

SAVE eNews 4/2007

Quarterly e-mail service of the European SAVE Foundation
(Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe)

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SAVE joins IUCN – The World Conservation Union



The World Conservation Union

We are pleased to inform you that SAVE Foundation and its network became a member of IUCN, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. At its 68th meeting held in Kruger National Park, South Africa, on 19-20 November 2007, the IUCN Council approved the admission of SAVE foundation as a member of the Union in Category B (d) International non-governmental organisations.

With this membership, SAVE foundation is integrated in a worldwide Union that brings together States, government agencies and a diverse range of non-governmental organizations in a unique partnership of more than 1000 members spread across some 140 countries. IUCN is the world's largest democratically governed environmental alliance with UN observer status. Within this Union, SAVE foundation becomes part of a collective voice on important issues of our age at local, national, regional and global level. As a Union IUCN seeks to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. Furthermore IUCN builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

As a competent European network of agro-biodiversity specialists, the SAVE Foundation brings an important but often ignored sector of conservation to the World Conservation Union. Although environmental awareness on both the political and the individual level is greater than ever before, awareness of the issue of conservation of agro-biodiversity hardly exists. Awareness is growing on a national and international level, but many individuals are not aware of the fundamental importance to genetic diversity and ecosystem protection. Agrobiodiversity is an essential and integrated part of ecology and nature conservation. For example traditional agro-eco-systems (TAES) are a basic prerequisite for conservation of natural and cultivated landscapes such as mountain pastures or river deltas. They are an important factor in sustainably securing survival of biodiversity in these areas.

SAVE has worked with nature conservation organisations since its foundation, the chance to bring agrobiodiversity onto the policy agenda of a respected international conservation organisation is very important for SAVE.

Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation & SAVE Network 2007

The annual meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network from September 27th to 30th, 2007 was conducted in cooperation with the Italian SAVE partner organisation R.A.R.E. Within the frame of the fair “Piante e animali perduti” in Guastalla, Northern Italy, the different meetings of the SAVE Network took place.

“Piante e animali perduti” (lost plants and livestock)



Each year in autumn, this fair attracts many visitors who are interested in traditional regional products, cultivated plants and livestock breeds. The medieval town centre of Guastalla becomes a unique marketplace of possibilities. The stalls of local and regional conservation organisations that are actively engaged in the conservation of breeds and varieties and their utilisation as food and non-food products are of particular interest.

European Day of Agrobiodiversity

Under the title “Use it or lose it – Conservation of Livestock breeds in Europe”, the European Day of Agrobiodiversity 2007 was honoured with a conference in Guastalla. Possibilities for the utilisation of old breeds on marginal sites, their characteristics, products and marketing were presented to an interested audience during several lectures and translated into English and Italian.



ELBARN kick off



The SAVE annual meeting began with a kick-off meeting of ELBARN (European Livestock Breeds Arc and Rescue Net) project partners. The project is - as concerted action within the frame of the EU-regulation 870/2004 – significantly supported by the EU. The envisaged approach, procedure, competences and duties of the partners were thoroughly discussed during the venue. Furthermore, the point in time for the first milestone, a “central workshop” with participants from all European regions and subject-related topics was fixed for 8-10 February 08.

SAVE Network meetings

The open meeting of the project commission began, by invitation of the town administration of Guastalla, with typical Italian specialties and a glass of sparkling wine. Many thanks go to the town administration for the kind gesture. Central points of discussion during the meeting of the project commission were the European Agrobiodiversity Day and its (re)conception, the ELBARN-project and Arca-Net. Arca Net is now available for farms and stations in different languages and from various countries.



New SAVE Chairman



According to the statutes, a new chairman was appointed on the occasion of the Board of Directors meeting. The board thanked Staf van den Bergh (SLE, Belgium) very cordially for his engaged commitment during 2 terms of office (2003-2005 and 2005-2007). He is going to play an active part in the development of SAVE Foundation as member of the "management committee" in the Board of Directors. Prof. Dr. Riccardo Fortina (R.A.R.E., Italy) was consentaneously elected new chairman for the next term of office. Riccardo Fortina has built up the national Italian conservation organisation R.A.R.E. and has since been active member of the SAVE Board of Directors. SAVE is looking forward to his engaged and productive activities.

On invitation of the major of Guastalla, a common dinner of all participants took place in stimulated atmosphere. We wish to express our cordial thanks for the friendly support of the town of Guastalla and the professional organisation by R.A.R.E. The next SAVE meeting is scheduled for June 2008 in Kozard, Hungary.



EPGRIS3 – a self-funded initiative for PGR Documentation



A joint meeting of the ECPGR Documentation and Information Network Coordinating Group and the EURISCO Advisory Group was held on 2-3 April 2007 in Maccarese/Rome, Italy hosted by Bioversity International.

This meeting was organized upon consideration that a recent EU proposal for a European PGR Information Infrastructure (EPGRIS2), as well as other proposals for projects contributing to an improved documentation infrastructure (AEGIS and EGRISI), were regrettably not approved for funding. It seemed therefore necessary to take stock of ongoing initiatives and explore alternative ways to better collaborate in the field of PGR documentation in Europe. The existing framework of the ECPGR Documentation and Information (D&I) Network was considered the most suitable to organize a planning meeting.

The meeting agreed on the need to create a mode of operation whereby PGR documentation activities could be carried out in collaboration on a voluntary and self-funded basis, and thus contribute in a coordinated manner to the achievement of common goals in the European Region. Collaboration should result in adding value to the sum of individual activities. It was considered desirable to create a system that would not be elitist, but rather constituting a driving force that would be able to be inclusive rather than excluding the less developed countries from the initiative. The system would have the ability to collect contributions from several partners, either in the form of technological improvement, or with discussion and ideas. Transparency of operation was considered paramount.

