

# Annual Report of the European Regional Focal Point

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## **1. Introduction**

This year the 16<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the European National Co-ordinators (NCs) for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (FAnGR) is organised in Crete, Greece. This is a good opportunity to have all NCs in Greece and specifically in Crete, the maritime road connecting East with Europe. Don't forget that Zeus (the King of the Olympian Gods) disguised as a good looking bull attracted Europe, the beautiful princess from Finiki, and brought her in Crete as a first station to their journey to west.

After this introduction, I would like to point some issues related with the work that ERFP has accomplished, not only during the previous year, but since the Antalya Workshop (2006), where Greece succeeded France in the ERFP Secretariat. As it was presented then, ERFP was entering a new phase, as an established and well functioning organisation in the frame of the FAO Global Strategy for the management of animal genetic resources. Several achievements have been fulfilled in this period, with the support of all NCs. Between them, I like to raise the increased participation to the annual Workshops, the extending of the meeting as to a two days event and the enhancement of our activities with seminars, workshops and training courses. Events, where the majority of the NCs actively participated. Now, all the European countries are members of the ERFP, (the majority is present in this Workshop) and 4 countries as associated members. Now, we can all agree that ERFP is a successful example of a regional focal point and this has been achieved with the active participation of all NCs.

Since the last Workshop in Barcelona, (August 2009), we proceeded on the implementation of the decisions taken to continue and reinforce the work done by the Regional Focal Point for Europe (ERFP). This report includes the activities taken place in the period from September 2009 until August 2010.

## **2. ERFP activities since the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop**

### **2.1. ERFP Call for Action**

Following the decisions taken in the Barcelona Annual Meeting, the ERFP Secretariat launched the 8th Call for Action, which included five thematic topics).

1. Coordination of the actions of different stakeholders for the management of AnGR (governmental /research/breeders association/NGOs)
2. Identification of various threats for indigenous breeds (genetic, diseases, political, social, economical etc)
3. Breeds characterization and taxonomy
4. Exploitation / utilization of local breeds for the production of local products  
- Economical evaluation of breeds
5. Sustainable breeding programs

The total amount foreseen by the Annual Workshop for the Call for Action was 50,000 euros. In this Call for Action, ERFP received 3 project proposals, which after evaluation have been approved for funding.

<b>No</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Evaluation of Current Status of Busha Cattle and develop a regional breeding program for their conservation and sustainable economic use</i>	17000
<b>2</b>	<i>Seminar: "Conservation and use of farm animal genetic resources: challenges in practice"</i>	17000
<b>3</b>	<i>Development of models assessing the breeds risk status by utilization of population and relevant georeferenced data</i>	16000

Including this 8<sup>th</sup> Call for Action, the ERFP has given a financial support to a total of 24 projects. The current status of the on going projects is presented in the Projects Coordination Meeting scheduled for Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of August in Crete.

### **2.2 ERFP web-site.**

One of the main activities of ERFP is the dissemination of information and the website is the main tool for this. The German Institution, BLE, is hosting and managing the Website, while ERFP is responsible on providing BLE with regularly updated information. This is done on the basis of a four year contract signed between both parties expiring in 2010. The continuation of the hosting of the website by BLE has

already been discussed in connection with their election as the new ERFPP Secretariat for the next 4 year period.

### ***2.3 ERFPP Newsletter***

Since the Vilnius Workshop, 2 further issues of the ERFPP Newsletter were published and circulated electronically, the 7<sup>th</sup> (in January) and the 8<sup>th</sup> (in August). The Newsletter aims to serve as a tool for communication between the NCs, for the diffusion of their activities in the different countries and also to bring together the different organisations and bodies related with the AnGR and ERFPP.

### ***2.4 ERFPP Annual Workshop in Crete***

During the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop in Crete, on Saturday is organised the Projects Coordination Meeting where the NCs in charge of an ERFPP project present a report on the ongoing results and exchange information with the NCs. On the Annual Meeting on Sunday the work programme of ERFPP for the 2009-2010 will be decided.

The report on the Annual Workshop, including the annual Country Reports received, the presentations and the minutes of the Workshop and all the relevant material of the 2 day Workshop will be available on the ERFPP website.

