



# ESSA courier

No. 3 – September 2009

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## The President's Editorial

In the middle of the year 2009 we can see the development of ESSA, thanks to Marbach director Dr. Astrid von Velsen-Zerweck, office and team and thanks to ESSA office manager Alexandra Lotz.

Our contacts with the Education and Culture Direction at the European Committee are going forward, and our next board meeting at the end of August will be in charge of preparing the subsidies file for next year, with the help of the consultants of the French Haras nationaux, whom we have to thank for their support.



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We had an excellent general assembly at TOPOL'ČIANKY, very well prepared and organised by director Michal Horný, many thanks to him and his staff (and shame to the very late entries who made his task much more difficult...). Every year our general meeting is a success, and initiates a lot of bilateral partnerships.

For the moment, we have to prove that our association is strong. Therefore, we need enough members of many different European countries. The new statutes allow us to have either individual or institutional members. There are two categories of institutional members: either a stud itself for an annual fee of 500 Euros, or an institution representing different studs in its country, paying a 1000 Euros membership fee per year. Apart from the studs themselves it is essential to gain individual members, with an annual membership fee of 100 Euros. Are we strong enough to win many individual members around each member stud?

The aim of this foreword is to tell you that this should be the challenge of this 2009 summer: each of the member stud gaining 3 persons interested to be members! Members benefit from the newsletter "ESSA courier" appearing every second month, invitations to ESSA events and more advantages in the future.

You will find a membership form for distribution accompanying this ESSA courier. Thanks in advance to make ESSA stronger !

On behalf of the ESSA board

Bernard Maurel  
(ESSA president)

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## Review ESSA General Assembly 2009

18 participants from 12 studs in 10 European countries participated in the ESSA general assembly at the Slovakian national stud of TOPOL'ČIANKY. Reports were given on the activities and the financial situation of the organisation. New members introduced their institution and old members illuminated current developments of their studs.

In a workshop session the participants discussed their expectations and possible future initiatives of ESSA. Four fields of activity were identified: breeding and genetics, education and research, culture and tourism as well as training and ethics.

For the topic „breeding and genetics“ working groups were established, dealing with the quality of semen and with law matters concerning the studs.

For education and research a catalogue about existing initiatives shall be compiled. A questionnaire will be worked out and sent to the members. A partnership with EEAP (European Association for Animal Production) is regarded as desirable.



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The participants agree that the ESSA network can be highly beneficial for the development of tourism in all studs by joint promotion activities and packages. A quadrille pool which can be booked by organisers of events outside the studs shall be established. Also a touring exhibition is planned to promote the organisation.

Networking in the field of education and training is also regarded as highly desirable. A catalogue shall be compiled to inform the partners about experts of other partner studs who could give trainings and share know-how within the ESSA network.

In the future ESSA might organise stipends for employees to work with experts.

To include ethic principals in the ESSA communication and in order to guarantee to live these principals "ESSA rules of conduct" are to be established on European level. The Swedish "Code of Conduct" can serve as example.

Concerning the promotion of ESSA studs as European heritage the participants agree to apply for European heritage status as a group of studs. Nevertheless, each stud needs to promote nationally at the respective ministries of culture.

The application for EU-subsidies by the culture programme of the European Union is discussed. Financial support can be possible from 2010 to 2013 when the application is handed in in autumn 2009. The project proposed needs to deal with networking on EU level, educational and promotional activities. Co-funding through the ESSA members is necessary. A working group for the application for EU subsidies is established with Bernard Maurel, Nicolas Fourcroy and Alexandra Lotz.

To promote ESSA on European level the organisation has the opportunity to organise an exhibition with opening event at the seat of Baden-Wuerttemberg in Brussels. The opening event is scheduled for Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2010. The exhibition can stay for up to four weeks and can be seen by all visitors of the Baden-Wuerttemberg facilities.

The 2010 ESSA general assembly will take place at Neustadt/Dosse. Arrival and culture programme in Berlin is scheduled for Monday 07.06.10. the conference will take place on Tuesday, 08.06. 2010 at NEUSTADT/DOSSE, where Dr. Jürgen Müller wants to show what was achieved by EU funding.

