

February 2026

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Connect
Communicate
Collaborate

JOIN US WITH YOUR QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND IDEAS

HETI LIVE MONTHLY MEETING

MONTHLY ONLINE MEETINGS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

[HTTPS://HETIFEDERATION.ORG/HETI-ONLINE/](https://hetifederation.org/heti-online/)



TIME 

VARIABLE
ACCOMODATING
TO ALL TIME ZONES

DATE 

2ND WEEK OF
A MONTH



HETI LIVE
MONTHLY MEETING



HETI's Sports Task Force

The world of EAS

by and for HETI members



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Purpose of Today's Presentation:

Presentation of the Sports Task Force

Why sport is relevant to EAS

Discussion

About the Task Force



The Sports Task Force was created following requests from equestrian coaches and trainers who needed guidance to train riders with diverse challenges.

The demand mainly came from:

- Para Dressage

But it **also** concerns:

- Special Olympics, Virtus World Intellectual Impairment Sport
- Driving
- Vaulting
- Competitive and non-competitive activities

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President:

Marianna Grammatikaki (Greece)

Founder – Riding Academy of Crete
Coach of the Greek Paralympic Dressage Team
Team Leader – Paralympic Games Paris 2024

Members:

- ✓ Alexandra Stergiou
- ✓ Kirstin O'Neill
- ✓ Selcuk Akpinar
- ✓ Laurence Ikan
- ✓ Michail Kalarakis
- ✓ Marketa Pisova
- ✓ Gustavo Dos Santos



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Main Mission

Support professionals working with challenged riders in sport-oriented equine activities and create bridges between Sport, Therapy, Education, Welfare and Science.



Aim 1 : Building a Network



- ✓ Develop a Sport-EAS international network to connect people and organizations
- ✓ Enable equestrian professionals and EAS specialists to create working collaboration
- ✓ Facilitate connections between EAS and Equestrian practitioners, centers, and organizations to support the professional development the practice of adapted sport and raise the amount of athletes.

Aim 2: Knowledge Sharing



Provide relevant knowledge through

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Round tables Create guidelines

Support safe and effective work with riders with diverse needs,
with full respect for each rider's abilities, skills, and challenges

Aim 3: Cooperation & Awareness

- ✓ Coordinate with main Equestrian bodies (e.g. FEI)
- ✓ Raise awareness of adapted sport among EAS practitioners to increase number of Para & special athletes worldwide.

Why Sport matters in EAS

In EAS, riding skills are often used as a strategy to improve everyday life functioning. It is a structured learning environment that promotes development and self-confidence.

We shall see main points in the following slides:

Learning riding skills develops Functional Independence

- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Sequencing
- ✓ Problem-solving
- ✓ Executive functioning

These abilities transfer directly into daily life activities

Sport raises confidence and self-esteem

- ✓ Partnering with a large animal, which inherently involves a powerful symbolic system (strength, magic, Prestige)
- ✓ Learning patterns
- ✓ Progressing levels
- ✓ Integrating into the sports field and enhancing social inclusion

This transfers to School – Social participation – Rehabilitation goals

Emotional Regulation

Riding requires: Calm breathing, Focus and Emotional control

**The horse reacts immediately to tension or relaxation,
teaching self-awareness and emotional modulation.**

Motivation & Physical Fitness

Sport increases participation because the activity feels recreational rather than clinical.

Also improves:

- ✓ Respiratory Fitness
- ✓ Endurance
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Muscle tone

Important for populations at risk of sedentary lifestyle.



Identity and Inclusion

The participant becomes a **rider, not a patient.**

It supports Dignity, Belonging, Community integration.

A key philosophical principle of Equine Assisted Services.

DISCUSSION



Questions for Discussion

- ✓ Do you agree sport is relevant to HETI?
- ✓ What support do professionals need most?
- ✓ What challenges do you face in your country?

Your Suggestions

- ✓ What should be our priorities?
- ✓ Would you like to collaborate?
- ✓ Ideas for projects, research or education?

Thank you for your attention!

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