

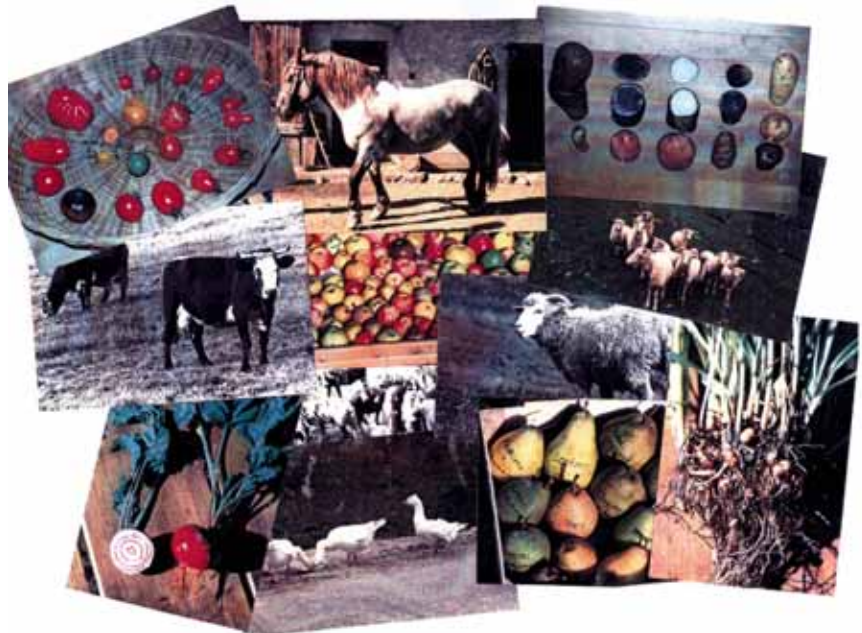


**SAVE** foundation

Safeguard for **A**gricultural **V**arieties in **E**urope  
Sicherung der landwirtschaftlichen ArtenVielfalt in Europa  
Sauvegarde pour l'Agriculture des Variétés d'Europe

**2011**

# SAVE Foundation Activity Report



Success Report for the period Summer 2010 – Summer 2011

# Foreword

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We are pleased to inform you with this annual report about our activities and projects in the area of agricultural biodiversity in Europe. In previous years we have reported at the annual SAVE meetings about the network programs and projects. In order to make the activities of SAVE Foundation and the European SAVE Network more accessible to third parties an annual report has been created as a replacement. The period of this report covers the time between the SAVE Annual Meetings, therefore the period summer 2010 to summer 2011.

For the past 18 years the European SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network has worked for the conservation of diversity in agriculture. Projects not only focus on monitoring and live conservation of breeds and varieties but, also the networking of stakeholders in Europe, which plays an important role in the conservation work. SAVE actively networks the 21 partner from 16 countries and promotes the flow of information both "top down" with information to the NGOs, for example from the European Union and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, as well as "bottom up", for example, presentations and statements to important committees and consultations. Over time this has allowed prior judgements and prejudices to be dispelled and has given an important

impetus for the conservation of the breeds and varieties in Europe. But not only has the SAVE Partner Organisations have benefited from the SAVE activities. There is a close co-operation of numerous other organisations and individuals. National or regional European projects would not be possible without a network of committed actors. SAVE would like to thank all for the great, usually voluntary, commitment of individuals, groups and organisations, volunteers and supporters.

SAVE Foundation is a non-governmental organisation and is therefore largely dependent on private patrons and donors for projects and activities. At this point a big "thank you" is given to the sponsors and patrons who contribute to support the live conservation of old and endangered breeds of farm animals and crops.

As a European umbrella organisation SAVE Foundation will continue to stay in contact with the pulse of time, networking, helping with specific projects and programs for the conservation of a diverse agriculture in Europe – shoulder to shoulder with our supporters!