For 2011 a general assembly is proposed in France, at one of the three member studs, most likely in LE PIN. Details are to be defined until next year.



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## **Stud directors adopt a declaration to preserve traditional branding**

During the General Assembly of the European State Studs Association (ESSA) at the Slovakian National Stud Topolčianky the stud directors adopted the *Declaration on the Preservation of Traditional Brands*.

Many national and traditional studs and different stud books traditionally identify their horses with brands. In their declaration the stud directors recommend the possibility of identification by brands in addition to the implantation of microchips.

### ***Declaration on the Preservation of Traditional Brands***

*The directors of the European national and traditional studs, represented by the European State Studs Association (ESSA), wish to express their concern about the current development of horse identification.*

*They favour the method of horse identification by microchips in connection with identity papers, as introduced by EU regulation No. 504/2008 from 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2009 on. They clearly recognise the benefits of the new identification system.*

*Nevertheless, ESSA strongly suggests maintaining the procedure of branding.*

*In most of the European national and traditional studs, brands are part of the studs' culture. In contrast to implanted microchips the traditional brands are easily visible and serve as a trademark for the studs and breeds.*

*The preservation of the traditional brands is highly desirable not only as an important part of the studs' cultural heritage and as an element of identification, but also as a visible sign of biodiversity.*

*Scientific studies show that correct branding is not in contrast to animal welfare, which is also a major concern of ESSA.*

*Therefore, the stud directors recommend continuing the use of traditional brands in addition to the identification by microchips.*

*Topolčianky, 10th of June 2009*

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## **Suisse-Hungarian cooperation project to save the “Mur Island Horse“**

The Swiss national stud recently received a Hungarian delegation interested to cross a local breed with the “Franches-Montagnes“. Such a cross-breed could help saving one of the remaining breeds of light draught horses in Europe.

Last January the Swiss National Stud of AVENCHES received a Hungarian delegation intending to save the Mur-Island-Horse, an equine breed endangered to become extinct. The delegation inspected some breeding stallions and visited a Franches-Montagne breeding farm. The experts hope that a partnership between Hungary and Switzerland could help saving the Mur-Island-Horse.

It is planned to export semen of a Franches-Montagnes stallion, to be used for cross breeds with the Mur-Island-Horses. The Swiss National Stud will help Hungary with technical advice to support the breed. In the future the National Parc Orség will be responsible for Mur-Island-Horse breeding.

Part of a national genetic preservation programme, light draught horse, the Franches-Montagnes seems to resemble with the Mur-Island-Horses. Their visit to AVENCHES convinced the Hungarian representatives that this breed was very similar to their national breed .

Originally, the Mur-Island-Horses are a Croatian breed born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by crossing of local mares of Norique, Percheronne, Ardennaise and Brabant breeds. The Mur-Island Horse – “*medjimurski*” in Croatian – is one of the last representatives of light drought horses in Europe. It is used for work at the farm or in the forest. Its current population is in between 45 and 55 horses, with 3 breeding stallions. The Suisse -Hungarian breeding project is part of an international programme of the preservation of endangered species.

### **Contact for more information:**

Haras National Suisse, Pierre-André Poncet, [pierre-andre.poncet@haras.admin.ch](mailto:pierre-andre.poncet@haras.admin.ch), 026 676 61 12

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## **German – Hungarian Horse Festival at Marbach**

On 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of October MARBACH will celebrate a German-Hungarian horse festival. The stud's stallion parades will be enriched by performances of guests from Hungary. The MARBACH director Dr. Astrid von Velsen-Zerweck is happy about the choice of the visiting country: “Hungary has a centuries-old tradition in horse-breeding and riding.



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We are looking forward to welcome the mounted band of Bábolna with its noble Shagya-stallions, Bíró Gábor and Kürti Péter with their reckless group of riders from the Pusztas, as well as Hungarian dancers and musicians.”

