have ancient connections with them. Wild horses are dominant among the 13 species depicted in the caves of Chauvet in France 30,000 years ago, and although debate continues, archaeologists estimate that the existence of horses is at least 5,500 years old. And as the oldest non-hunting human-animal relationship - with dogs - the relationship between horses is unique, because now we mostly don't eat this animal.¹⁴¹

The horse has accompanied Bulgaria throughout its millennial and tumultuous history. The Proto-Bulgarians are a semi-nomadic tribe that moves from place to place in search of a better life, thanks to the horse - one of their most valuable assets. The fact that the Bulgarians are a window people is proved by the fact that they are extremely skilled masters in riding and archery, which made their troops perfect and invincible. From an early age, no matter a boy or a girl, they are "breastfed" with the horse and the ability to ride well. The most reliable fact, the horse for the proto-Bulgarians is a creature with a mythical status, is that the battle flag of the proto-Bulgarians from the 1st to the 9th century is the horse's tail - a symbol of victory¹⁴². Meanwhile, in 681, Khan Asparuh came on horseback to establish the Bulgarian state.

The horse has its worthy place in Bulgarian folklore. There is almost no old Bulgarian song in which the horse is not sung. The horse is the lyrical hero in a number of folklore works. In them he reaches "through nine mountains in ten", the characters do not ride, but fly. Despite being a bit forgotten by our people, the image of the horse is alive and relevant. He is also present in a number of Bulgarian proverbs, embodying the power of this animal, paraphrased in the expression "healthy as a horse".

In Bulgaria, the image of the horse is revived every year with the beginning of the holiday Sirni Zagovezni or Forgiveness on the day of St. Todor. See the Horse Racing app. Todor's day. Then in the village of Bachevo with a wonderful geographical location, where tourists and riding enthusiasts can observe the three most beautiful mountains in Bulgaria - Rila, Pirin and the Rhodopes.

The foundations of horse breeding in Bulgaria were laid at the beginning of the last century, but the boom occurred in the 50s of the 20th century, when several horse farms opened in different parts of the country. Thanks to these plants, the bred breeds acquire their appearance, characterized by specific external features of the horses, as well as their genealogical structure.

The Kabiyuk Horse Farm in Shoumen is the oldest horse farm in Bulgaria. It is located on the Shumen plateau 13 km northeast of Shumen, at an average altitude of 194 m. It was founded in 1864 by the Ruse governor Mithat Pasha, in order to produce horses for the

¹⁴¹ Petuchnoto ese: kulturnite znachenia na divite kone, <https://bg.livingorganicnews.com/friday-essay>

¹⁴² Konyat – po-svurzan s nashia narod, otkolkoto predpolagame, <https://trakiec-bg.com/konete-narod/>

Turkish army. Already in the first years the number of horses in the stud farm reached about 1000. Later, during the Russo-Turkish war of liberation, all the horses from the stud farm were transported by the retreating Turkish army to Anatolia and the liberated Bulgarian state found it empty.¹⁴³

The horse farm "Stefan Karadja" Balchik is the heir of the horse farm in Bozhypishte near Sofia. The other famous horse farms are: Ister, Kamchia, Khan Asparuh¹⁴⁴.

Although Bulgaria cannot compete with the strongest countries, which have centuries-old traditions in horse breeding, it has something to boast about in this regard. At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century in our country are bred and bred about 25 breeds. 7 of these breeds are entirely the work of the native horse breeding: East Bulgarian horse, Pleven horse, Danube horse, Bulgarian heavy horse, Bulgarian riding horse, Bulgarian sport horse and Karakachan horse (autochthonous primitive breed). /See app: Breeds/

According to the information on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the most popular among them are: Arabian breed, Thoroughbred English breed, East Bulgarian breed, Danube breed, Pleven breed, Trakehner breed, Hanoverian breed, Lynx breeds, Heavy breeds, Scottish pony, Haf, Aboriginal breeds - Karakachan and Deliorman horse.

The beginning of equestrian sports in Bulgaria was accompanied by the domestication of these graceful animals by humans¹⁴⁵. The country has its historical contribution to the development of the world equestrian heritage, as well as in terms of the diversity of horse breeds. For many years, Bulgarian horse breeding has used horsepower in agriculture, the army and sports in Bulgaria. Horse populations in Bulgaria have been improved thanks to a number of specialists. The traditional Bulgarian breeds are East Bulgarian, Danube and Pleven horse breeds. As well as the bred populations in our country from Thoroughbred English, Thoroughbred Arabian, Shagia and populations of representatives of the heavy type of horses and others. These breeds have brought many sporting successes to the country around the world and in our country, the stud farms and the people who worked with them remained in history.

Currently, there is a widespread tendency to reduce the rich and great both genetic and ecological breed diversity due to the dynamically changing weather. Bulgarian horse breeding is an integral part of the world, as such, historically, gives us cause for national pride.

The first data on horse races in Bulgaria date back to 1878. They are directly related to the establishment of the Bulgarian army and in particular - to the laying of the foundations of the cavalry in it¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ Kabiuk – Nachalo. kabiuk.net

¹⁴⁴ <https://agro.bg/predstoyashto/seminari/porodi-kone-razvazhdani-v-balga>

¹⁴⁵ Bulgarskiyat konen sport – istoria i traditsii, Agro TV, april 18, 2016, https://agrotv.bg/p_6710Bulgarskiqt-konen-sport—istoriq-i-tradicii

¹⁴⁶ Bulgarskiyat konen sport – istoria i traditsii, Agro TV, april 18, 2016, https://agrotv.bg/p_6710, Bulgarskiqt-konen-sport—istoriq-i-tradicii

The Bulgarian equestrian sport debuted at the Paris '24 Games. In the French capital, we are represented by Gen. Vladimir Stoychev and Krum Lekarski¹⁴⁷.

