

EQUIST & VELIEFENDI

THEY SUIT EACH OTHER
VERY WELL



INTERNATIONAL HORSE AND EQUESTRIAN FAIR EQUIST-ISTANBUL HORSE SHOW CLOSED ITS DOORS AFTER A 3-DAY MARATHON FULL OF EVENTS. HOWEVER THE NEW GATES OPENED IN THE WORLD OF HORSE EVENTS.

The International Horse and Equestrian Fair EQUIST-Istanbul Horse Show, organized on 19-21 May, brought together the most important brands of horse riding community. 7460 individuals visited the event, where 42 companies represented 72 brands. Mehdi Eker, the former Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Istanbul deputy, Foreign Relations Manager and Vice Chairman of AK Parti, who made the opening speech of the fair, noted that the fair took place in the right place and attracted attention to the increasing interest in horses and horse riding in metropolitan areas. Eker: *"We have now begun to believe fully, refreshing our memory, that we need to rebuild our relationship and friendship with horses in our daily city lives just like it has always been in nature. Today, I think the arranged fourth EQUIST is significant in this sense. Let us not keep our relationship with horses and horse-riding merely limited with flat races. Horses are not only objects of races. We should vary the activities related to horse riding,"* he said.

EKO Fair Managing Director Ilker Altun said, *"We have organized EQUIST under the auspices of Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, as being hosted by the Turkish Jockey Club and in cooperation with both The Jockey Club and Turkish Equestrian Federation. The market conditions and accessibility to the markets of neighboring countries offered by Turkey cannot be ignored by the European companies that have the fundamental horse riding brands of the world. I believe that the decision of the western brands to exhibit at the fair will change rapidly in the coming years."*

Eko fair Exhibitions manager Altınay Bekar added *"When we started this exhibition 4 years ago we did not expect as much participation as we had because at that time we did not have enough producers in Turkey. This year there were some political issues with Turkey but despite that fact, a lot of international brands attended the fair because they still believe in the potential of the Turkish market."*

Turkish Equestrian Federation contributed in enlivening the racetracks and carrying them to another level by various activities including 6-pole competition in the high jump, dressage, pony racing and volte shows. Atif Bulent Bora, the President of the Federation, stated in his speech at opening ceremony that they had made efforts to contribute to tourism and economy and said: *"We gathered together as TJK, TBF and TGSDf and we set out to establish a horse city in Istanbul, Turkey. We would like to have a facility where all the equestrian sports can be traced and exercised, which will grant benefits to our country in terms of tourism and economy."*

General Secretary Turgut Alaku, who spoke on behalf of the Turkish Jockey Club, the host of the organization stated the following: *"We are very pleased that the fair is*



Altınay Bekar, EKO Exhibition Manager





organized at our hippodrome. We are very happy that our hippodromes are not the places where only flat races are organized but facilities that are open to social and sporting activities with therapy centers, sports fields, picnic areas and other places that are open to public. "

The 4th edition of EQUIST was organized in Istanbul Veliefendi Hippodrome for the first time, and introduced many innovations. *"The visitor matter was important to us. Although it was for the first time in Veliefendi Hippodrome and the weather conditions on the last day were bad, the fair was successful. We are proud of Turkey's only equestrian fair,"* said Ahmet R. Gurdogan, Manager of Epona Company and he drew attention to the positive sides of the innovation.

The majority of the visitors consisted of buyers and they also evaluated new business opportunities. Hatko Kaucuk Co. was a first-time exhibitor at EQUIST, which offers a significant business potential to its exhibitors in a large-scale sector. Nejan Hatko, Member of the Board of Directors evaluated the event: *"On the behalf of our company EQUIST was positive in terms of reaching the right companies and the right people from the horse industry. We are delighted that we have been able to introduce our products to a community that has a fine sense of quality. We hope we will get great responses after the fair."*

Besides exhibitor booths, shows and workshops that took place at the 600 acres of Veliefendi Hippodrome's open and closed facilities offered incomparable experiences for riders and those who are interested in riding. The children who performed volte show on ponies on the racetracks, dressage demonstrations that fascinated the spectators in between the excitement of races, breathtaking horse shows synthesized by traditional sports left long-lasting traces on the tracks of Veliefendi Hippodrome. On the other hand, lecturers, academicians and students from universities coming from all over Turkey also introduced the sector's educated workforce to sector representatives. *"We would like to thank the organizers of EQUIST, which has a very important value in the development of equestrian and horse sports. The organization of panels and congresses within the scope of the fair activities is an effort to contribute to this improvement,"* said Inonu University Lecturer Assist. Dr. Abdurrahman Koseman, and he stated that he hoped for more contribution from public-private sectors for reaching better and more beautiful events.

Just as other international events in the recent period in Turkey, the number of EQUIST participants from foreign countries decreased. However, business-focused companies retained their professional attitudes. Erich Krähenbühl, owner of the Swiss Equitrade company, who attended the fair with positive experiences of previous years said, *"Istanbul is a wonderful place to go. The organization was very professional; the tent stand setups were very good. It is a pity that, only some of the participants have canceled their participation to the fair for some reason,"* and he added that they certainly would consider to exhibit at the next event. Despite the adverse cyclical effects, foreign companies exhibiting for the first time at EQUIST also attracted great attention. 🇹🇷

All photos by Kadir Civci

