

The 2018 European Haflinger Championship in Stadl-Paura was a milestone in the development of the international collaboration, and it faithfully reflected the ever-increasing quality achieved throughout the member countries in both breeding and sports. When the preparations started in 2017, all efforts and resources went into organising a high-profile sports event with considerable international appeal. The aim was to create a celebration for the entire Haflinger community, uniting athletes, breeders and all other Haflinger enthusiasts. Another major objective: make the Haflinger breed known to a larger audience with the help of the tournament itself and a number of different media channels: For the first time, the contests were streamed live on the internet – and the feedback was excellent.

The many spectacular impressions and snap-shots from the Championship were later turned into a film which was shown at the WHBSF General Assembly and is available for the member organisations to use. It is lasting memory which reflects and documents the mood and the sporting achievements of the tournament, and a key tool to promote the image of the breed.

While the year 2018 was dominated by sport, 2017 also saw an analysis of the breeding efforts and of the Haflinger's international positioning – the results of which were highlighted from various points of view at the Haflinger World Congress, which took place in spring 2017 near Merano/Meran. In the spirit of a true world federation, one of the WHBSF's primary concerns is to provide a scientifically sound basis of topics that are of relevance to all member organisations in the Haflinger community.

Federation finances

Michael Gruber gave a detailed account of the Federation's financial business: In 2017, the funds amounted to EUR 68,200; EUR 12,200 of which had come directly from the member organisations, and the remainder being a grant from the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen – South Tyrol (I). The Audit Committee confirmed the transparent and prudent financial management of the Federation, which reported a profit amounting to EUR 74.30.

A new member from the Netherlands

The Nederlands Haflinger Paarden Stamboek (NHPS) had already been an extraordinary member of the World Federation; now, after its official recognition as a breeding organisation by the corresponding committees, the WHBSF General Assembly could vote to admit it as a full member.

The new EU animal breeding regulation

The new European Union animal breeding provisions (EU-Regulation no. 2016/1012) entering into force on 01 November 2018 was another crucial topic at the plenum. The regulation and its rules apply to all member organisations and stipulate that the organisations in charge of the original stud books must provide a definition of the breed to which the affiliate stud books must adhere.

Of course, the member organisations' autonomy remains nonetheless intact: They can continue to shape their breeding approaches and the main section of their stud books as they see fit. In addition, they ensure the registration of pure-bred stud horses from the main section of other stud books in the appropriate class of their own stud book main section.

ANACRHAI and HPT, the organisations in charge of the original stud books, pledged to deliver the definition of the breed within two months' time.

And with that, the official part of the General Assembly ended on a constructive note in a friendly atmosphere, making room for the attendees to discuss and exchange ideas among themselves – an informal chance for networking which has proven to contribute to the consolidation of the WHBSF and which the member organisations continue to embrace with great enthusiasm.