



EAFE President Speech

Reykjavik, 9th July 2007

Thank you Ragnar for your kind words and hospitality. On behalf of the EAFE bureau and of all our members, I would like to thank Olafur Klemensson and all the conference organizers. Also thanks to the scientific committee, Erik Lindebo, Massimo Spagnolo and Ragnar Arnasson. I am very happy to be here with you and I am sure that this will be a very successful conference.

On behalf of the Association let me also welcome the keynote speakers, professor Peter Pearse, Niels Wichmann, professor Jim Anderson and professor Ragnar Arnason. And thanks for coming to the European Commission: Emilio Mastracchio, head of the Directorate E, Resources and Relations with Stakeholders and Alberto Spagnolli, head of the Economic Analysis Unit of the DG Fish.

This is the first time that an EAFE Conference takes place in such a Northern country whose linking with the Association has always been strong and fruitful and where fishery economy has a long and prestigious tradition. Some of the most relevant papers discussed at the EAFE Conferences have been presented by Icelandic fishery economists.

And this is also the place where fishery managers in Europe firstly experimented the application of sound management measures based on fishing rights. All over the world fishery economists study the Icelandic system of ITQ, as an example of equity and efficiency in fisheries management.

And one of the most recent and relevant Communication presented by the European Commission concerns rights-based management tools in fisheries. As economists, we welcomed with high interest this communication as it proposes a EU wide approach based on economic tools for fishery management.

It is important that the Commission's communication recognizes the different fishing rights, in particular individual fishing rights or quotas and territorial use rights (TURFs) that consider economic, social and local priorities, more than technical, biological considerations.

There is another Commission's Communication that describes the future scenarios of the European fishery: the Communication on Implementing sustainability in EU fisheries

through maximum sustainable yield, which is consistent with the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg. Fisheries conservation is of course a pre-condition for the sustainability of marine ecosystems and economics has the burden to estimate its impact and minimize the social weight.

Both these issues will be wider discussed during this conference and several papers will propose analysis to enrich the international debate and will also propose scientific tools and models to be used by scientists and managers.

Of vital importance for a sound economic advice and reliable modeling is the availability of robust and complete economic data. The Data Collection Regulation has highly increased the collection of economic data by Member States. And the institutionalization of the data collection has been undoubtedly a step forward. But the level of accessibility and analysis is not yet satisfactory. Until 2005, the 'community of fisheries economists' - through concerted actions funded by the EU - managed to produce annual economic reports. Also, an efficient database was set up and was accessible to the research community. The situation has changed after the introduction of the Data Collection Regulation (DCR). Data is not readily accessible and the Annual Report is no longer available. EAFE would like to encourage the European Commission to increase the level of accessibility of aggregated economic data and to support the publication of the Annual Economic Report. We wish that the role of the Joint Research Center in this complex structure could be clarified and we, if required, would like to offer to the European Commission our support and ideas.

I have been honored to be the President of this association for the last 2 years. I think that I and the rest of the bureau managed to reach at least some of the goals that we fixed 2 years ago. We have now a new web site, hosted by the University of Brest and which will be presented later during the Annual General Meeting. We also have a new Treasury, hosted by LEI. The involvement of our corporate members has increased and the high level of participation at this Conference testifies the increasing interest in the Association and in general in fishery economy.

But some other relevant issues are still there. In particular, what should be the role of EAFE? We recognize the importance to have an European association to promote exchange of research results, cooperation and discussion on European fisheries among European economists. But is this enough? There is an increasing demand of economic advice and expertise in the field of fishery economy. Could be possible to play a wider role in terms of advice for managers (Member States, European Commission, Regional Advisory Councils) and other stakeholders? This is still an unsolved question.

We have time to discuss all these issues during the Annual General Meeting and during the whole Conference as well.

I wish all of you an interesting conference. Enjoy your stay in this cold, but friendly country.

Evelina Sabatella
President EAFE, 9^h July 2007