

Advice on the transport of FEI horses within Europe

EU Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 concerns the requirements to protect animals during transport within the Member States of the European Union.

Some of these requirements do not apply to “registered horses” (defined in Council Directive 90/427/EEC). FEI horses in possession of an FEI passport or an FEI recognition card (with an EU approved passport), are in effect “registered”, therefore can be transported without being subject to some of the provisions of Regulation 1/2005. This is in recognition of the fact that the transport is most likely taking place for competition, races, cultural events or for breeding, as the Regulation does not fully apply to the transport of animals that is not taking place in connection with an economic activity. The term “economic activity” has not yet been defined by the EU.

Equine transport thought to be engaged in “economic activity” can therefore be stopped by the authorities and checked to see if it complies with the provisions of Regulation 1/2005. The most common reason for transporting FEI horses is for FEI competition. The derogations for “registered horses” certainly do not mean that horses can travel to competition in transport that is not suitable for horses or undergo excessively long journeys. Individuals cannot claim travel to competition as a means to actually conducting an “economic activity” and avoiding the provisions of 1/2005.

Competitors who travelled through EU Member states to compete at FEI events during the summer regularly reported that Member States required different types of proof that transport was not being used for an “economic activity”. A number of reports from Italy in particular have highlighted that if there is not an easily shown connection between the vehicle, its ownership and the ownership of horses in it and no clear intention that the horses are being transported for competition, racing, cultural events or for breeding, the authorities can claim that the vehicles and horses are subject to 1/2005. These vehicle checks often take place by the roadside.

The FEI therefore asks National Federations to advise people travelling with their horses across Europe, particularly Italy, to be properly prepared before starting their journey. They must be able to establish immediately that the vehicle and horses in it are exempt from 1/2005.

The principle is that equines must be transported in suitable vehicles. If the documents accompanying the vehicle and the horses do not make it clear that the transportation is related to competition, races, cultural events or for breeding purposes, then correct statements making this clear must be made in writing before the journey starts. After a vehicle has been stopped and a fine imposed, it is much more complicated and time-consuming to make these arguments. Under EU requirements, all horses must travel with valid passports, either an FEI passport, or an FEI recognition card AND an EU-approved passport.

Some examples of situations where clear documentation is needed are :

- If the owner of the horses might appear to be different from the owner of the transport and not connected with the driver, a clear statement accompanies the horses and vehicle establishing that the horses are not being moved for an economic activity, but for competition, races, cultural events or breeding. If the driver is renting the vehicle, this must also be easily proved.
- If a company owns a vehicle, all company personnel can drive and use the vehicle to transport the horses linked to that company. That connection must be easily demonstrated.
- Employed drivers of vehicles must be able to prove they are employed to move horses for a “non-economic activity”.
- Members of the same family involved in the movement of the horses should be able to prove their relationship with each other, specifically the relationship to the family member in whose name the vehicle is registered.

For further information please see the following information on the [EU Website](#).