The Bulgarian Equestrian Association BAKT / BAHT / operates in Bulgaria, a branch organization registered under the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act, uniting and protecting the interests of its members. BAKT was established with the idea to support the construction of modern conditions for the development of equestrian tourism in Bulgaria. For the main goals of the association See Appendix are:

1. Creating modern conditions for the development of equestrian tourism in Bulgaria and all activities and factors on which its better development depends;
2. Creating conditions for compliance with the principles of fair competition between the owners of horse bases in Bulgaria;
3. Promotion of Bulgarian equestrian tourism, including its opportunities for healthy development of young people and integration of disadvantaged groups.

The Association recognizes the exclusive competence of the International Equestrian Federation¹⁴⁸.

There are currently 29 horse training bases in Bulgaria, located in the regions of Sofia, Plovdiv, Shumen, Varna, Dobrich, Veliko Tarnovo, Stara Zagora, Troyan, Kneja and others.¹⁴⁹ All of them are subordinated to the Bulgarian Equestrian Federation.

According to the chairman of BAKT in Bulgaria, the equestrian bases in Bulgaria are about 350. According to him, the equestrian bases, which can be defined as tourist, are multiplying.

Among them the most popular are: Salla Estate / East Bulgaria/, Kalimanski han /East Bulgaria/, Perivolos, /South West Bulgaria/, Pirin, /South West Bulgaria/, Simeon Veliki, /South East Bulgaria/, Batoshevo, /Central Bulgaria/, Tara, /South Bulgaria/ Tangra, /South West Bulgaria/¹⁵⁰, Han Asparuh, /Sofia/¹⁵¹. etc.

The potential for its development on the territory of Bulgaria is determined by the availability of appropriate geographical and climatic conditions and the large number of horse bases.

Some of them have separate equestrian schools that offer riding in nature for beginners to take their first steps with learning in a natural environment, as well as opportunities for advanced to experience adventure on interesting routes, opportunities reaching historical places: to fortresses, Bozhenski Urvich, old Roman roads, picturesque waterfalls and ancient stone bridges, along rivers monasteries.

The philosophy of the schools is oriented towards unity with nature and synchrony with the horses. They offer horseback riding within a day, some without offering complementary tourist products services.

¹⁴⁷ Konen sport, <https://www.bgolympic.org/>

¹⁴⁸ Bulgarian Equestrian Association BAKT / BAHT, <http://www.bakt.bg/en/about-us.html>

¹⁴⁹ Sportni bazi, Bulgarska federatsia po konen sport, <http://www.horsesportbg.org/horsebases>

¹⁵⁰ Konni bazi, <http://www.bakt.bg/bg/konni-bazi.html>

¹⁵¹ <http://www.sofia-guide.com/attraction/han-asparuh-horse-base/>

Equestrian bases provide opportunities for horseback riding almost all year round in various training programs for both children and adults.

They offer different types of horseback riding programs depending on:

- Duration - one day and several days.
- Age - for children and adults
- Type of activity:
 - horse riding at the arena at the base;
 - horseback riding on a certain route;
 - free riding;
 - photo hunting;

Every year new bases appear, but there is a problem with the staff, as this type of tourism is a specific service and requires qualified staff. Many of the horse bases work with foreigners who are looking for a package for a few days, the reason for which is our beautiful nature, diverse terrain and experienced guides. The demand among the foreign tourists proves a high level and good quality, which in turn proves great competitiveness.

The equestrian sport is an expensive sport for wealthy tourists. It requires maintenance, equipment, clothing, investment in general. The difference between an amateur rider and a professional is measured financially. Bulgaria can benefit from the rare cultural and architectural heritage that needs to be used. In addition, with the current enthusiasm for outdoor activities and environmental protection, it is essential to promote our country by developing an offer of equestrian products for everyone, from beginners to experienced.

According to the only book recently published in Bulgaria on horseback riding, the country is divided into six zones by economic and geographical indicators with listed natural, historical and tourist attractions, near the horse bases¹⁵². The edition includes the sites for amateur and tourist horse riding, schools in different directions such as WESTERN and HORSEMANSHIP, hippotherapy, children's riding camps, recommended routes for horseback riding combined with wild camping and luxury spas.

There are different forms of organization of equestrian tourism in the different bases.

In Bulgaria most of the horse bases are self-sufficient. In addition to caring for their own horses, many bases offer the so-called "boarding house" to support themselves¹⁵³. Many horse owners practice this type for a certain amount of money to look after the horse, which is a sure financial support for the base. The more luxurious the base, the higher the figure for the maintenance of the horse, which, accordingly, brings profit to the base.

Many bases rely only on the season, especially those around the tourist villages, such as Varna, Bansko.

There are bases that rely on organizing green schools or children's camps.

¹⁵² Putevoditel na dovolniya ezdach, Ezdapress, 2018

¹⁵³ Mnozhat se konnite bazi v Bulgaria, Interview with Vladimir Pavlov, chairman of the BFHT: Brazdi, 27.02.2021, <https://bnt.bg/news/mnozhat-se-konnite-bazi-v-balgariya->

