



**Association des bisons d'Europe de la forêt de Suchy
ABEFS, Suchy, Switzerland**

**Announcement of the death of our female Pola IV on the morning of 29
November 2024**

Suchy, the 30th november 2024

The ABEFS (Association des bisons d'Europe de la forêt de Suchy) regrets to announce that our female Pola IV, nicknamed the Teigne because of her strong character, died on the morning of 29 November 2024. She was born in 2017 at the Pszczyna breeding centre in Poland and arrived at Suchy at the end of 2019.

Since the end of October, several animals at the Suchy Breeding Centre, which is part of the EBCC-IUCN (European bison conservation centres) network, have contracted bluetongue disease (BT) caused by a virus carried by a very small fly in the Ceratopogonidae family. According to information available on the Swiss Federal Veterinary Office website, the disease is now widespread on the Swiss Plateau, affecting many cattle farms.

At Suchy, it was first our male Posel who showed signs of the disease on 20th October, and he was treated accordingly with anti-inflammatories to reduce his pain and enable him to regain his mobility. Then it was our female Polamana's turn, and finally her sister Pola IV. While the first two mentioned are recovering slowly from the disease, this has not been the case for Pola IV. In cattle, the symptoms are abundant salivation, followed by a blockage of the jaw muscles and then the legs, resulting in paralysis that prevents them from drinking, feeding and moving around, with rapid weight loss. As the disease progressed, our Pola IV also developed complications, in particular inflammation of the feet and detachment of the hoof horn, accompanied by significant renal and hepatic insufficiency, undoubtedly linked to the difficulty she had in keeping hydrated.

Internationally, as part of the European bison conservation programme, several cases of death have been reported since this autumn in breeding centres similar to the one in the Suchy forest, particularly in Romania in the Carpathian Mountains, where three bison have already died.

This unfortunate event is a reminder of the fragility of these European bison, which are all issued from the 12 individuals reunited in 1922 and used to revive the species. So despite the fact that there are now more than 10'000 individuals distributed mainly in Eastern Europe and in several genetic conservation "cells" in Western Europe similar to the one in Suchy, the species continues to suffer from their genetic impoverishment and the weaknesses associated with it.

In this context, financial contributions of our members and sponsors of the ABEFS remain essential and we are grateful to you for them for the future of this species.

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