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Summary of Actions

The ELBARN Area South Eastern Europe is made up of the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo UNMIK, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. Of these countries, only two are members of the EU, namely Bulgaria and Romania. The recommended goals, requirements and actions were discussed in an Area Workshop in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria in May 2009 together by participants from the above-mentioned countries. The workshop discussions led to the Action Plan published here. A main goal of ELBARN is to build up a functioning network of Ark and Rescue Centres (A&RCs). The centres will be used in emergencies, such as old age of important breeders or the outbreak of contagious diseases, to prevent the loss of animals from autochthonous livestock breeds. They also have an important function of raise public awareness of rare and autochthonous livestock breeds and traditional farming, and to conserve the breeds through active breeding work.

The Area Action Plan for South Eastern Europe sets out a need for action as follows:

- Rare breeds should be approved for special treatment within legislation.
- Identification of breeds and breeders must continue, followed by long-term monitoring.

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- An Area Task Force should be set up to co-ordinate the rescue actions, work on contingency plans, help identify A&RCs and prepare information.
- Traditional farming should be supported and improved through better legislation and improved information to farmers and veterinary officers.
- Potential A&RCs should be identified, contacted, visited and documented in the ELBARN database.
- Rescue and quarantine centres need to be identified contacted and their usefulness for protecting rare breeds in the case of diseases established.
- Pilot projects should be initiated to show interested farmers how ark institutions can be set up and run sustainably.
- Herdbooks and breeding associations should be established where they do not yet exist. Quality of the herdbooks and the breed associations should be continuously checked.
- Nucleus herds should be built up in the Area in order to protect important breeding lines.
- Whilst moving towards EU standards, care should be taken to conserve the farming systems that are unique to the Area.
- Public awareness must be raised by promotion through the media, through marketing products and through education.
- Cost–benefit calculations should be made to show that indigenous breeds are more beneficial than exotic breeds – these calculations should include ecological costs.
- A systematic impact assessment should be used prior to the introduction of new breeds to the Area should be developed.
- Public health issues and an awareness of the importance of quality products for human health should be promoted.
- Cross-border co-operation, exchange of information and study visits should be arranged.
- Workshops should be organized to address special topics, e.g. herd management, organizational structures for NGOs, etc.

The combined impact of these actions will allow for optimal conservation work for traditional breeds and the landscapes they inhabit in the Area.