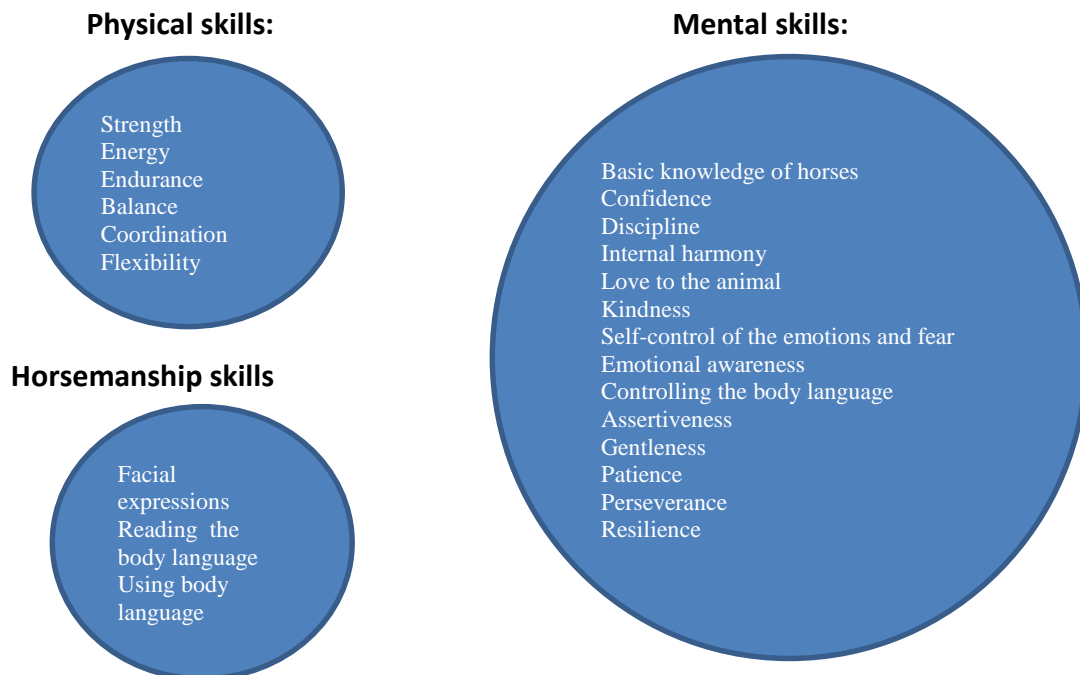
According to many base owners, the revival of equestrian services will bring revitalization to rural areas. The world of the horse is different from the one in the city, from the world of technology, this is a real, not a virtual world. Working with horses teaches attention, builds patience, proper communication, responsibility. The goals of the horse bases are to train many people, to help mass horse riding and horse tourism. But many are chosen and few are called. In most of the horse bases not all horses are purebred, but there are purebred Arabic, Shagia, Anglo-Arabic. Of great importance for the ride, which lasts many hours, is the horse to be light and durable. That is why rabid, purebred horses are preferred. To practice the product of equestrian tourism, one must have basic skills that are specific to equestrian riding: to be able to ride, to be able to communicate with the horse, to have balanced movements, to have a sense of coordination, to maintain discipline, to be patient. There are three types of riding skills:

- physical:
- mental:

Both are mandatory for the rider and skills concerning both parties in order to properly communicate between them.

- horsemanship is the art or practice of riding and caring for horses¹⁵⁴. They can be grouped as follows:

Figure 24: The required skills for the riders



Source: Author compilations

¹⁵⁴ Anrie Diedericks, „What Skills Do You Need For Horse Riding?“, What is horsemanship?, Riding for Beginners <https://www.equestrianspace.com/>

Skills concerning both parties for the purpose of proper communication between them or so called **Horsemanship** can be learned and developed through continuous work with horses¹⁵⁵.

According to Yonka Maximova, a long-time equestrian athlete with a number of national and national championship titles, as well as numerous victories in show jumping tournaments, the equestrian tourism has a great future in Bulgaria because of the benefits of communication with horses and love for these noble animals, as well as the great interest shown by foreigners in this sport in our country¹⁵⁶.

The Bulgarian Equestrian Association BAKT / BAHT / operates in Bulgaria, a branch organization registered under the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities, uniting and protecting the interests of its members. BACT was established with the idea to support the construction of modern conditions for the development of equestrian tourism in Bulgaria. The main goals of the association are:

1. Creating modern conditions for the development of equestrian tourism in Bulgaria and all activities and factors on which its better development depends;
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According to the only book recently published in Bulgaria on horseback riding, the country is divided into six zones by economic and geographical indicators with listed natural, historical and tourist attractions, near the horse bases¹⁵⁷.

The publication includes sites for amateur and tourist horseback riding, schools in various fields such as WESTERN and HORSEMANSHIP, hippotherapy, children's riding camps, recommended routes for horseback riding combined with wild camping and luxury spas.

There are currently over 300 horse bases in Bulgaria, among which they are more popular: Salla Estate, /East Bulgaria/ Kalimanski han, /East Bulgaria/, Perivolos, /South West Bulgaria/, Pirin, /South West Bulgaria/, Simeon Veliki, /South East Bulgaria/, Batoshevo, /Central Bulgaria/, Tara, /South Bulgaria/ Tangra, /South West Bulgaria/ etc¹⁵⁸.

Every year new bases appear, but there is a problem with the staff, as this type of tourism is a specific service and requires qualified staff. Many of the horse bases work with foreigners who are looking for a package for a few days, the reason for which is our beautiful nature, diverse terrain and experienced guides. Demand among foreign tourists proves a high level and good quality, which in turn proves great competitiveness.

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.equestrianspace.com/what-skills-do-you-need-for-horse-riding/>

¹⁵⁶ Chaleva, L. Zashto konen turizum, Zaщо конен туризъм? February, 28, 2020 <https://trip.dir.bg/news.php?id=27571602>

¹⁵⁷ Putevoditel na dovolniya ezdach, Ezdapress, 2018

¹⁵⁸ Konni bazi, <http://www.bakt.bg/bg/konni-bazi.html>

Equestrian sport is an expensive sport for wealthy tourists. It requires maintenance, equipment, clothing, investment in general. The difference between an amateur rider and a professional is measured financially.

An interesting and passed down tradition in Bulgaria is the so-called Horse Easter. It is practiced in southwestern Bulgaria, in the village of Bachevo, Razlog region. /See Appendix 1/.

Conclusion

In Bulgaria, the equestrian tourism is a relatively young type of tourism. In order to be properly developed, the support of the state is needed. A good option is to create an association by uniting the stables. The country is a member of the World Organization of Equestrian Tourism, but yet needs a self-organization on the part of all stakeholders within the country. Their tasks as it concerns the equestrian tourism should be:

- classification of equestrian routes and creation of a list of reference routes in Bulgaria,
- training of professional staff for equestrian recreation,
- dissemination of information about programs and
- interaction with travel companies.

