

## **HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR SPECIES-SPECIFIC LEGISLATION**

*More often than not, equines are considered as farm animals at European level, although could be covered by legislation relating to wild animals too. Furthermore there are at least three different official definitions of 'equidae' in existing EU law, three sub-categories of equid, and several context-specific definitions which depend on how the animal is being used.*

### **Background**

Equine welfare is not properly protected in current EU law. The versatility of their roles - even simply as 'farm animals' - means that their welfare is often compromised as they change from owner to owner and from role to role. A law which aims to facilitate the functioning of the internal market for racing and for high-value sports horses may well have negative impacts on a donkey being kept for work in tourism. Indeed, the treatment of working equines is a cause of concern in a number of Member States, as is a lack of access to professionals such as veterinary surgeons, farriers and saddlers.

Eurogroup for Animals is working with its Member Organisations, and in collaboration with the European Commission, on a research project which will outline selected key welfare issues affecting equines across Europe. It will look at the legislation that is currently in place, both at national and at European level.

The results gathered are expected to be presented at the first EU level conference on equine welfare in 2015. This aims to ensure that equines are included within the scope of any forthcoming Animal Welfare Framework Law, or to ensure that existing gaps in legislation are addressed at European level via a revision of the law on a case by case basis.

### **Our Objectives**

Eurogroup wants to see species specific legislation introduced for equines in Europe, which designed to safeguard the welfare of these unique animals, however they may be used.

At the very least, in the absence of an Animal Welfare Framework Law, Eurogroup is committed to ensuring that equines are included within the scope of the Commission's next EU Animal Welfare Strategy