The meeting reached, *inter alia*, the following points of agreement:

- A new initiative will be launched by the ECPGR D&I Network, consisting in a self-funded project called EPGRIS3. The objective of this initiative is to coordinate ongoing, self-funded voluntary actions proposed by European partners for the improvement of a European Plant Genetic Resources Information Infrastructure.
- EURISCO, currently the European *ex situ* catalogue maintained in Rome by Bioversity on behalf of ECPGR as a central infrastructure, will need to be further developed as the entry point for access to all information on European PGR at the accession level.
- EPGRIS3 will specifically aim to achieve a list of workplan elements, related to: discussion on vision and scope of EURISCO; data quality and quantity in EURISCO; uploading mechanism; user interfaces; and networking of National Focal Points.
- EPGRIS3 will be coordinated by Theo van Hintum, CGN, the Netherlands. The ECPGR Secretariat will send a letter to all National Coordinators and D&I Network members inviting participation in the project and seeking available inputs in kind. These may consist of technological inputs, training, staff time, etc.

A few general principles for EPGRIS3 are the following:

- Time-bound: it is a time-bound project with a five-year life span (2007–2011), after which it should be reviewed and a decision about its continuation should be taken.
- Decentralized: activities will be as decentralized as possible, with delegation of responsibilities to activity leaders.
- Transparent: all the discussions and outputs will be open to the public.

=> The project's Web site at <http://www.epgris3.eu> includes all the information on on-going EPGRIS3 activities.

Newsflash

Slow Food International receives Binding Price

The main award of the Binding-Foundation Vaduz, Liechtenstein, worth 50'000 CHF (Euro 30.000) was handed over to Slow Food International on 16th November 2007. The quest to produce and market food whilst respecting nature was honoured. The dignity of man and animals is respected and the health of consumers is protected, according to Binding Foundation. Slow Food with its head quarters in Piedmont, Italy, integrates cultural considerations into the environmental debate. With its engagement for the "arc of taste" Slow Food contributes to a sustainable development and supports thus the conservation of agrobiodiversity.

ProSpecieRara celebrates 25th anniversary

The Swiss Foundation ProSpecieRara is one of the few NGOs engaged for endangered livestock breeds and rare cultivated plants alike. Thanks to "engagement in the field" and clever fundraising the organisation quickly gained support and is today one of the largest European organisations in this area in Europe. ProSpecieRara has fundamentally contributed to the foundation of SAVE and is an important member of the European SAVE Network. SAVE congratulates cordially.

Link: <http://www.prospecierara.ch>

Euronatur is 20 years old

The foundation European Nature Heritage Fund – Euronatur has gained a very special importance amongst international nature protection organisations. From the beginning, it was not only active for the securing of large protection areas and migratory animal species in Europe, but also for the reconciliatory cooperation of agriculture, nature protection and animal protection. Therefore, its no big surprise that the first SAVE project, the conservation of Turopolje pigs in Croatia was a common project of Euronatur and SAVE. Today, Euronatur and SAVE cooperate closely in the Green Belt in Southern Europe. Within the frame of the ELBARN project (cf. SAVE eNews 1/2007), Euronatur and SAVE have entered into a much more far-reaching partnership whereby Euronatur overtook, amongst others, the important hinge position to the European Commission. SAVE congratulates cordially!

Link: <http://www.euronatur.org>

Important dates (extract)

2008

4-9 February: 3rd World Biosphere Reserves Congress "Biosphere Futures, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves for Sustainable Development" in Madrid, Spain. Contact: m.clusener-godt@unesco.org

8-10 February: European Livestock Breeds Ark and Rescue Net (ELBARN), Central Workshop at Kutna Hora, Czech Republic. info@monitoring.eu.com, Web: <http://www.save-foundation.net/pdf/ELBARN.pdf>



16-17 February: BioVersity 2008 "Old cultivated plants and livestock breeds will have a future", Workshop on Marketing at Kirchbach near Graz, Austria. Contact: bioversitaet@bio-austria.at; Web: <http://www.bioversitaet.at>

25-28 February: Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity to the topic "Ecosystems and Human Well-being", Galway, Ireland. Contact: conference@cohabnet.org, Web: <http://www.cohabnet.org/cohab2008/>

3-7 March: International Symposium "Underutilized Plants for food, nutrition, income and sustainable development", Arusha, Tanzania. Contact: underutilized-species@cgiar.org, Web: <http://www.icuc-iwmi.org/Symposium2008/index.htm>

27 April - 2 May: Symposium "Plants for People & Places" at Lindley Conference Centre, Westminster, London. Contact: horthalls@rhs.org.uk, Web: <http://www.rhs.org.uk>

12-16 May: "Planet Diversity", World Congress on the Future of Food and Farming. Bonn, Germany. Contact: info@planet-diversity.org. Web: <http://www.planet-diversity.org>

19- 21 May: "IN SAFE HANDS - communities safeguard biodiversity"; Diversity Fair (during COP 9) in Bonn, Germany. Contact: Ursula.Groehn-Wittern@bukoagrar.de, Web: <http://www.bukoagrar.de>

19-30 May: 9th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9), Bonn, Germany. <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=COP-09>

12-14 June: Annual Meeting of SAVE Foundation and the SAVE Network at Kozard, Hungary. Joint Conference with DAGENE to the topic "Marketing of products of traditional domestic breeds". Contact: info@monitoring.eu.com



24-27 August: 59th EAAP Meeting with satellite workshop "Linking Conservation NGOs with the Professionals", Vilnius, Lithuania. Contact: rbi_office@agro.auth.gr

5-14 October: 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress "A Diverse and Sustainable World", Barcelona, Spain. Contact: congress@iucn.org