Bulgaria has wonderful prospects for the development of equestrian tourism due to its rich natural and recreational resources. This will help many regions and the country as a whole to increase their budget. High rates of development of equestrian tourism for regions of our country such as Ruse, Preven, Plovdiv, Black Sea, Pirin and other regions. And it is precisely these regions that must play an important role in the inbound and the domestic tourism in the near future

Horse breeding and rearing must be part of regional and rural development policy, helping to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The equestrian industry offers many opportunities for the economy, especially the rural one. It creates jobs, provides training opportunities for young people and creates a social connection between the city and the country. Without producing food, equestrian activities contribute to improving the competitiveness of agriculture, protecting the environment and biodiversity, reviving the genetic and cultural heritage of breeds and cultural heritage. Ideally, they also contribute to the diversification of agricultural activities by offering ancillary services in the field of equestrian tourism. The intervention of public authorities through direct payments, financial support for breeding organizations, farms and horse farms must be a mandatory basis on which the sector must be able to develop its activities for the benefit of society.

In order for all future actions to be effective, a number of preliminary measures must be taken to address the gaps identified, with the participation of all actors, and to pay attention to their vocational training. These are: breeders, riders, drivers and traders. They must all join forces to create a common organization or Council of Horse Industry Participants to exchange and pool knowledge on the work of the sector, complementing and disseminating it to best meet their needs and needs and the expectations of the clients,

respectively the tourists. Unresolved issues need to be addressed quickly so that there is professional support for all. The development of EU projects is also a good prospect.

Recommendations

In order to ensure a regular monitoring of the sector, a rational system of indicators would assess its impacts with greater importance:

- A comprehensive census of equidae is needed to monitor progress with greater accuracy.
- The main indicator is the number of jobs generated by the fast-growing sector.
- the location of jobs in various fields such as agriculture, crafts, tourism, sports, trade related to the equestrian and tourism industries.

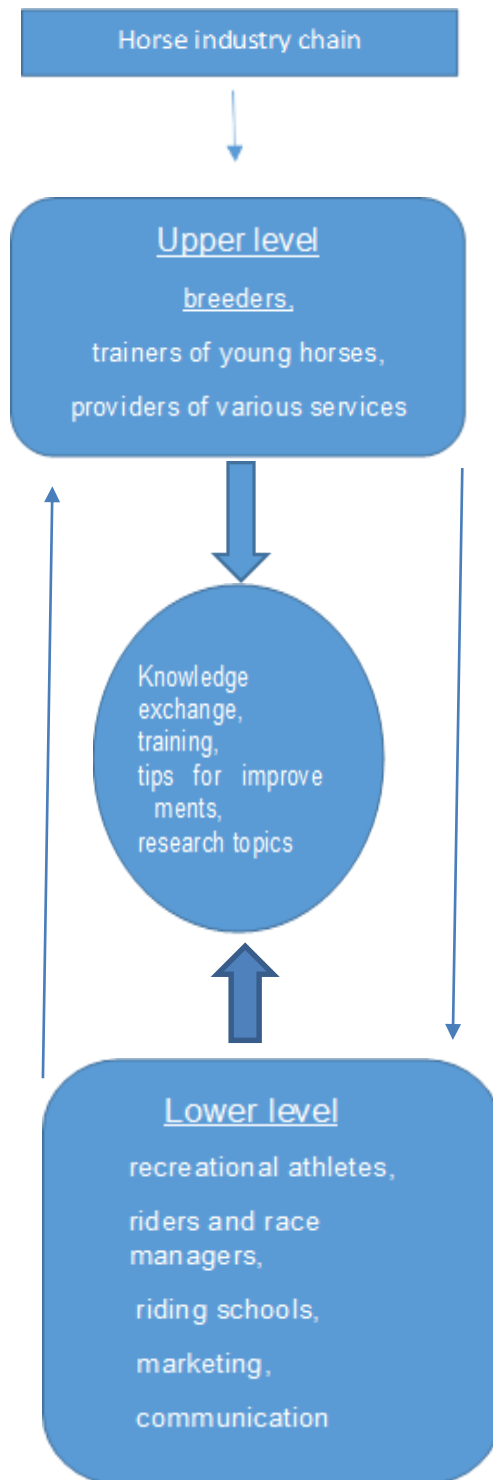
Systematic collection of information on these indicators and their updating would lead to a more complete picture of the situation in the sector, which, in turn, would give a more accurate assessment accurate for training and development needs.

Accurate figures are also needed in terms of quantitative economic burden - profitability, costs and prices of different activities, matching supply and demand, transactions, imports and exports, number and geographical location of routes.

Structural change in agriculture needs to be studied and regularly monitored so that innovative methods can be used to diversify activities and assess the freedom of action of farms. This would affect the development of the equine sector in rural areas.

Partnerships between the various actors in the sector, up and down the chain, should also be encouraged and given feedback. /See Fig. 30/

Figure 30: Horse industry chain



Source: Author's idea

Given its geographical features, rich natural resources, the competitiveness of hundreds of horse bases and guest houses and accommodation in general, on the one hand, and the traditional attitude to the horse in different historical periods, that has left its prints on the history and culture of the country, on the other hand, Bulgaria has wonderful conditions for the development of this type of tourism. The country has a lot to offer to its home and foreign tourists, but also has a lot to learn from the foreign experience.

The social and recreational opportunities of equestrian tourism must be carefully analyzed in order to maximize and develop a concept aimed at maximizing the development and promotion of this type of tourism.

Institutional framework



The IHSC – the International Horse Sports Confederation it was established in 2013 and brought together the international bodies for major horse sports, being:



- **The FEI** The International Equestrian Federation was established in 1924. There are 136 member National Federations.



The IFHA - The International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities. The IFHA is the world peak body for the international sport of Thoroughbred racing. Its members are the national racing authorities across the globe which stage Thoroughbred races¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁹ About the IFHA, <https://www.ifhaonline.org/default.asp?section>



FAO - The Food and Agriculture Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. There are more than 194 member states, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide. "Everyone can play a part in ending hunger"¹⁶⁰.



Italian Federation of Equestrian Sports /Federazione Italiana Sport Equestri (FISE or "Italian Federation of Equestrian Sports") since 1926¹⁶¹.



