

MINUTES

EEBA Expert Panel safety – meeting (virtual) 23 June 2022

Participants:	EEBA office	Anna Lena Grytz
	participants	Stefan Schwanbeck (USG United Sportproducts Germany GmbH) Claire Williams (British Equestrian Trade Association) Fabio Colombo (D.P.I. Safety s.r.l.) David Wewetzer (NOMA GmbH) Jörg Frank (EQUIVA GmbH) Heiko Koch (Herm. Sprenger Metallwarenfabrik GmbH & Co. KG) (Cornelia Schmidt (Uelzener Versicherungen a.G.))

Summary:

- **We need standards** to make horse sport safer for riders, to provide information to consumers and dealers and to show manufacturers a clear direction for production of products which have an effect on the safety of all actors in this sector.
- **We need to educate** because customers have no idea about special norms and rider also do not understand which kind of PPE is the best. Also, there is room for improvement regarding overall education about safety during handling horses or sport with horse.
- **We need an European online data collection service** which collects the data of all kind of accidents in the equestrian field. There are actually no really good statistic of accidents available, which could help manufacturers improve their products, trade providing a better purchasing advice and also have an important impact on education and training in general. As a result, the whole equestrian sector would benefit from this.
- To date the data collection about accidents is handled differently in each country. For example:
 - UK: set up a recording tool for accidents last year (“Our database aims at recording incidents by riders or people handling horses on the ground so that we can understand what types of accidents occur, when they occur and what type of equipment they were wearing at the time of the accident, whether that equipment sustained any damage and whether there was evidence that the equipment worn reduced the severity of the accident, as well as data on treatment and hospital admissions”(Claire Williams))
www.beta-uk.org/pages/safety-equipment/rider-accident-amp-equipment-reporting-form.php
 - Germany: “In Germany the healthcare system is not collecting specific data about accidents and how they happened. So this only comes later when the insurances get involved due to a very long recovery time and have to pay the people because they stay longer out of work than six weeks” (David Wewetzer). Also, the Equestrian Federation doesn’t have a dedicated activity for this.
- (Future) Structure of the Expert Panel: Splitting the overall Expert Panel “safety in horse sport” into smaller sub-groups for specific topics so everybody can focus and join for the topics individually relevant. The office team will manage to share relevant information with everybody and coordinate feedback among the sub-groups.

In detail:

Anna Lena Grytz introducing the agenda and purpose of this meeting:

- getting an overall idea of what we are about to do in this group
- Stefan and Fabio to give a quick idea of what was the initial idea of having this group
- understand everybody's expectations toward this expert panel
- idea of which aspects of security in horse sports we should be looking at
- plan the further steps

Stefan Schwanbeck:

“Within the European Equestrian Business Association, we are planning to have several working groups and one of this working groups should be safety equipment in the stable and the equestrian world. There are several product groups we have to look at.

The European CEN working group, which Fabio and Claire are part of as well, is working at moment for a new standard of body protector, airbags and back protectors. This will take at least another one or two years to finish this. But I think there are some more other products like stirrups, stirrup leather, reins, girth and other to look at. These products are in the market and can easily be called “safe”, but there are no regulations about this. We need to bring in standards to make it safer for riders, to make it clear for dealers and to give the manufacturers a clear way to produce.

This kick off today should be followed by our physical meeting at spoga. Over there we will be able to meet with many manufacturers / providers of these products and discuss which products we should start with standard test ceremonies, et cetera, et cetera.

We already have some partners in this group (Claire Williams/BETA, Fabio Colombo/EquiAirbag, Heiko Koch/Sprenger, Jörg Frank/Equiva), which represent different parts of the supply chain. Everybody is interested to have an easy way and a clear understanding “Why products should be safe” and how we can bring this message to the market as clear as possible. And that is the reason why we meet today.”

David Wewetzer, who is a trained safety consultant of VFD, has a dual interest in this group. The first one is as a representative of the “Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Deutschland zu Pferd”, who wants to join this process. The second more important one is from an academic and research point of view.

“Which aspects of safety in which situations do we want to have a look at? Which accidents should specifically be considered?”

Anna Lena Grytz welcomes this view and emphasises that this is also in the interests of Uelzener Versicherung, whose representative Cornelia Schmidt had to leave the meeting.

She requests to Stefan to provide an insight about the chat he had with the person in charge of the National Equestrian Federation (FN) about the safety issue about what happens to the information coming back from accidents statistics etc.