Your SAVE Foundation Team



**SAVE**  
foundation

# The Mission of SAVE Foundation

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Generations of breeding have given rise to a multiplicity of domesticated animals and plants that are optimally adapted to their specific environment. Today, this genetic, cultural, and historical heritage is increasingly threatened by high performance agriculture. The loss of the diversity of autochthonous breeds and cultivated plants means a loss of possibilities for sustainable production, especially in marginal areas. These areas often are areas with a special value for nature and, therefore, they need a special near-to-nature management. People in these areas need a sustainable livelihood in order to make remaining in their native region a viable option. Rare, autochthonous breeds and plants are mainly found in marginal areas and/or with minority ethnic groups. Conservation of the cultural heritage of humans is important as, not only languages and customs, are endangered but, also land-use systems and traditional farmers' knowledge. These latter aspects are directly related to the work of the SAVE Foundation and are an integral part of all the projects. Working together with local representatives strengthens their voice within national political processes and, due to the subject matter, promotes and supports sustainable production of local produce. Often, governmental support is missing for activities to conserve and protect these animals and plants. Governments are generally more interested in commercial aspects of farming, this can be detrimental to both human development in rural areas and the local environment.



This above explanation shows the holistic, multi-sectoral approach SAVE takes: the conservation of agrobiodiversity in Europe is more than “just” agriculture. Conservation of agrobiodiversity means the sustainable development of marginal regions, live conservation of cultural heritage and promoting future food security. Farming with the goal of live conservation of genetic resources is complemented by research and collection of basic data and, as breeds and varieties do not respect our modern political borders, can be a practical aid to international understanding, based around one goal: the cross-border conservation of local breeds and varieties and, with them, the conservation of a piece of one's own cultural identity.

## History

Up to the 1960s, plants and animals were bred depending on the needs and environmental conditions where the farmers lived. Today, more than half of the breeds that existed in Europe 100 years ago are considered to be extinct. In regions such as Eastern and South

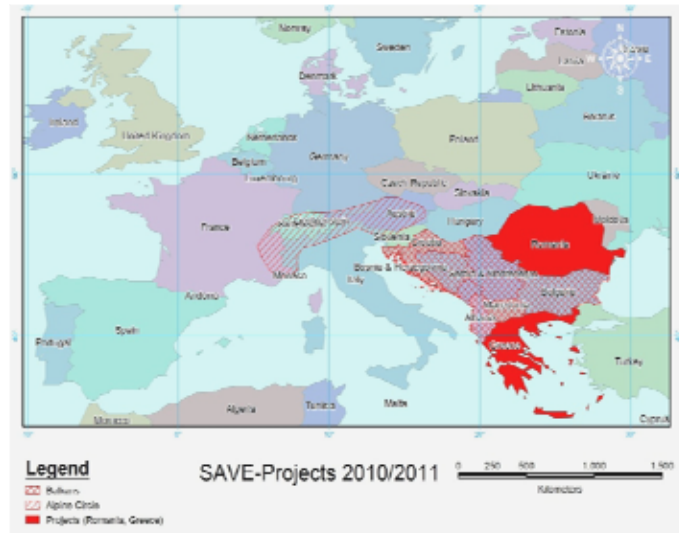
Eastern Europe, the loss of breeds and varieties is particularly serious. National plans and efforts for live conservation have often been insufficient. Therefore, representatives of national NGOs decided, 18 years ago, to combine their energies within a pan-European Organisation to promote and coordinate activities to con-

serve the diversity of agriculture: SAVE was founded in the Netherlands in 1993. Today, the SAVE Network is made up of 21 organisations from 16 European countries. The SAVE Board of Directors consists of 14 individuals from 11 European countries. SAVE Foundation runs the SAVE Network Office in Konstanz, Germany. The SAVE Project Office is based in St. Gallen, Switzerland.

# Programs and Projects 2011

## The SAVE Activities

During the period of reporting, SAVE Foundation was especially active in Romania, in Greece, in the Balkans, in the Alpine Circle, and in pan-European projects. Alongside these projects SAVE's permanent activity is networking and lobbying for the live conservation of rare breeds and plant varieties.