The high participation of NCs and other interested scientists for the AnGR in this annual event indicates the importance of the event and its attractiveness.

### ***2.5 Cooperation with FAO - Implementation of the Global Plan for Action***

The actions that ERFPP develops and implement are in harmony with the Strategic Priorities for Action, considering that attention should be given to multinational involvement and avoid to undertaken actions that under the responsibility of the individual country. The Country Reports are formulated according the Strategic Priorities for action of the GPA, in order to have a comprehensive view on how the GPA is implemented in the different countries members of the ERFPP. In the 9<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of CGRFA (19-23 October 2009) ERFPP member countries were represented.

In the specific session organised in the 9<sup>th</sup> WCGALP "Management of AnGR: Quo vadis after the State of the World Report", ERFPP activities and its role in the management of AnGR was presented by Andreas Georgoudis. In the same session Elzbieta Martyniuk presented the challenges and opportunities in the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe with the implementation of AnGR.

## **2.6 International Meetings and events**

A number of meetings and workshops have been organised the previous year.

The following events were held:

1. Breeds at Risk: Criteria and classification, 16-17 February 2010, London. The seminar was supported by RBI, RBST and ERFP.
2. Genebanking and Cryopreservation seminar, 1-3 June 2010, Lelystad. The workshop was organised by CGN and FAO, supported by ERFP.

Detailed reports and material can be found in the ERFP website. Relevant presentations are included in the Annual Workshop in Crete.

In a special event organised by FRB (Research Foundation for the Biodiversity research) in the frame of the International Fair Salon d' Agriculture in Paris 3 March, ERFP activities and its role in the management of AnGR were presented.

In the frame of the ERFP projects several meetings have been contacted:

1. *The Murinsulaner horse: A project on traditional transboundary breeds on the example of a nearly forgotten horse*
2. *Development of a common methodology to evaluate and monitor the population-genetic status of farm animal breeds in Europe and derive a common interpretation of the status of endangerment of breeds*
3. *Development of a regional network in function of sustainable breeding programs for transboundary breeds*
4. *Characterisation of the indigenous and improved podolic breeds and identification of the threats*

## **2.7 Collaboration with EAAP, WG-AnGR and EFABISnet project**

The role of ERFP in the management of the European database comprises two aspects, the first is in connection with the NCs and their support to establish and maintain their national database, while the second refers to the production of technical reports and disseminating information at European level.

With a relevant agreement signed between EAAP and ERFP, ERFP supports EAAP for the management and improvement of the EFABIS Database with the amount of 10000 euros per year.

In addition, ERFPP is supporting the EAAP Session 14, "Strategies to add value to local breeds" organized in collaboration with the EAAP WG\_AnGR, FAO and ERFPP, chaired by Beate Scherf, Christina Ligda and Sipke Hiemstra.

### **3. ERFPP situation**

#### ***3.1 ERFPP Business Plan***

Since, the Vilnius Workshop we have been discussing new ideas to incorporate in the work of the ERFPP, related with the need of having a business plan for a period of years and the sustainability of the funding. Several discussions have been carried out, and finally last year in Barcelona there was a general consensus that the ORGANISATION AND ITS WORKING RULES should form the basic pillar for ERFPP which would then be accompanied by a MULTI-YEAR PLAN covering a 5 year period.

The Steering Committee and Secretariat have discussed this and decided to have a Terms of Reference document and a short paper on a multi year programme of work (MYPOW). A working document was prepared on the Terms of References by the small group formed (Asko Maki-Tanila, Mark Maguire and Ela Martyniuk and a written contribution by Eleonore Charvolin) that revised the draft version based on the Barcelona decisions. This document was discussed in the last SC meeting in Rome and circulated to all NCs. The essential context of the MYPOW is to list the topics on which the ERFPP will focus in the coming years.

Both documents are going to be discussed in this Annual Workshop and all necessary changes will be incorporated in the form that will be adopted by the NCs. The Assembly will be the forum for updating these documents in the future. The MYPOW, in particular, will need continuous updating in the future, in order to serve as a useful guideline for the activities of the ERFPP in relation to the on going AnGR issues.

