



Sabine Bock | Director Germany

**Why does WECF support women?**

*“We need two eyes to see straight,” says an old Chinese proverb.*

*Only if we take women and men’s perspectives equally into account, can we understand problems from all angles and develop truly sustainable solutions. So far the views of women are too often neglected in politics, economics and society. WECF works towards closing this gap, by bringing in different perspectives. Together as women and men, we work for a healthy environment for all, locally and globally.”*



Marie Kranendonk | Founder WECF

**Why is it important to protect children?**

*“Our children are the most vulnerable members of society.*

*All of us share a responsibility to protect them from harmful pollution, which causes physical and mental damage. Children have the right to grow up in a healthy environment, – without being exposed to hazardous chemicals in their food, toys and environment – so their brains and bodies can be developed to their fullest potential.”*



Sonja Haider | Chemicals Coordinator

**Why does WECF work in Europe?**

*“For us, “Europe” is the whole European region from Ireland to Tajikistan.*

*In Western Europe we focus on advocacy and policy work. In the EECCA region<sup>1</sup> we implement projects at the local level. Our neighbours – just a few hundred kilometres away – suffer from poor sanitation, energy poverty and environmental pollution. As one of the few Western NGOs working there, we support our partners and encourage the exchange of capacities and knowledge. In today’s globalised world, we cannot afford to ignore anyone.”*

Gero Fedtke | Programme Coordinator

**Why does WECF work at the local level?**

*“Together with our partners we work on improving the environmental and health conditions of people where it is most needed.*

*We are providing individual solutions to local problems, often in very small villages. These solutions can only be sustainable if they are adapted to local culture. Therefore, it is logical for me to involve local people right from the start. By working for gender equality and equity, we encourage both women’s and men’s participation.”*



Sascha Gabizon | Executive Director WECF

**Why does WECF work at the international level?**

*“Our main strength is that we don’t just talk about issues, we solve them!*

*We work on practical projects at the local level, and take our results and experiences to the international policy level. We encourage our partners to raise their concerns at international policy level even though they may not speak English or have no public speaking experience. Policy makers rarely get the chance to hear from real people affected by real issues, giving a different perspective from official consultants and reports. Through our local projects, we improve the direct living conditions of tens of thousands of people. Through our international advocacy work we reach out to millions.”*



**moving people for a world in balance**



**Women in Europe for a Common Future**

Women in Europe for a Common Future - WECF - was created in 1994 following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to give women a stronger voice in sustainable development and environmental policy, with the aim of balancing environmental, health and economic perspectives. WECF strives for a Healthy Environment for all.

Today, WECF is a network of 100 women’s and environmental organisations in 40 countries. Our network spans Western Europe and the EECCA<sup>1</sup> region. WECF has three offices: in the Netherlands, Germany and France.

Our project work brings safe ecological solutions to local problems in the areas of chemicals, sanitation, energy and food production. Our policy work at national, European, UN and international level brings women’s perspectives to policymakers.

**WECF works on four key issues**

- Safe Chemicals for All
- Safe Energy for All
- Safe Food production and rural development for All
- Safe Water and Sanitation for All

**Our vision is that by 2020**

- All consumer products are free of hazardous chemicals
- All have access to safe, affordable and renewable energy
- All have access to safe, regional and diverse food
- All have access to safe and affordable water and sanitation

**To reach these goals WECF promotes:**

- Poverty reduction
- Public Participation and Environmental Rights
- Gender equality

WECF has NGO status with United Nations Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC)  
WECF is an official partner of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
WECF is a member of the European Environment & Health Committee (EEHC)

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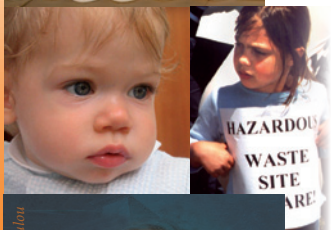


### Facts

two farm animal breeds become extinct worldwide every week.

In the 1900s, in Germany alone, 1,500 apple sorts existed; today only three varieties cover the European apple market.

Agro-biodiversity and world food security are threatened.