Stefan Schwanbeck had a conversation in the past about with the German Federation and reports about it.

“Actually there are not at all really good statistics of accidents (including equipment used) available which provide manufacturers, dealers or whoever works in this industry support or an information for the production of really good products. The FN has some data, but it is not systematically collected and used. It’s handled differently in each country, but more information is necessary as a base for decisions and development by federations, the sport, clubs, riding schools as well as the manufacturers. In comparison, in the UK there are some more activities about this going on and Claire will be able to provide an overview.”

Claire Williams:

“We've always been very conscious about safety in the UK and a lot of the British disciplines, especially eventing, is very good at gathering data on riding accidents and they have a very large database. There has been some data collection going on in the past, but we need constant data to come through with similar data fields, so last year we set up a recording tool. As for the data collection of the British Horse Society, they specifically ask riders to record data when they've had accidents out riding.

There's a lot more heckling and riding out in the UK and there's a lot of riding on the road. There are accidents that happen as result on road traffic, dog attacks or low flying aircraft. That's what their databases is recording.



Our database aims at recording incidents by riders or people handling horses on the ground so that we can understand what types of accidents occur, when they occur and what type of equipment they were wearing at the time of the accident, whether that equipment sustained any damage and whether there was evidence that the equipment worn reduced the severity of the accident, as well as data on treatment and hospital admissions.

We launched our tool last year. Charles Owen would have been running one for about two years, so we used theirs as a base. Our Chief Medical Officer advisor helped to add additional fields she felt was necessary. It's working very well and already showing some really interesting results. Specifically, around accidents happening when people are handling horses, either loading or turning out. That will help us not only understand the mechanism of the injury, but also help us to provide feedback to the manufacturers. Manufacturers are happy to share the data and we are happy to share it with them because it's anonymized. F.e. we can tell a manufacturer how many accidents happened with their equipment, but I could also then say how many accidents happened wearing hats. The general agreement is we don't share the brand data we collect with anyone other than the individual brand.

At the same time in parallel there's a lot of data collected by our National Health Service and we're about to try and collect the A&E data which they're not very good at collecting horse riding, but when somebody goes in and they have a motorcycle accident or a cycling accident, they're very good at recording the activity they were doing, and so we're currently lobbying the innate chiefs to increase awareness of the importance of recording it when it was a horse riding accident.

In case of an accident the information can be easily shared by using a QR code. We do accident cards (which some of the manufacturers brand themselves), but the key is that it all goes into one point regardless of who records it.

I would recommend extending the existing QR-system by different languages rather instead of setting up another system.

And then going back to the point of why joining the group: we're interested because we're very focused on safety, and we're very keen to get the message out to the riding public. The importance of wearing correctly fitted safety equipment, like wearing a hat and a body protector, has been raised. But if they're not fitted correctly at the point of sale, they're not going to do the job they need to do. We put a lot of public promotion out, talking to the riders in the riding schools and the riding clubs.

We also have been trying to get a group together to start looking into the standards for safety stirrups. We would be very, very supportive of any move specifically on safe on stirrups that are claiming they are safe. I did some research about it amongst riders last year and figured out that a lot of people do not understand what is meant when we say a safety stirrup. A lot of people have a wrong expectation or expectations that I don't think are being met in the marketplace. A lot of manufacturers on the market will not make safety claims but the retailer will make the safety claim or the user will make the safety claim. This leads to people buying stirrups, thinking they are safe when actually they haven't been designed as a safety stirrup."

Anna Lena Grytz:

"Do I get it right that there is no defined standard about what may be called a safety stirrup?"

Claire Williams:

"No there isn't. It's a general problem with horse riding equipment because it's not classed as PPE. In the UK, we ride out a lot and many people wear high vests on the road. There's a standard for high vests for riders but not a standard for high vests for horses. The only thing around the saddle that has a safety standard (and that's only a British standard) is the tree of the saddle. Any other piece of tech does not. The stirrups are the big flashing light as a lot of people think they're buying a safety stirrup. But what is a Safety stirrup? Most people say a safety stirrup is one that the foot will come out of easily when you fall or has parts that will release. But there's no work done on the forces needed to release the angles or any other parts of it."