Italian Federation of Trec-Ante Equestrian Tourism. The Italian Federation of Equestrian Tourism and Trec Ante was established in Rome on 8 March 1968 with the name ANTE (National Association of Equestrian Tourism): among its main purposes, the organization and dissemination of equestrian practice in the countryside and the enhancement of the horse - in particular that raised in biodiversity - as a resource of the Italian heritage and for tourism promotion.

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.google.com/search?q=www.fao.logo&client>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.coni.it/en/national-sports-federations/italian-federation-of-equestrian-sports-fise>.



The Bulgarian Equestrian Federation

BF 'Equestrian Sport' has been operating since 1914 under the name 'Bulgarian Jockey Club' and since 1945 under the name 'Bulgarian Equestrian Federation'.¹⁶²



Association
Bulgarian
Sport Horse

Асоциация „Български спортен кон“ (АБСК). Сдружение с нестопанска цел „Асоциация български спортен кон“ е регистрирано на 27.04.2006 г. да извършва развъдна дейност¹⁶³.



The National Horse Breeding Organization in Bulgaria was established in 1999 as an independent, voluntary organization¹⁶⁴.

Final Conclusion:

Some of the problems that are waiting to be solved in order to encourage the development of equestrian tourism are related, first of all, to the infrastructure in the territory, the personnel, the professional training, the lack of good advertising and information about the activity of the equestrian bases. level of development and development of equestrian routes, requiring proper planning and availability of facilities, equipment and maintenance. All this, of course, must be realized with the participation and support of the state - the key to its successful development.

¹⁶² Bulgarska federatsia po konen sport, <http://www.horsesportbg.org/bef>

¹⁶³ https://bgsporthorse.com/?page_id=3729

¹⁶⁴ https://agro.bg/firmi/zivotnovadstvo_93/natsionalna-asotsiatsiya-po-konevadstvo-14/ © www.agro.bg

Despite the above problems in the sector, it does not mean that this type of tourism has no future.

As the Horse tourism has its` great economic and social influence on the territory by keeping the preservation of the cultural-historical heritage, the natural beauty and supporting the local economy, thus contributing for the territory development, we can conclude that this kind of tourism is a sustainable one.

The horse tourism activities evolve the locals, prompt intercultural exchange and experience, thus effecting positively not only the locals, but the tourist and the horse industry.

The specific features that characterize equestrian tourism, not only distinguish it from other species, but make it less practiced and widespread in most parts of the world. There is still no mass organization of horse tours by tour operators, there are few offers offering equestrian tourism or packages for equestrian tourism. Now, in a time of pandemic, this type of tourism can be a winning card, because it is not dependent on the distance, is not characterized by the typical for maritime and cultural and recreational tourism mass. The interest in horseback riding is constantly increasing and tourist companies must take advantage of its main advantage, namely that this type of tourism is environmentally friendly and strengthens health. This interest continues, which implies its transformation into a sustainable type of tourism.

The researched topic is relevant, because equestrian tourism is a prerequisite for the development of domestic tourism, not only international. Although today almost the whole world lives in unstable geopolitical conditions, equestrian tourism is among the types of tourism that are in demand around the world. Unfortunately, this type of tourism, although popular in Bulgaria, has not yet received sufficient support from the institutions responsible for it. The best practices for its development have not been reached and developed as much as possible. Bulgaria has something to learn about the development of equestrian tourism in some of the European countries with traditions in the field of equestrian riding and tourism and the prospects for development and to take advantage of this.

Given its geographical features, rich natural resources, the competitiveness of hundreds of guest houses and accommodation in general, on the one hand, and the traditional attitude to the horse in different historical periods, on the other, Bulgaria has excellent conditions for the development of this type of tourism. The country has something to learn from foreign experience.

The social and recreational opportunities of equestrian tourism must be carefully analyzed in order to maximize and develop a concept aimed at maximizing the development and promotion of this type of tourism. In the modern world, with its fashion for a healthy lifestyle, the equestrian tourism is becoming increasingly popular as a type of sports and health tourism. More and more tourists prefer to travel, combining the enlarging of knowledge with the health. And in this respect, the equestrian tourism is gaining more and more popularity as the most ecological, educational, affordable type of tourism and most importantly, having a health-improving effect.

In addition to the positive impact of horseback riding on the body, the tourist gets an unforgettable experience, traveling through unique natural places, landmarks of a particular region, gaining knowledge about the life and culture of the peoples of the places visited. The above analysis of the spatial organization of equestrian tourism showed us that the centers for equestrian tourism are usually located in rural areas and organized in national parks, to picturesque natural sites, cultural and historical sites that can be reached on horseback.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

The Horse Easter Tradition

Horse Easter. The custom is practiced in southwestern Bulgaria, in the village of Bachevo. Preparations at the horse base begin before sunrise, and later hundreds of guests, relatives, friends and riders from all over the country flock to attend our celebration. For many years in a row, the Horse Festival has been celebrated with organized jumping tournaments, professional competitors, a rich prize fund and many spectators. With the advent of horseback riding as an alternative to tourism, the focus has shifted to people who want and practice riding as amateurs. The holiday is also called Todor's Saturday, as it is held on the day of St. Todor, according to the Christian calendar. In recent years, on Todorova Saturday, whole families come to the base, all the best is offered for both parents and children. Horses are washed early, manes and tails are combed. Ritually, the horses are fed with corn, and cakes in the form of horseshoes are distributed to those present. The first guests and customers who will ride are given white shirts to maintain the tradition of St. Todor's Day. For everyone else there are ponies, horses, lush meadows for picnics, attractions, barbecues, entertainment, folk music and warm hospitality. Amateurs and professional riders from the base go and take part in the stormy kushi, which are organized in places.

Appendix 2

The International Horse Sports Confederation

The IHSC was established in 2013 and brought together the two international bodies for major horse sports:

- the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI); and
- the International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities (IFHA). The key missions of the IHSC include:
 - being the official body for the relations of the horse industry with the OIE;
 - the exchange of information and technical knowledge between the FEI and IFHA;
 - the encouragement of cooperation between the FEI and IFHA on matters of mutual interest which affect horse sports;
 - the representation of the collective interests of the FEI and IFHA.

