

The President also referred to the harmonisation of the stud books and to mutual recognition as important activities. Cooperation of the breeding organisations within the WHBSF has made it possible to continuously compare the evaluation models and breeding methods and to more easily identify similarities and potential interfaces. The process of mutual acceptance and adjustment, even though not always easy to shape and to implement, was one of the basic principle of the WHBSF.

Sound financial standing

Secretary Michael Gruber reported on the very sound financial situation: the WHBSF with its 22 ordinary and two extraordinary member associations is funded both by membership fees and by public funding of the province of South Tyrol which is highly committed to the harmonisation of Haflinger breeding worldwide. The President thanked the South Tyrolean authorities on behalf of all members.

Harmonised breeding principles, autonomous breeding programmes

President Scheiber and Secretary Gruber also addressed the breeding principles for Haflinger horses drawn up jointly by the breeding organisations in the main breeding region of *Italy/Austria* after agreeing on harmonised definitions. As regards breeding programmes, the breeding organisations with affiliate stud book will continue to enjoy far-reaching autonomy while the joint principles give them an important guideline for orientation. This also increases transparency and legal certainty for breeders around the globe.

Active participation by all

Asked for a final round of feedback, there was general consensus among the member associations: they stressed their interest in active participation within the WHBSF. Concrete requests were:

The joint principles drawn up by the breeding organisations keeping the stud book of origin should be made available as soon as possible. The member associations also expressed their wish to actively participate. Regular exchange via new formats like video conferences was perceived as very useful.

The delegates were unanimous in their appreciation of the activities of the WHBSF and considered the additional benefits for the breed and breeders clearly discernible for all.