Fabio Colombo:

“It’s a very interesting aspect Claire explained about the research on accidents. I would like to underline that the safety level of safety technology has increased a lot recently. Also, because some existing technologies have been adapted in order to make a progress and improve the safety of our sport. From my point of view, there is a lot of confusion in the market right now and people do not understand which kind of PPE is the best. Regarding the stirrups, for example: they look attractive and helpful, but they consumers do not really know whether they are safe or not. My expectation is EEBA to become the one to tell consumers about what is a real safety product and to set up European standards for this. In the end the real winner will be horse sport as a whole as it will be more safe. This will encourage more people to enter the sport and add value to the market.”

Jörg Frank:

“I’m representing Equiva today. I’m the category manager for the assortment of riding equipment. So for me, body protectors, airbags and similar products are very interesting. I would like to offer my customers safe and tested products to give them the best security we can. We all have a responsibility for our customers, whether they are doing equestrian sports professionally or in their leisure time.”

Anna Lena Grytz:

“What about your experience in the everyday shop life. Are customers asking for safety issues a lot and are they keen on getting more details about the quality standards of the safety products they buy?”

Jörg Frank

“The customers have no idea that there are special norms. They come into the store and want to buy a vest or a body protector, but they don’t know which they have to buy and which they can trust. They have really no idea because they have not enough information about it. It is part of our job to provide this information to the customers. This means people selling these products to the customers need this information as well. As a responsible retailer, we teach our staff about all the details on a regular basis in cooperation with suppliers. I consider it very important to train them on a regular basis, at least every half year. But I guess the procedure might be different in other or smaller shops.”

Heiko Koch:

“I am very much on point with Claire because for us, especially the stirrups are important. Saddles are also important as we are also a manufacturer for the metal parts of saddles, which can be an issue as well. But from my point of view the stirrups are the most important aspect and a difficult one at the same time. What is a safety stirrup? At Sprenger, we don’t call them safety stirrups because there is always the possibility of someone getting stuck in a stirrup. There is no 100% security. So, if we as an organisation can manage to create some kind of definition of the lowest risk possible and provide information and education to the customer we will be able to help prevent accidents. It’s also about the right usage of the products, but some kind of standard about the safety of stirrups would help. I think it’s a good idea to have support from the scientific and technology side via our universities. In everyday working life, there are a lot of rules for the protection of people. But for equestrian equipment, there are no existing rules, and we have to start close from zero – we will have a long way to go and need support from all sides we can get.”

Anna Lena Grytz summarizes the three important aspects of the issue that we should look at more closely.

- One is the standards itself or to agree on a certain common sense,
- the other is education and information about it,
- and finally, it’s about getting a flowback of accident statistics and scientific facts into the industry.
- *ADDENDUM Anna Lena Grytz: should we include “safety for the horse” aspects as well? I guess this might become a relevant issue within the animal welfare debate...*

Stefan Schwanbeck:

“I think we need to be a little bit careful when we talk about ‘standards’. We need to know that there are some standards existing for certain products (like the BETA standard for body protectors) and we have to respect and to use them. At the same time, there will potentially be new standards setup under the name of EEBA, which can probably become the European standard in the future. My aim is that if there is no existing standard, EEBA should be the one to bring in a minimum of safety into the market – for our members, for our manufacturers, for our partners and consumers. We should be the ones to provide a “handbook” to the dealers about how to explain and present it and to the riders about what is a safe product.”

Claire Williams:

“I think its maybe a first step to start with education, also considering the costs to be expected for developing new standards. Over here we’ve to talk a lot more about what is a safety stirrup and give more information to the retailers and users to make them understand what is meant by a safety stirrup. Because then people will not have wrong expectations about what they are buying. This will hopefully help as well to make it safer. The challenge is that horse riding is not a safe, but a high-risk sport. So we need to try to make it safer by all means. It’s all about reducing the risk, so the law of an intended consequences doesn’t happen.”

Stefan Schwanbeck:

“Especially as there are some products in the market which are not safe at all...”

Fabio Colombo bringing in the idea of EEBA joining the TC162/EC162 (?) group for the European standards to get all the latest information and also report back to this group what’s discussed within EEBA.

Claire Williams argues that organisations are not nominated as experts, only individual persons.

Together we find the solution that Claire, Stefan and Fabio could report back because they are already part of this expert group.

Fabio Colombo points out that in other areas, such as motorsport, it is quite common to have “The Motorsport Association” as an unofficial participant.

