

High Level Conference "The Future of the CFP"

"Let us engage in preserving a sustainable future for EU fisheries"



**Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin
Noordwijk, The Netherlands
9 – 11 March 2011**

1. Introduction

The aim of the High Level Conference was to create a platform where important questions about the future course and destiny of the CFP could be discussed amongst representatives from the Member States and the European Commission with input from respected experts from the policy field and/or with an academic background.

The Conference took place under the 'Chatham House Rule' to create an open atmosphere and to have discussions in an informal way.

The conference was planned at a strategic moment, a few months before the Commission will present its reform proposals. In 2009 the Commission launched the debate with the Green Paper.

The first of March 2011 an import high level meeting on banning discards was organised by EU-commissioner Mrs. Damanaki. The Conference in Noordwijk enabled the participants to reflect once more on three topics that are fundamental to the fisheries policy.

In his opening speech, the Chair of the conference, Mr. Carlo Trojan, stressed the importance of these informal discussions: *"I do hope that today and tomorrow will contribute to clarify issues, to narrow differences and to define common policy options. Reforming the CFP is an enormous challenge if we want to preserve the social and economic viability of the EU fisheries while achieving long term ecological sustainability. Policy makers will need to let long term interests prevail over short term political gain. We know from experience that this is a tall order. Let us learn from our failings in the past and engage in close cooperation between policymakers and stakeholders in preserving a sustainable future for EU fisheries"*.

The future of the CFP was approached from multiple perspectives with the input from keynote-speakers, discussions in several parallel workshops and with a paneldiscussion to conclude.

This report focuses on the main points of discussion between the participants in the parallel workshops and forum discussion.

Conclusions were not drawn, nor statements formulated.

2. Background of themes discussed

In 3 different workshops the following items were discussed:

1. The role of the market in the new CFP
2. Financing the new CFP and
3. The way forward with regionalisation

The role of the market in the new CFP and what it can contribute in terms of both sustainability and profitability

The profitability of the European fishing industry is under pressure. This is mainly caused by low fish prices, high fuel costs, cheap imports and a only moderately organized, supply driven sales chain. There is a limited organization in the chain, which is not market demand driven but supply driven through the available catch quota. In addition, the other links in the chain add little value to the product.

The challenge for future is to let the fishery profit from the favourable market conditions: a large and growing demand for seafood combined with a limited supply. These conditions, in addition to the awareness of the fishermen that they should meet the consumer's preferences for sustainable products and fishing methods, do give a good perspective for the future.

An important question for the coming discussion on the CFP is how these conditions should be taken into account and how the CFP could contribute to meet these conditions. But even more important is how the economic incentives of the market could be used. In general economic incentives from the market work very well to incentivate companies. After all, if companies do not meet the requirements of their customers, they lose market share.

Certification of fisheries is an example of how a market instrument can stimulate sustainability of the fisheries. Potentially even more effective than specific government rules or regulations aimed at obtaining the same results. The consumer's wish to have fish caught in a sustainable way can be addressed through certification systems. Once the retail demands certified fish, the fishing industry will have to react. This also requires a change in their approach regarding to sales: from supply – to demand led.

There is a general consensus that in order for the market to function properly, the role of the producer organisations (PO's) should be strengthened. Currently producer organisations hardly have any influence on supply and demand of fish. This situation would improve if PO's could more accurately anticipate on actual trends in the market. An important question which remains is what kind of incentives could stimulate the PO's to restructure towards strong organisations that can play a more active role in the market?

Overall it should be the fishing industry which should take the lead, with the government's role reduced to more modest levels of support. Also the objective of government's role should be examined carefully. Should government support be geared to the transition of the fishing industry towards greater sustainability and market orientation? If this is the case should subsidies (EFF, a future fund) be exclusively reserved for measures aimed at these objectives?

The issues/questions that need further elaboration and discussion during the workshops are:

- Should the new CFP give a more prominent role to market mechanisms?
- How could market mechanisms be deployed to contribute to the CFP objectives of sustainability and profitability?
- Which instruments are the most appropriate to strengthen and promote the role of the market in the new CFP?

- What should be the role and responsibilities of the public authorities in a more market oriented CFP?

Workshop 2 - Future financial instruments: how should financial instruments be put in place in support of the new CFP?

The European fisheries fund (EFF) provides funding to the fishing industry and coastal communities to help them adapt to changing conditions in the fisheries sector. It's main objective is to support developments to realize a economically sound and ecologically sustainable fisheries sector.

Commission and member states agreed to the following five priority areas (axes) for EFF funding:

- adjustment of the fleet (e.g. to support scrapping of fishing vessels)
- aquaculture, processing and marketing, and inland fishing (e.g. to support the shift to more environmentally friendly production methods)
- measures of common interest (e.g. to improve innovation, collective actions, certification, product traceability or labeling)
- sustainable development of fisheries areas (e.g. to support diversification of the local economy)
- technical assistance to finance the administration of the fund.

In the past decades both the European Commission and European governments have supported the fishing industry with considerable amounts of financial support. With the EFF this support is concentrated largely on decommissioning schemes for vessels and investment schemes but also on the encouragement of innovation and collective actions.

It's assumed that most member states agree on the continuation of public subsidies and on the preservation of a future EFF. On the other hand there is a broad recognition that the current aid level cannot be sustained. This means that there is a need to think about the objectives and related measures that should have priority in a future EFF. It goes without saying that the new EFF should fit to the goals of the new CFP.