## Pan European Services and Actions



### Arca-Net – Experience the European Ark Network!

Arca-Net is an innovative project which serves the sustainable and live conservation of agrobiodiversity. Arca-Net is a pan-European network of Ark Farms and other places that have integrated breeds and varieties that are at risk of extinction into their business concept and have made them accessible to the public. Alongside the conservation, the fundamental understand-

ing of the general public for biological and agricultural contexts is supported. At the same time, keep of traditional livestock breeds and cultivated plants become networked and can exchange knowledge and experience.

**By the summer of 2011 Arca-Net had expanded to more than 46 countries presenting over 530 entries. Find out more at: [www.arca-net.info](http://www.arca-net.info)**



## A shelter for endangered livestock breeds

**ELBARN** is the European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net. This pan-European network ensures that valuable livestock can be protected from slaughter in times of crisis. A pilot project began already end of the 1990s in the German-speaking area of Europe, which expanded to become Arca-Net (see above). ELBARN – with the aim to create a workable concept for the Ark and Rescue Net - began in 2007 with a three year concerted action funded by the European Commission under the work programme of Council Regulation (EC) No 870/2004. This project (AGRI GENRES action 066) was completed in 2010. This project has resulted – among other things – in a well-networked and motivated group of people; this resource is an asset to the future work on conservation of indigenous animal breeds in Europe. ELBARN will be continued under the leadership of the SAVE Foundation and by using the now well-established name ELBARN

*The integrative character of the network, which includes officials as well as NGOs and individuals is unique and very effective.*

## Variety Savers: Networking with conservation colleagues across language barriers within Europe



Conservation depends on the many thousands of breeders and keepers who with a high level of, often unrecognised, engagement carry out the difficult task of keeping the breeds and varieties alive. In order to provide these people with a platform that will

enable them to network internationally and across language barriers, a multilingual network has been established. The pilot version is now available: <http://variety-savers.net>

Interested people are requested to join the network and to send their comments and suggestions on how the website can be improved. In order to prevent the network being filled with spam, registrations are approved. For the initial application as "not yet a member", click on the top right box, fill it out and wait for email confirmation. You will be asked to provide some basic information and your membership will be confirmed. Confirmation will take place within office hours, so be patient if you sign up in the evening or at the weekend! You can choose your own password to make changes and add to your profile. The use of this website is free.

=> here you can register to take part in this unique network: <http://variety-savers.net>



## EAD – The European Agrobiodiversity Day



The European Agrobiodiversity Day was launched to raise awareness of the importance of Agro-Biodiversity. Various activities take place across Europe run by the national organisations in the European SAVE Network. The EAD is held annually at Michaelmas, 29th September. The EAD is also increasingly used by other organisations. The Motto of the 6. EAD in 2010 was: "Agrobiodiversity – a crucial part of biodiversity." With this topic, the public should be better informed about the crucial role of the Biodiversity in agriculture and the importance of life conservation of autochthonous breeds and varieties. More information [http://www.save-foundation.net/EAD/EAD\\_en.htm](http://www.save-foundation.net/EAD/EAD_en.htm)

## Fruit-Net

Fruit-net is a European-wide directory of conservation organisations with neglected and forgotten fruit and berries. Under the term "Fruit-Net" the information is now available for everybody online. As far as possible, variety lists are retrievable from the Fruit-Net. The database-supported



online-inventory is equipped with several search functions, allowing optimal use of the information provided. In this directory SAVE-Foundation collaborates with "Crops for the future", the former "Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species" and the partners of the SAVE Network. Fruit-Net contains now about 400 addresses from 43 countries. **Please have a look at: [www.fruit-net.info](http://www.fruit-net.info)**

## Synonym Register of Fruit Variety Names

SAVE Foundation launched, in cooperation with "Bioversity International", the plant-sustaining institution of the FAO in Rome, a multilingual register of the variety names and synonyms. This register is unique in Europe: comparisons can be made quickly and easily and duplications in cross-border conservation work can be avoided. So far, 18'000 synonyms of more than 2500 apple varieties are recorded, grouped, and included in a database, additionally 220 plum varieties have been recorded. The synonyms are now edited in English, French, German, Czech, Polish and Russian. Each description is supplemented with various indications and completed with a source. Unique to the synonym register is also the inclusion of Cyrillic characters.

**A first version is included under URL [www.synonymregister.info](http://www.synonymregister.info)**

## Network for the Management of Feral Populations in Europe



In many European countries and regions populations of feral animals exist. Mostly, little notice is taken of these populations unless they interfere with the regulated activities in agriculture and forestry by diseases, damage to trees, crossbreeding, fodder and water competition. Semi-wild animal populations exist in different countries and from almost all livestock species. A classic example of the productive coexistence between wild and semi-wild indigenous live-

stock breeds is the New Forest National Park in Hampshire in England, where since the 16th Century, pigs, cattle and horses are kept semi-wild and grazed. The management of large natural areas by grazing with large herbivores is of increasing importance. But in many places large herbivores no longer exist in the wild.

In the framework of the project SAVE Foundation found many examples of such semi-wild livestock keeping. But up to now, no systematic recording of breeds, types and systems in which these animals exist, has been undertaken. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to begin recording the populations and their habitats. Since this area has hardly been addressed, first principles need to be created, based on further steps to be taken:

- Research into the available information and data (Internet, libraries, etc.)
- Record and describe the (known) wild and semi-wild populations
- Publication of results, preparation for a network of stakeholders

*This project began end of 2010*

## Regional Activities

### Fundus Agricultura Alpina



The feasibility study “Agricultural Species Diversity in the Alps – Conservation and Use of Traditional Knowledge” undertaken by the SAVE-Monitoring Institute shows that the current, publically available systems for recording data about agricultural praxis are very rudimentary. Approaches to collecting experience, traditions and customs are, if undertaken at all, only for limited subjects or local or regional in nature. The interest in collecting information and knowledge about livestock breeds and cultivated plants in the Alps is, however, large. The fea-

sibility study on the use of traditional knowledge in the Alps showed clearly that, in order to build up a lively, useful system, the commitment of many people will be necessary. The basis of a future project would be a wiki content management system within which authorized people could make entries and changes.

Alongside text entries, pictures, animated clips, graphics etc can also be integrated. Test runs have shown that, particularly the necessary research in old annuals, calendars etc requires a large personnel capacity. Direct interviews will probably only be rarely used, as the generation that still farmed traditionally is gradually dying out. A further, important pillar of a successful main project will be the collaboration and interest of experts who are prepared to contribute their experience.

## Network for Water Buffalo Conservation in South Eastern Europe

The Workshop “Conservation of Autochthonous Buffalo in Southeast Europe” took place 6-7 May 2011 in Sighisoara, Romania and was co-organised by SAVE Foundation and Fundatia ADEPT. It was an event to meet together with buffalo experts and stakeholders from South-eastern Europe with the aim of creating a network for the conservation of water buffalo. There is an urgent need for action. Conservation activities should preserve the full range of buffalo type to ensure a large gene pool. Selection for better production can take place as a part of the conservation activities. Markets for buffalo products exist, improvements need to be made in production, distribution channels and raising awareness of the unique nature of buffalo products.

**Genotyping** of the buffalo found in each country in South East Europe is an expensive but necessary measure that should be conducted as soon as possible. It was suggested that samples are also collected in Georgia and Turkey in order to complete the picture. **Registration and recording** is poor to very poor in all countries. Some form of payment or benefit in order to motivate animal owners to register their animals is required. **Exchange of knowledge** within the network is very important. This exchange ranges from practical aspects such as discussion of nutrition and monitoring to the more theoretical ideas for conservation strategies.



*A Buffalo Network information page will be published on [www.agrobiodiversity.net](http://www.agrobiodiversity.net). Possibility to discuss buffalo conservation exists within <http://variety-savers.net>.*

## National Actions

### Romania

Projects in Romania need to be based upon a broad and inclusive framework that takes into account the needs and viewpoints of subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers (about 4 million!) as well as commercial farmers, ecological and developmental agencies, policy-makers and the specifications of EU regulations. In this way a cohesive and successful conservation strategy for all autochthonous livestock breeds and cultivated plants can be established. SAVE Foundation has worked to build up a network of connections within Romania. As an extension of the Buffalo Workshop (see above), a meeting of Romanian stakeholders was organised, with a main focus on buffalo. Extensive search tours have also been made to find remnant populations as well as suitable Ark and/or Rescue Centres and suitable project partners. One of the next steps will be a model Ark Farm based on Saxon



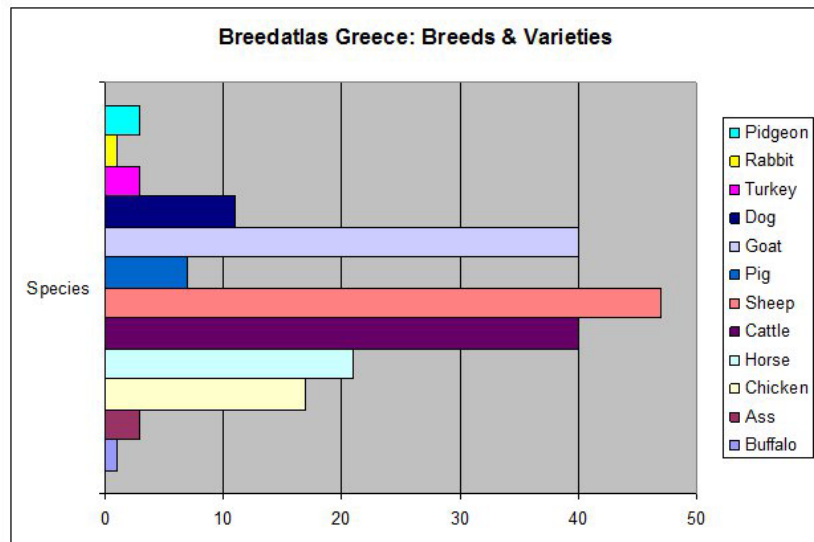


farming traditions. Identification and conservation of traditional fruit varieties in Transylvania is in preparation.

*Funding is sought to work together with local stakeholders to build up a national organisation for the conservation of autochthonous breeds and varieties and, also, to implement practical, model projects.*

## Greece

The SAVE Greece Programme runs already since 2005. A lot of forgotten or believed as extinct breeds and varieties could be located in the meantime. The “Atlas of Rare Breeds in Greece” shows an impressive range of more than 170 breeds and varieties. After monitoring, the need of action is for the most endangered breeds like Rodopi and Sykia Cattle. But also pilot Ark farms need to



be promoted, because animal parks and especially farms open to the public are fairly rare in Greece. The breeders often are not informed about how to manage the live conservation of their animals when only small numbers are left. The consequence of this is breed extinction due to crossbreeding with other breeds. Therefore SAVE Foundation ran a workshop on herdbooks in Schimatari near Athens in summer 2010 using conservation of small ruminants like sheep and goats as an example. In the framework of a project evaluation tour in autumn 2010, nucleus groups of some sheep breeds could be established and especially the situation of the Greek rare cattle breeds Rodopi and Sykia could be assessed. The precarious financial situation of the Greek government makes further engagement urgently necessary.

Together with the Greek partner organisation Amaltheia a network of Greek Ark Farms could be established and nucleus groups of Sykia cattle, Argos sheep, Ikaria sheep and additional Oulokeros goats could be placed at Resue Stations.

# 2010 – An International View of Agrobiodiversity

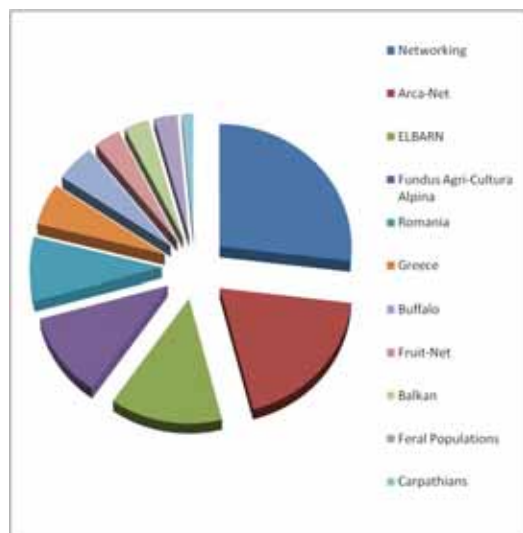
## Year of Biodiversity is now the Decade of Biodiversity