Stefan Schwanbeck suggests splitting the overall Expert Panel “safety in horse sport” into smaller sub-groups for specific topics so everybody can focus and join for the topics individually relevant. The office team will manage to share relevant information with everybody and coordinate feedback among the sub-groups.

Anna Lena Grytz asks whether there are similar initiatives on a global level, for example in the US.

Stefan Schwanbeck denies.

Claire Williams explains that the FEI has a certain interest in safety, as BETA has been asked to join a working group which is about to be setup. In the states there is no such initiative as these are usually run by bodies like BETA or EEBA. There is nothing similar to find globally.

Stefan Schwanbeck:

“We need an European online data collection service, which collects data from several accidents in the equestrian field in a neutral way. But we need this information from nearly every European country, not only Germany and the UK. The question is how to collect the data and how to proceed with them and draw conclusions. The German Federation does collect some information from eventing. But they do not use this information in any way. We need a European system by EEBA in order to improve safety and really enforce a change.”

Anna Lena Grytz:

“Claire, in the UK it’s the NHS to collect all the data, right?”

Claire Williams:

“Not all data. The NHS only collects data when they admitted through accident and emergency cases. I would be surprised if Germany, as well organized as it is, doesn't have this information available via various health bodies. The problem with health bodies is that they will not go as much into details as we need it. They do it on a more neutral way. They're unlikely to collect data about the type of equipment people were wearing, for example, or the exact mechanism of the accident

A big difference is that British Eventing does produce statistics once a year. They produce quite thorough statistics on accidents, which is good.

But what we need to decide, I suppose, is where and from which part do we want to collect the data from? Do we want to collect them from the health system? Or do we want to collect it from manufacturers who have some well collected data as well? Or do we want to collect it from the endpoint which is the rider or the owner who had the accident. At our tool, we collect it from the injurie. So when they have an accident, they are encouraged to report it.”

David Wewetzer:

“To my knowledge, in Germany, the healthcare system is not collecting the data about accidents and how they happened. This only comes later when the insurances get involved due to a very long recovery time and have to pay the people because they stay longer out of work than six weeks. So I guess in Germany we will have a poor data set right now about a specific horse riding accident. From my former work in another association, we tried to get hands on the same data and it wasn't really that easy because there is no data.”

Claire Williams:

“It might be interesting to know that New Zealand has fantastic data about accidents because they have the system called accident compensation. So if you have an accident, you can get compensation. I've got a set of their data which is amazingly detailed.”

ADDENDUM Anna Lena Grytz: I had a conversation with Cornelia Schmidt from Uelzener insurance afterwards. She confirmed that they did evaluate figures from 6000 damage claims (2012-2014) from their own customers. This helped them a lot to understand about when and how accidents happen and they are willing to share their knowledge with the Expert Panel. She also recommended to get in touch with the German system of “Berufsgenossenschaften” (Employer's Liability Insurance Association) to ask for information.

David Wewetzer suggests that instead of “inventing” a new tool using the British and maybe adapt it to our needs, as we could grow in Europe with a larger and consistent data set.

“It would only need us to start a campaign as EEBA, asking people to report back to us. “

Claire Williams confirms that the tool could immediately and easily made available to us. “It works via link or QR code and is easy to share. Only language would have to be adapted.”

All agree that different languages are necessary to make handling easier and reduce thresholds for using it.

Anna Lena Grytz asks for possible national data protection issues.

Claire Williams confirms that it has all been done under European GDPR regulations.

Heiko Koch highlights the importance of having a clear structure in the group and says that there needs to be someone transferring the information in between the different participants.

Anna Lena Grytz explains that EEBA would like to elect speakers for each Expert Panel as representative of this topic in the public and also being the major touch point for the EEBA office team.

“The office team will support with all kind of coordination and administration. All information could be shared online in our intranet, where we can easily create dedicated areas for specific Expert Panels.”

Anna Lena Grytz summarizes the to dos.

To dos office:

- Figure out who collects which kind of helpful data (FN, different insurance companies etc.)
 - Starting with Germany, UK and France
- Talk to members from different regions whether they know about any data collected in their region
- Have a deeper look into how the tool works in the UK
- Organise a live meeting at spoga, group agrees on Monday, 5 pm being the best date
- Draft an overview on the structure of the Expert Panel in a total with subgroups for different topics

To dos everybody:

- Get recommendations from group members whom to invite to the meeting
- Share available information with the office team
- Spread the word! Talk to your partners and personal contacts who might be willing to contribute their expertise to EEBA