

**EUROMONTANA**  
**2, Place du Champ de Mars – B-1050 Bruxelles**

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H.E. Mr. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav  
Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of  
Mongolia (MoFALI)  
13381 Governmental building 9<sup>th</sup>, Peace avenue 16a,  
Bayanzurkh district, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia  
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Brussels, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

**Subject: Letter of support for IYRP proposal**

Dear H.E. Mr. Mendsaikhan Zagdjav

We hereby confirm that Euromontana, the European Association for Mountain areas supports the proposal to have an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026.

Euromontana highlights its commitment to living mountains in Europe where human activities must be maintained via a socio-economic context that ensures their sustainability. In this respect, Euromontana recalls its attachment to pastoralism, an activity with many challenges for mountains and mountain people. Indeed, pastoralism, a form of extensive livestock farming, allows the development of areas with low agronomic value, often difficult of access or non-mechanizable, and thus the maintain of economic activity in these areas and the valorisation of the quality of agri-food products. Euromontana reminds of its attachment to pastoralism in order to maintain the production of ecosystem services in the mountains.

Beyond the economic stakes, a well-managed pastoral activity, with an adequate availability of pastures, generates multiple benefits for the territory and beyond in the valleys. These benefits are environmental (positive role of extensive livestock farming in maintaining biodiversity in our mountains), landscape-related (maintenance of open spaces, diversity and landscape quality for tourism), cultural (pastoral spaces, material and immaterial heritage...) and allow the prevention of many natural risks (forest fires, avalanches, landslides, floods).

However, Euromontana notes that mountain pastoralism is today strongly threatened, in particular (but not only) by climate change, the decline in the attractiveness of pastoral occupations, demanding and difficult jobs or the increased presence of large carnivores in Europe.

Euromontana notes an increasingly worrying situation for pastoralism in many European countries where the populations of large carnivores (wolves, bears, lynxes, wolverines) are increasing. Apart from the extra costs involved by the protection measures to implement, this viability is also questioned in terms of the farming model and life model for shepherds. The maintenance of pastoralism should go along with a reinforcement of the attractiveness of pastoral jobs through the improvement of living and working conditions for shepherds and an adequate training.

For all these reasons, Euromontana considers it would be very important to have an International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists at the UN level.

To support this IYRP, Euromontana is ready to :

- share good practices, including those on maintaining adequate management of permanent grasslands collected during the LIFE OREKA MENDIAN EU project.
- Organise events, conferences and webinars at EU level to raise awareness about the importance of pastoralism in the EU and beyond

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- Raise concerns and opportunities linked to pastoralism during the Civil Dialogue Groups meetings as these meetings are privileged areas to discuss with the European Commission about the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy
- Inform Members of the European Parliament who are members of the Intergroup RUMRA (Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas) and Smart Villages about the importance of maintaining a good pastoral activity in Europe.
- Inform the 65 members (research and training institutes, regional and local authorities, farming organisations, chambers of commerce, parks...) of Euromontana, coming from all over Europe, about the importance of pastoralism.

We therefore encourage the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2021 to endorse this proposal of having 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

Yours faithfully,



Juan-Andres Gutierrez Lazpita  
President of Euromontana