Appendix 3

The FEI - Federacion Equestre Nacional или Международната федерация по конен спорт е учредена през 1924 година. It became possible by joining of the national organizations of Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America¹⁶⁵. Днес в нея членуват 134 национални федерации, които имат статут на независими организации. Международната федерация работи в партньорство с тях и регулира развитието на различните дисциплини в конния спорт.

The Mission of the Federation is to drive and develop equestrian sport globally in a modern, sustainable and structured manner with guaranteed integrity, athlete welfare, equal opportunity and a fair and ethical partnership with the horse.

The Vision of the Federation is to grow the unique and mutually beneficial bond between horse and human in sport globally¹⁶⁶. The FEI is based on the principle of equality and mutual respect between all 134 affiliated National Federations, without prejudice to race, religion or internal politics.

The FEI promotes equestrianism in all its forms and encourages the development of the FEI equestrian disciplines throughout the world. The core values of the FEI are: fair play, equality, complicity with the animal and respect for the horse and the environment¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁵ Allen, K; Schumacher, SA (2015). "Impact of FEI rules on sport horse medications", Chapter 26: In Sprayberry, KA; Robinson, NE (eds.). Robinson's Current Therapy in Equine Medicine (7th ed.). Elsevier Health Sciences. ISBN 9780323242165, pp. 112–115

¹⁶⁶ Federacion Equestre Nacional, <https://inside.fei.org/fei/about-fei/values>

¹⁶⁷ The International Horse Sports Confederation Welcomes Significant Progress on Key Projects, December 12, 2017, <https://www.ifhaonline.org/default.asp?section>

Appendix 4

International Federation of Horse Racing Authorities (IFHA)

The IFHA is the world peak body for the international sport of Thoroughbred racing. Its members are the national racing authorities across the globe which stage Thoroughbred races. Major areas of the IFHA's activities include:

- Making and amending the International Agreement on Breeding, Racing and Wagering (the IABRW)
- Policy development relating to welfare and safety of horses and riders
- International Race Planning and Grading ("black type")
- World Rankings
- Equine Prohibited Substances and Practices
- Harmonization of Race Day Rules
- Fostering commercial development of the racing industry globally¹⁶⁸.

Appendix 5

Bulgarian Equestrian Federation

BF 'Equestrian Sport' has been organizing activities since 1914 under the name 'Bulgarian Jockey Club' and since 1945 under the name 'Bulgarian Equestrian Federation'. He has been a member of the International Equestrian Federation since 1928. Co-founder of the European Equestrian Federation on 18.02.2010. Develops the disciplines: jumping, dressage, all-round riding and endurance. With individual athletes and teams he took part in the disciplines of all-round riding, dressage and show jumping at the Olympic Games in 1924, 1928, 1932, 1952, 1956, 1960, 1972, 1980, 1992, 2000 and 2004.

Appendix 6

Bulgarska Asotsiatsia za konen turizm /Bulgarian Horse Tourism Association/ - БАКТ

BACT is a branch organization registered under the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities, uniting and protecting the interests of its members. BACT was established with the idea to support the construction of modern conditions for the development of equestrian tourism in Bulgaria¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶⁸ About the IFHA, <https://www.ifhaonline.org/default.asp?section>

¹⁶⁹ Bulgarska Asotsiatsia za konen turizm <http://www.bakt.bg/bg/about-us.html>

Appendix 7

Bulgarian Sport Horse Association (ABSK)

The non-profit association "Bulgarian Sport Horse Association" was registered on April 27, 2006 to carry out breeding activities. The Association aims to develop and stimulate the breeding of Bulgarian sport horse, intended for the Olympic disciplines, to provide protection and control of its origin. , to work for its genetic improvement, to ensure the integration between equestrian sports and breeding, to represent the interests of the community engaged in breeding Bulgarian sport horses to the relevant national and international organizations - the World Federation of Sport Horse Breeding, etc.

Appendix 8

"Putevoditel na dovolnia ezdach/ "Пътеводител на доволния ездач", EzdaPress, 2018

The 204-page book is ready to guide you on the path of your free ride, through mountains, villages and towns across the country. Equestrian bases, sports clubs, hotels with equestrian tourism, arranged in alphabetical order and distributed in the six geographical areas of the country, await you on the threshold of the summer season with offers for horseback riding and walks, children's riding camps, travel with stagecoaches and carriages and many more horse adventures.

Appendix 9

PEGASO Project

The PEGASO project is an initiative of the Interreg III-B "Atlantic Region", developed between 2005 and 2007 by several regions in four Atlantic countries, which seek to develop and increase the importance of equestrian tourism, creating their own identity in which the horse is in the basis for socio-cultural and economic development - Spain, England, Portugal, Ireland.

The main objectives of the **PEGASO** project were:

- development of a methodology for assessment of the territory with equestrian heritage as a tourist product;
- development of a model of equestrian tourist destination based on the diagnostics of each territory, identifying the public and private elements of quality for all tourist destinations;
 - development of various activities that improve the levels of management training in equestrian sports, in particular those related to equestrian tourism;

- strengthening the identity of the horse, as a tourist attraction, through cooperation between different territories, so that it is possible to disseminate good practices, compare methods and create synergies between the regions that formed the project.

The SWOT analysis of equestrian tourism developed for the PEGASO project highlighted

the following characteristics:

a) Strengths:

- Very diverse territories.
- Traditional equestrian products and events rooted in local cultures.
- Complementary tourism activity with other consolidated tourism segments in the territories that already have several resources.
- Development of new experience and pilot projects aimed at the development and promotion of equestrian products.
- Huge and consolidated tourism experience in some areas.

b) Weaknesses:

- Small number of companies in the sector.
- Difficulties in creating useful interactions between the subsectors involved in equestrian tourism.
- Lack of equestrian tourism policies.
- Lack of information about the equestrian tourism market.
- Lack of knowledge about the tourism sector related to equestrian tourism.
- High insurance prices for activities related to horses.
- Insufficient equipment and facilities.
- Illegal commercial supply of equestrian entertainment and tourist activities.
- Ignoring specialized trade policies.

c) Opportunities:

- Great potential for practicing equestrian activities.
- Tourism segments with potential for development: incentives; accessible and therapeutic tourism.
- National institutional support for segments that help reduce seasonality and increase the impact of tourism on rural areas and that contribute to extending the average tourist stay.
- Opportunity to recognize equestrian tourism as a "green product".
- A large number of people with disabilities in Europe who form a potential market for the development of hippotherapy activities¹⁷⁰.