### Facts

Levels of hazardous chemicals are increasing in new born babies' bodies.

97,000 chemicals sold in the EU market are used without sufficient tests on health risks.

Consumers are denied full information about chemicals which allow them to make an informed choice.



“ I want to make everyone aware of how their bread, fruits and other food is produced:

by using pesticides and other chemicals or in a sustainable manner? I think that safe and organic agriculture is probably the most important factor influencing our health and lives. It is the natural heritage of mankind!

Agro-biodiversity is part of our culture, nature and tradition and must be protected at the regional level. If we lose it, what legacy will I be able to leave my own four children? With our WECF project “Green Bridges” between Ukraine, Germany and Poland

we exchange knowledge to save agro-biodiversity. To raise awareness we take these issues to the international political level. Organic farming is a local enterprise, which bears fruits globally. When I started this work 7 years ago, only 20 farmers were interested in organic agriculture. Nowadays, the phone never stops ringing.”

**Ela Priwieziencew | Poland**  
WECF Member  
Spoleczny Instytut Ekologiczny

# Healthy Environment for All



“ To achieve a world with safe chemicals we have to work locally to have a global effect.

Here in Greece, as maybe elsewhere, people unfortunately believe that chemicals can protect them from ‘germs’ and keep them healthy: bleach for example is a bestseller in Greece! But we know that exposure to toxic chemicals can cause cancer, infertility and damage to children’s brain development. We show people that they have the power as consumers to refuse to buy hazardous chemicals, and in turn to convince producers to change their policies. One of our

Youth Conference’s themes was “Future without Toxics” in cooperation with WECF. We also lobby for more regulation to make sure products are toxic-free. Thanks to the international work of WECF we have been able to exchange knowledge and cooperate with other countries.”

**Carla Baer Manolopoulou | Greece**  
WECF member - Clean up Greece

“ My organisation works for sustainable rural development in Armenia. Many people in our

rural areas suffer from energy poverty. In daily life this often means they can only afford to light or heat one room. To survive, people burn whatever they can: plastic, kerosene etc. without considering health risks. In our project village Hayanist, schoolchildren suffer from coughs and other respiratory diseases like asthma because of the smoky stoves in the classrooms. For me, this is unacceptable! We started to carry out a solar energy project to improve

the situation. I believe everyone, including the poor, has the right to sustainable energy. WECF funding has also enabled us to produce a film on indoor pollution and energy poverty in Armenia to become more visible. The WHO recently invited us to show it at an international conference.”

**Elena Manvelyan | Armenia**  
WECF Member - Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment

“ I was affected personally by the issue of safe water and sanitation when my community

was flooded with thousands of litres of sewage water from the city’s sewage system. As a result of the contamination people became ill and some even died. Here in Ukraine the water and sanitation situation is below human dignity. For example, people in rural areas mostly have to use outdoor pit latrines. Often they are built next to the drinking water wells, which causes water-borne diseases. We want to demonstrate that good health is linked to safe sanitation and clean water.

I am happy that with the support from WECF we could build EcoSan toilets in three schools. Now that they have indoor school toilets the frequency of girls’ bladder infections has been reduced. The ecological toilets have become so well-known in Ukraine and other countries that many people want to copy them, including the authorities.”

**Svetlana Slesarenok | Ukraine**  
WECF Member  
Black Sea Women’s Club (BSWC)



### Facts

The poor are most vulnerable to negative effects from climate change.

At least 21,000 people still die of indoor air-pollution in the EECCA region<sup>1</sup> because of the detrimental energy situation.

Polls show women are more often concerned about the sustainability of energy. They oppose nuclear energy and are eager to switch to renewables.

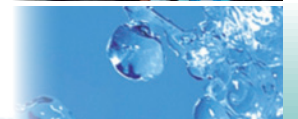


### Facts

120 million people in the EECCA region<sup>1</sup> and at least 20 million in the EU are without access to safe sanitation.

14,000 children in the EECCA region<sup>1</sup> die yearly from waterborne diseases.

Better (waste) water management would prevent 30 million cases of water related diseases/year.



<sup>1</sup> EECCA - Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia