

From behalf of our president Kostas Papaioanou who can not attend the meeting due to personal problems I would like to read this letter.

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to welcome all of you at the Annual Meeting of the SAVE Foundation and the European SAVE Network.

We also like to thank the Kerkini National Park Authority and all the others sponsors, who contributed with products and services.

As you may know, “Amaltheia” is a partner of Save Foundation, established in 2007, and our main aim is the protection and conservation of indigenous Greek domestic animal breeds. For this purpose, Amaltheia coordinates the activities of several local NGO’s, stakeholders and other individuals that have dedicated time, energy and resources to monitoring and breeding such autochthonous animals.

Since the programme of this Meeting includes the 9th European Agrobiodiversity Seminar with the title: “Unrecognised and Isolated Populations of Rare Breeds and Varieties”, I would like to emphasize the fact that in Greece exist numerous populations of domestic animals, specially sheep and goats, that have specific phenotypic characteristics, live in remote mountainous or island areas and are not recognized officially by the State and the EU as rare breeds. On the other hand, we have encountered stock animals of officially recognized rare Greek breeds, which inadvertently had been claimed to be extinct. A recent example, are the cattle of Kea breed that were discovered in Makronissos island last year. Vasilis Lekkas will cover this project later on.

Mostly, these domestic rare breeds and populations are kept by traditional farmers, due to their adaptability to inclement conditions and ability to thrive in environment with poor vegetation. Due to this fact, most of these autochthonous breeds form an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Greek rural area.

Besides breeding and monitoring such animals in reproductive nuclei, we focus our efforts on two additional sectors:

1. identification of their genetic trait, in order to determine genetic distances between them
2. improve their productivity, to increase the income of their breeders.

We are looking forward to hearing your ideas and proposals on the common route that all of us should follow, as members of Save Foundation.

Finally, we wish a successful conference and a pleasant stay in Greece.

Thank you very much for your participation.