2010 was the UN Year of Biodiversity. There were many actions to make the concept of biodiversity known to the general public. Biodiversity in agriculture is an essential component of biodiversity. In this context, partner organizations of SAVE drew attention to this fact. On the "European Agrobiodiversity Day" under the motto **"Agrobiodiversity – a Crucial Part of Biodiversity"** various events took place and messages were published pointing out how important the conservation of historical and genetic diversity in agriculture is for the future of our food security and also for the conservation of the diverse landscapes and production systems in Europe. Last year, more people were able to be sensitised to this issue.

But the loss of species and varieties continues almost unabated, not only in agriculture. The United Nations (UN) declared 2011-2020 the "Decade of Biodiversity" in response to a recommendation by the signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the 10th Conference of the Parties. The EU aimed to achieve the goal of no more extinct species as early as 2010. On 15 March 2010 the EU environment ministers moved this goal to 2020 and launched a campaign for biodiversity, which is also reflected in the common agricultural policy.

## Output 2010 - 2011



The graph beside shows the key aspects of our activities during the reporting period. In accordance with the mandate of SAVE Foundation a major part of work is in networking and information sharing. This includes the organisation of the annual meetings and other networking events as well as the daily work on the internet platforms, publications, newsletters and correspondence.

The graph also shows that a large part of the work performed by SAVE 2010 to summer 2011 was laying with Arca-Net and ELBARN. The EU funding for the ELBARN project 2007-2010 expired in 2010, Arca-Net will continue to play an important role in SAVE activities. Besides these activities for the European network, the promotion

of agricultural biodiversity and the stabilisation of farms and stock eight other projects were worked on during the reporting period.

SAVE Foundation applies its resources and capacities as efficiently as possible and works with many volunteers. A special feature of the SAVE projects is that a large part of the funds for the projects are used on the ground with project partners, farmers and local stakeholders benefitting – thus funding is not consumed by complicated administrative processes within the organisation.

# Sustainability

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Sustainability is the basic principle of SAVE Foundation. The hands-on conservation projects are developed together with local partners to build up long-term viable populations, thus conservation programmes can be continued even after the project ends. Alongside this practical conservation work, the empirical work that is an essential basis for successful conservation takes place in the form of field work, applied research and monitoring. Networking and information sharing is another key element of the work of SAVE Foundation. This occurs in close cooperation with representatives of the respective ministries responsible and they are encouraged to become involved in the activities. A close cooperation with universities and other academic institutions also serve the sustainable development and re-valuation of the breeds and varieties.

## The three Pillars of Conservation

The first pillar represents the conservators: the **farmers and hobby keepers**. They form the basis of any successful live conservation of livestock and crops. The long-term conservation of live farm animals and crops means, in particular in Eastern and Southeastern

Europe, sustainable rural development from the farm through production to marketing. Only if the income of farmers and sustainer can be secured can the breeds and species survive in the long-term.

The cooperation with the **State** is another important pillar. Agriculture and rural development need to be included in conservation programmes. Subsidies or State-owned enterprises alone cannot secure conservation. All subsidies can be reduced or canceled any time if the economy takes a downturn or the State budget is tight. The State's role in the conservation work is to implement international obligations – at the local level and together with the 1st Pillar.

The **scientific community** has developed important principles such as genetic studies of blood lines, has measured disease resistance of various breeds and varieties and characterised other features of the old and, often, nearly forgotten breeds and varieties and has developed methods and techniques for the scientific monitoring of conservation projects. The cooperation with scientists in particular strengthens the re-valuation of varieties and breeds and demonstrates their distinctive features.

# The Bodies of SAVE Foundation

## The SAVE Board of Directors

### Chairman (2009-2013)

Fortina, Riccardo Prof. Dr., Torino, Italy

### Executive Vice Chairman

Grunenfelder Hape MSc, St. Gallen, Switzerland

### Second Vice Chairman

Van den Bergh Staf, Holsbeek, Belgium

### Secretary

Boink Geert Dr. Udenhout, The Netherlands

### Assessors

Beco Pavel, Dicken, Switzerland

Feldmann Antje, Ellingerode, Germany

Hajas Pal Dr., Ecseg, Hungary

Gaspardy Andras Dr., Budapest, Hungary

Ivanov, Sergej Dr., Dimitrovgrad, Serbia

Kompan Drago Prof. Dr., Domzale, Slovenia

Miklis Michael, Piltown, Ireland

Stadelmann Markus, Dornbirn, Austria

Toth Dezider Prof. Dr, Nitra, Slovak Republic

Wolters Pauline, Maastricht, The Netherlands

## The SAVE managing Staff

Kugler, Waltraud MSc, *Project Director, St. Gallen*

Broxham, Elli MA, *Programme Director, St. Gallen*

Donath, Ulrich MSc, *Data Base Officer, Konstanz*

# The SAVE Partnerorganisations

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# With SAVE connected Websites

**Agrobiodiversity.Net:** [www.agrobiodiversity.net](http://www.agrobiodiversity.net)

Network portal of European NGOs working on the field

**ELBARN:** [www.elbarn.net](http://www.elbarn.net)

European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net

**Europ. Ark Network:** [www.arca-net.info](http://www.arca-net.info)

Network of institutions showing rare breeds and plants

**Fruit-Net:** [www.fruit-net.info](http://www.fruit-net.info)

Network for neglected and forgotten fruits and berries

**SAVE Foundation:** [www.save-foundation.net](http://www.save-foundation.net)

Website of the European SAVE Foundation

**Synonymregister:** [www.synonymregister.info](http://www.synonymregister.info)

Synonym register of fruit variety names (multilingual)

**Variety-Savers.Net:** <http://variety-savers.net>

Community for Breed and Seed Savers in Europe



# References

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## Collaboration with international organisations:

- Irene Hoffmann, Chief Animal Genetic Resources, UN-FAO, Rome
- Bioersity International, Maccaresse-Rome
- GEF (Global Environment Facility) United Nations Development Programme
- IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature), Gland
- EuroNatur, Radolfzell
- ERF (European Regional Focal Point), Bonn
- Rare Breeds International, Thessaloniki
- EU – DG Agriculture, Brussels

## International Patronage Committee

- Dr. Franz Fischler, former EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Absam (A)
- Dr. Dagmar Schratter, Director Vienna Zoo Schönbrunn, Vienna
- Marleen Felius, Artist and scientific animal illustrator, Amsterdam

## Patronage Committee Switzerland

- Aeschbacher Kurt      TV Moderator, Zurich
- Bötsch Manfred      Director Federal Office for Agriculture, Bern
- Gysling Erich      Publicist, President Forum East-West, Zürich
- Schenker Robert      President WWF Switzerland, Herrliberg
- Semadeni Silva      President Pro Natura Switzerland, Chur-Araschgen

## Long-term project funding (excerpt)

- Margarethe und Rudolf Gsell-Stiftung, c/o Dr. Nicolas Roulet; Rebgasse 1; CH-4005 Basel
- MAVA – Fondation pour la Protection de la Nature, Rue Mauverney 28; CH-1196 Gland
- Graf Fabrice von Gundlach & Payne Smith-Stiftung; Andrea Engi; Zedernweg 1; CH-7000 Chur
- Lotteriefonds St.Gallen; CH-9001 St.Gallen
- Dr. Peter Goop (several foundations), Heiligkreuzstr. 19, FL-9490 Vaduz
- Dr. Mario Broggi (several foundations); Im Bretscha 22; FL-9494 Schaan
- Heidehof Stiftung GmbH; Heidehofstr. 35 A; D-70184 Stuttgart