¹⁷⁰ Lubersac & Lallery, Hipoterapia: Método de intervenção terapêutico praticado por indivíduos com deficiência física ou mental, 1973, realizado por profissionais de saúde com o apoio de treinadores de equitação. Os principais objetivos são melhorar a postura, o equilíbrio e a mobilidade (Alves, 2009) através do movimento do cavalo.

Threats:

- Lack of statistical information - limits the study of equestrian tourism.
- Consolidated international markets, especially in the equestrian sector (Germany, France and the Netherlands).
 - Reduced number of tour operators specializing in equestrian tourism.
 - Concentration of specialized international tour operators in certain countries.
 - Inclusion of the proposal for entrepreneurial initiatives with little entrepreneurial training

Also according to the **PEGASO project**, the equestrian sector, from a tourism point of view, has the following **characteristics**:

- France and Hungary, pioneers in recognizing the economic potential of equestrian tourism, have set up official organizations to promote the sector to give it high quality standards;
 - Europe and the United States presented themselves as the two main sources of equestrian tourism;
 - . The widespread use of equestrian services throughout Europe leads to the diversification of agricultural activities and accommodation facilities in rural tourism, which perceive equestrian tourism as an asset for their business;
 - North American tourists prefer European destinations (Ireland, Italy and Spain), while European tourists look for places like Africa and South America;
 - there is an overlap between private practice (commercialization of leisure activities) and the supply of tourism in the equestrian industry;
 - the various equestrian disciplines have led to sports competitions or shows capable of attracting a large number of visitors;
 - few equestrian disciplines were sold as tourist and leisure activities;
 - additional tourist activities are traded in more or less traditional tourist packages (routes and horseback riding; stay in farms / studios; horse clinics; horse playgrounds for children; carriage rides; shows and book events);
 - alternative methods of horse riding or natural riding, for riders with great experience and high purchasing power, who have gained popularity;
 - equestrian activities are beginning to be perceived by the business sector as a form of incentive, serving to stimulate the capacity and values of its human resources;
 - hippotherapy is gaining importance among people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged groups;
 - most commercial equestrian routes are administered by specialized tour operators (less than twenty) located in Europe and North America (United Kingdom, United States and Canada) and offering destinations worldwide;
 - The most popular tourist destinations for active equestrian tourism are: Kenya, Botswana and South Africa; Australia and New Zealand; Chile; Argentina; Uruguay; India; Mongolia; Tibet; Canada; USA; France; Spain; Italy; Austria; Wales; Iceland;
 - specialized tour operators had high customer loyalty (42%);

- tour operators perceive equestrian tourism only as a complementary option, although they recognize that this may become the main reason for choosing a destination;
- The most sought after activities are: shows; horse routes lasting one day; visiting facilities; sport events; horse routes lasting more than a week;
- the lack of specific details on the percentage of revenues received by tour operators in the field of equestrian tourism;

According to the PEGASO project, there is a need for improvement, such as the fact that the promotion of many activities is not at the required level, destination information and advertising are also insufficient, there are no instructions on environmental and landscape protection; there is no detailed information on the development of equestrian routes and the use of unsuitable horses.

Appendix 10

Breeds of horses bred in Bulgaria

Arabian breed



Arabian horses are the oldest cultural breed in the world, which directly or indirectly took part in the creation of all cultural breeds of horses of riding and riding-harnessed type. They are characterized by elegant shapes and exceptional performance. Our country has a good tradition in breeding and breeding horses of Arabian breed and Arabian breed Shagia, and the Arabian horse was of paramount importance for the improvement of horses in many parts of the country.

Now purebred Arabian horses are bred in the Kabiuk stud farm in Shumen, as well as purebred horses of the Shagia breed. The populations of both breeds are small but of very high quality. The stallion Mephistopheles is recognized as a breed standard by the International Shagia Breeding Association.

Purebred English breed



Source: <http://www.konete.bg/view/showcategory/>

The purebred English horse was created in England in the early 17th century and the second half of the 18th century. Horses are mainly used for racecourse races with a tote and bring high revenues in countries with developed racetrack industry. Worldwide, the Thoroughbred English Horse is a major breeder of all half-bred horse breeds. The breed has played a leading role in the creation of the Bulgarian half-bred horse breeding. The elite part of the breed is bred in the state stud farms "Kabiuk" in Shumen, "Khan Asparuh" in Razgrad, "St. Karadzha "Balchik and private horse farms. The future development of the breed is determined mainly by the admission of our country to the International Organization for Breeding the Thoroughbred English breed in the world. for membership in the International Pedigree Book Committee of the Thoroughbred English Breed / ISBC / Such membership will lead to the opening of the international market for horses of the breed born in the country, as well as prestige for the Bulgarian horse breeding.

East Bulgarian breed



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=чистокръвна>

The East Bulgarian horse is a half-bred breed of universal type, obtained as a result of complex reproductive crossing of local, Arabian, Anglo-Arabian and half-bred mares with half-bred and purebred English stallions. From the very beginning, this cross was accompanied by a thorough selection, which resulted in a breed of horses with versatile qualities. The East Bulgarian breed has preserved the qualities of the original breeds, such as undemandingness, endurance to the local living conditions, refined type and excellent riding qualities for various sports purposes.

The elite part of the breed is bred in the stud farms "Kabiyuk" in Shumen and "Stefan Karadja" in Balchik, as well as in private breeding farms. In recent decades, the economic and especially the sporting qualities of horses of this breed have been significantly improved. This is the most widely used breed for equestrian sports in Bulgaria.