To safeguard the continued development of ERFPP a new structure for the financing of ERFPP is proposed. So far the country contributions have been voluntary - now the next business plan is looking for a wider and more committed participation in funding. As it was initially proposed, we follow the FAO/UN scale in determining the level of payment for the countries.

#### ***3.2 ERFPP Secretariat***

The mandate of Greece to host the ERFPP Secretariat, expired in the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Workshop (Crete). Since the 12<sup>th</sup> ERFPP Workshop, the host has been the Animal

Genetics and Breeding Group of the Department of Animal Production in the School of Agriculture, of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and it has been supported by Christina Ligda (National Agricultural Research Foundation) and Evi Danou (Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food).

Following the decision taken in Barcelona (August 2009), the elections for the new Secretariat have been organized by post. There was only one candidate country (Germany) and 37 countries voted anonymously. The results were: 34 in favour and 3 abstain.

The new Secretariat for 2010 – 2014 will be hosted by Germany. We congratulate the new Secretariat.

The new Secretariat is facing new challenges in implementing the new business plan and developing further the work of the ERFP under the new framework that will be decided.

We wish all the best to Germany in the upcoming tasks.

### ***3.3 ERFP Steering Committee***

In this period, since the Barcelona Workshop 4 SC meetings were organised, in Rome, Paris, Rome and Crete. This year, Drago Kompan, NC of Slovenia is to be replaced under the rotational system. A new member of the ERFP SC has to be elected in this Workshop.

### ***3.4 ERFP financial situation and budget***

In the tables that follow the ERFP financial situation is presented.

In 2009, the expenses of ERFP were **111402** Euros and from January 2010 until 31 July 2010 **58951** Euros (Table 1). The budget approved in the 15<sup>th</sup> Workshop for 2010 was **144000** Euros. The details of budget partitioning both for 2009 and 2010 are presented in the Table 2.

The amount available for ERFP on August 2010 is **119652** Euros. Additional to this, an amount of **167000** Euros required for the implementation of the running projects according to their approved budget is reserved.

During this year, a letter was sent to all member countries asking for financial support. For our programme for 2009-2010, we have received financial support from 6

countries at the total amount of **48000** Euros. The SC in several meetings discussed on how to proceed with the implementation of the new funding mechanism on the most efficient way that will ensure the continuation of the financial basis of the ERFP. This topic is also included in the document for the new BP under discussion.

#### **4. Conclusions**

It is a common perception that ERFP can play a more active role in the development of strategies related with the conservation and sustainable use of animal genetic resources in Europe and in the mechanisms related with the implementation and funding of these strategies. Moreover, ERFP encourages the establishment and development of Regional Focal Points in other parts of the world by exchanging experience from the work already done in Europe.

In the continuous efforts to further develop the efficiency and the structure of ERFP a new business plan is under development. The objectives of the proposed ERFP business plan for the period of 2010 -2014 is to implement the principles of the strategic plan by organising the activities of the ERFP in a concrete project with formulated workplan, priorities and objectives, according to the experience of the plant genetic resources. This business plan should ensure ERFP ability to further develop its work following its statutes and running projects. The new framework provided by the Global Plan for Action, will be used as the basis for the development of ERFP activities within the new business plan, in order to contribute to the follow up of the implementation of the Global Plan for Action in European Region. European Region with the established regional focal point is in a good position to fulfil the commitments of the Global Plan of Action.

Increasingly complex issues are emerging the livestock sector, which require balancing the interests of a variety of stakeholders. In this context the dissemination of information and the cooperation with the private sector, including industry and breeders organization is encouraged.

As it has been presented in the Annual Report in the new period for ERFP, depending on the outcome of the discussion on the new Business Plan, ERFP must continue to play this important role and also develop and find new structures enabling it to meet the NCs needs. This evolution is necessary.

At this point, I would like to express my special thanks to Christina Ligda for the excellent work that she has done all these years with commitment and patient, Evi Danou also devotes my thanks for her personal contribution and through her position in the Ministry of Rural Development and Food.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to all of you for your excellent collaboration, which we enjoyed and exploited all these wonderful years of our mandate.