As in every year the classic MARBACH show numbers will fascinate with riding and driving abilities on top level. The free running herd of Arab mares, the roman chariots and the performances of the stud's stallions under the saddle and in front of carriages provide unforgettable memories for horse lovers, families, breeders and riders.

Several people from public and politics announced to come to the shows, including the Hungarian Ambassador and the prime minister of Baden-Württemberg. The stallion parades at MARBACH attract around 30.000 spectators per year. In 2008 the four hour shows were enriched by performances of the neighbouring country Switzerland.

On 26<sup>th</sup> of September, the evening before the first stallion parade, a Hungarian evening is scheduled in the historic riding house of MARBACH. Dr. Walter Hecker (Shagya Breeding Association, Hungary) and Dr. Dr. hc. Imre Bodó (University of Debrecen) will give an overview on horse breeding and sports in Hungary. Gábor Bíró, Péter Kürti und Sándor Török will speak about the tradition of the mounted bowmen. The presentations are accompanied by Hungarian food, music and dance.

*For more information see [www.hengstparade-marbach.de](http://www.hengstparade-marbach.de)*

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## **Horse Heritage Foundation (HHF) to save the genetic and cultural treasure of all species of the equus caballus to transmit it to the future generations**

A new foundation on horse heritage has been established in Switzerland, initiated by Mrs Llavall-Ubach. A future collaboration with ESSA might be possible with regard to the preservation of endangered horse breeds and biodiversity.

The HHF is working in the service of the world's horse heritage. As the profound transformation of our planet continues apace, characterized as it is by increasing globalisation and digitisation, the HHF aims to preserve the biodiversity of horse breeds through direct support of scientific research on the issue as well as through related cultural and educational efforts.

The HHF serves as an engine driving scientific research and working to protect horse breed diversity. Some horse breeds have disappeared from the globe others are endangered and require protection. This task will be undertaken through the creation of a “*Conservatory*” unique in the world, possessing the scientific equipment to store a complete collection of frozen sperm cells and embryos representing all known horse breeds on the planet. This



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conservatory will be set up in collaboration with the most recognised experts in the domain of horses, according to the best practices and most advanced scientific knowledge in the scientific community.

The Foundation's mission is to make information on relatively unknown breeds available to the public at large, to disseminate all available data on the horses of the world and to contribute to the increased awareness of their existence through various events around the globe. Among these communication projects, the HHF plans to publish a collection of books on the various known breeds.

In addition, priority is placed on the creation of a "living gallery", open year round to the public, gathering all the European breeds of workhorses (approximately fifty breeds). The main goal is to preserve this living heritage, abandoned due to industrialisation and mechanisation, by returning it to its rightful place in our society. This involves conservation of the skills linked to the development of the productive value of these breeds, with an emphasis placed on training in the related Traditional Crafts and Trades like that of coachman, saddle maker, stevedore, etc, and setting up a promotional media and tourism programme.

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## Discussion about new use of historic stud of Strasburg

The delegate of the French HARAS NATIONAUX for the East region (Alsace and Lorraine), Dr Ch. Haessler, informed us that the old buildings of the former national stud of Strasburg, belonging to the city and left by the horses and people in 2007 shall be used for very different purposes in the future. Since the stud is very well situated at the heart of the old city of Strasburg the site is attractive for investors. Currently it is proposed to transform the beautiful stables-building, in pink sandstone from the Vosges-mountains, for some medical laboratories. Despite these discussions a group of investors would like to keep an "horsy" dedication to the site. ESSA members and friends are welcome to support their activities. For more information, see <http://hnalsace.blogspot.com>.

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## Call for contributions

The next ESSA courier is scheduled to appear by the end of October. Contributions from all ESSA members are welcome. The articles shall deal with topics related to ESSA activities, such as cooperation projects or news in the field of horse heritage. The contributions can be sent to the ESSA office ([a.lotz@essa-europeanstatestuds.com](mailto:a.lotz@essa-europeanstatestuds.com)) preferably in English. Contributions in German or in French can be translated by the office. Deadline for articles is 15<sup>th</sup> of October.