Danube breed



Source: <https://ezdapress.com/2911>

The Danube horse is a half-bred breed, created by crossing half-bred mares with stallions of the Nonius breed and by selecting a suitable type of horses for different types of transport and agricultural work. Horses of this breed are characterized by a massive and compact physique, well-developed and strong bone system, good exterior, correct gait, calm temperament and good performance. For the last 30 years, crossbreeding with stallions of the Thoroughbred English breed has taken place, resulting in horses with good sporting qualities. The breed is of great interest, but its population is small and can not meet demand. Its elite part is bred by private farmers in Pleven and Sofia regions.

The Pleven breed



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=плевенска+порода+кон>

The breed was created by crossing local improved, Arabian, Anglo-Arabian and half-bred mares with Arabian, Anglo-Arabian and half-bred stallions, and later mainly with stallions of the Hydran breed. Pleven horses have good economic qualities and very good abilities for the sports disciplines high riding and jumping with obstacles, for which the use of stallions of Thoroughbred English breed at a later stage of breeding has a great contribution. Now the breed is threatened with extinction. A small population of valuable animals is concentrated in private owners, mainly in the Pleven region.

Trakehner breed



Source: <https://cdn.globetrotting.com.au/wp-content/upload>

The Trakehner horse is of a universal type with emphasized sport-riding qualities, suitable for all disciplines of the classic equestrian sport, especially for high riding and jumping over obstacles. Horses of this breed are bred at the Institute of Animal Sciences in Kostinbrod and by private owners. The purpose of their breeding is to increase the production of high-end horses for the needs of equestrian sports, and by using Trakehner stallions some qualities of the domestic horse breeds are improved.

Hanoverian breed



Source: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images>

Hanoverian horses are characterized by large size, harmonious physique, light movements and calm temperament. In the country horses of this breed are bred at the Thracian University in Stara Zagora. The breed is bred mainly for the needs of equestrian sports. Stallions of Hanoverian breed are used successfully for the production of sport horses in combination with mares of East Bulgarian breed.

The breed of trotting horses

The main breeds of trotters are the American, French, Eagle and Russian trotters.

Riding horses are designed primarily for racetracks with two-wheeled motorcycles, due to their characteristic ability to trot fast. Horses of these breeds are bred in the stud farms "St. Karadja" in Balchik and "Khan Asparuh", Razgrad, as well as in many private farms. The interest in these horses from the fans of the racetracks is significant, and the income from the lotto in the developed countries is constantly growing. In Bulgaria in the past hippodrome competitions were organized at the regional hippodromes, and at the end of the 80s on the specially built track of the Sofia Hippodrome. After the end of the activity of the Sofia Hippodrome, the interest for these horses decreased, but in the last 5-6 years, owners of lynxes from the region of Pazardzhik and Plovdiv revived these breeds.

Heavy breeds /for carrying weights/

The Bulgarian type of heavy horse is characterized by a massive physique, strong constitution, good exterior, calm temperament and excellent performance. They are also used for industrial crossbreeding to produce horses for meat. The elite part of the breed is bred horse farm "Khan Asparuh", Razgrad. Their purpose is the production of stallions to improve the performance of horses in their use in agriculture and forestry. Interest in them is great due to the development of logging, high fuel prices and the export of horses for meat. Unfortunately, the population is small and the production of horses of this breed cannot meet the demand due to the limited number of mother-mares in the stud farm. Recently, high-quality animals are also bred by many private owners.

Hufflinger



Source: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?>

The Haflinger is a mountain horse breed created in Austria and widespread in many countries. Characteristic features of horses of this breed are: relatively short stature, extremely massive body, beautiful body shape, light gait, good temper and undemanding to the conditions of care and nutrition. In our country, the breeding of horses of the Haflinger breed began in 1983 with a view to further satisfying the mountain areas with suitable horses for work, as well as the needs of horses for amateur riding, equestrian tourism and children's sports schools. The breeding of horses of this breed is concentrated in the horse farm in the town of Razlog and in private farmers in the Stara Zagora region.

Scottish pony



Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=scottish+pony&tb>

A characteristic feature of the horses of this breed is their extremely small height (65-125 cm). They are undemanding to the conditions of care and nutrition, and their obedience and attachment to man, makes them suitable for teaching children to ride. To meet the needs of children's riding schools for such horses in the country, they are bred in small groups of horses in the stud farms "Kabiyuk", Shumen and "St. Karadja" in Balchik. There is a great demand for horses of this breed and they are sold at relatively high prices.

Aboriginal breeds - Karakachan horse and Deliorman horse

The **Aboriginal breeds** are characterized by exceptional resistance to adverse conditions and very high fertility. They are grown outdoors almost all year round and in most cases are not even fed during the winter.



Karakachanski horse, <https://www.google.com/search?q=каракачански+ко>



Deliorman horse, <https://agri.bg/media/2020/09/04/569191/300x170.jpg>

The Karakachan horse is typical for the mountainous regions and its population is concentrated mainly in the Balkan Mountains, the Rhodopes, Rila and Pirin. The **Deliorman horse** is found in the region of Northeastern Bulgaria¹⁷¹.

Appendix 11

The La Sarraz Horse Museum, Switzerland

The La Sarraz Horse Museum (MUCHE) was established in 1982 by horse lovers seeking to preserve the cultural heritage of horses in Switzerland and to trace the evolution of the horse over the centuries. La Sarraz Castle, built in the 11th century, rents out its stables to this heritage museum, which aims to be educational and educational. It houses old works and many thematic collections, such as horse vehicles, a range of crafts, the reconstruction of a smithy and saddle, and many items related to the horse. This unique and well-known museum in Switzerland organizes temporary exhibitions and various equestrian exhibitions that give a lively touch. It was also awarded the International Museum of the Year in 1986, an award given by the Council of Europe to a museum that has made an important contribution to the understanding of Europe's cultural heritage¹⁷².

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¹⁷² Horse Museum (MUCHE), <https://www.museeducheval.ch/>

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