To establish the new priorities also the EU's growth strategy Europe2020 should be taken into account. Europe2020 defines three key drivers for growth, to be implemented through concrete actions:

- smart growth: fostering knowledge, innovation and education
- sustainable growth: making our production more resource efficient while boosting our competitiveness
- inclusive growth: raising participation in the labour market, the acquisition of skills and the fight against poverty.

During the forth Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014 – 2020, which includes the post 2013 EFF allocations, the Europe2020 strategy will be used as the benchmark. The ongoing discussions within the WTO will of course also influence the discussions on the financial support and the subsidies available for fisheries within the EU.

With more limited funds, the new CFP should leave more up to the market and only provide targeted support, hereby encouraging the fisherman's entrepreneurial activities. Support must

be geared to the transition of the fishing industry towards greater sustainability. It seems inevitable to start the discussion stating that future subsidies should exclusively be linked to measures of common interest like innovation and collective actions. All of which are aimed at further improving sustainability of the fisheries. Also given the need to balance fishing capacity and fishing possibility on the one hand and the high potential of aquaculture on the other hand, the question arises whether future public funding should perhaps be more focused on aquaculture and aquaculture products?

Additionally it is important to look at possible ways to reduce the administrative burden of the EFF and also to take into account the uniformity with other structural funds. At present other EU funds also have activities in fisheries. Duplication of procedures must be avoided and more synergies between the actions financed by the funds should be created. Improvement can be made through better communication, co-ordination, better alignment between the EFF and other funds, for example the link between axis 4 and LEADER. With increasing competition between the funds it is more necessary than ever to highlight the success stories to demonstrate the effectiveness of the EFF.

Some questions then arise which should be discussed during the workshops:

- The main question: Is there a future role to play for a new EFF?
If the answer is yes:
- What should be the priority objectives and areas of a new EFF: status quo or change?
- How can better synergy and uniformity between the different European structural funds be achieved?
- Which organisational improvements can be made to address the general consensus among Member States that the administrative burden of the EFF is too high?

Workshop 3 - Improving the decision making process; the way forward with regionalisation

The Common fisheries policy is and should remain a common European policy. It is the only way in which the fish stocks, which do not abide by borders, can be managed in the Community waters. On the other hand there is a common understanding that the policy should be closer to the practice, closer to the regions. Stakeholders should be involved to a greater extent than before. Regionalisation could be a good way forward. Regionalisation means that the decision making process has to change, becoming more transparent and placing responsibilities where they belong.

The current decision-making framework of the CFP does not distinguish principles from implementation: all decisions are taken by the Council. Where other EU-policies have a clear hierarchy between fundamental principles and technical implementation, the present CFP can be described as micro-management at the highest political level.

As a consequence the CFP is regulated through extremely detailed Council regulations that leave very little flexibility in implementing them and in adaptation to the local situation. This is without any doubt the main reason why the CFP is criticised by stakeholders. There is broad agreement among all stakeholders that a change is needed and that the discussions at the political level should focus on the principles and long term objectives. The need for change in this regard is felt even more urgently because of the Lisbon Treaty: all fishery decisions, apart from establishing yearly fishing opportunities, will fall under the co-decision procedure, hence will be decided by the Council and the Parliament together.

The treaty stipulates that the policy must be based on exclusive Community competence. This would not prevent implementation decisions being delegated to Member States, provided they are bound by decisions on principles at Community level. Putting policy in its right place could lead to a simpler and cheaper management system. This could be achieved by letting Council and Parliament focus on principles and delegating implementation decisions to Member States, the Commission and/or self-management by the industry.

The European fisheries has a highly regional structure in which every region has its own problems and options which require a suitable regional approach to the fisheries policy. The question is whether it would be more effective to organise the decision making of the CFP at different levels. Ideally this would be a system where at Community level the general principles, prerequisites, frameworks and the long-term objectives would be established. This would mainly be multi-annual objectives per area, whereby a number of principles would apply to all regions. The regions, or the member states, would then make plans for the realisation of the objectives for the concrete measures at regional level. These would mainly be general annual recurring decisions on, for example, the quantity of fish which may be fished.

This kind of regionalisation could make implementation more sensitive to specific local conditions and give the industry more responsibility in shaping its own destiny. It would enable governments and the industry to adapt the implementation of the policy to their needs and to find the best solutions both technically and economically. A possible additional benefit of a regional approach could be a more easy integration of the fisheries policy with the other policy areas in the region.

Although there seems to be a broad agreement that some form of regionalisation constitutes a key element in improving the decision making process, the ideas on how this concept should be elaborated, and who should be involved, vary widely. In the comments on the Green Paper stakeholders use a mix of terminology. Some refer to regionalization at the sea-basin level, other to regions within the member states. Some insist on subsidiarity where member states create regional committees for management and a high level of self regulation. Others propose simple co-operation between member states on issues of implementation and control and some see room for delegated decision powers on e.g. access, resource or fleet management. In order to make further progress questions that would need to be addressed are:

- Can regionalisation make a substantial contribution to improving the decision making process?
- Which aspects of the future CFP could/should be left to the regional level? Should this regional level also have specific decision making powers? If so, what kind of decisions would be appropriate to be decided on a regional level?
- How do we ensure a level playing field in a more regionalised CFP?
- How should the involvement of stakeholders in a more regionalised CFP be organised? What should be the role of the Regional Advisory Councils?
- Does a regional approach provide better opportunities to take into account developments in other policy area's, like the Marine Strategy Directive and N2000?

3. Main points of discussion

Role of the market in the new CFP

During the three workshop rounds four main topics came up: empowering the producer organizations, providing consumers with adequate information, improving the market position of European aquaculture and how to ensure a level playing field for European producers in a global market. There was a broad consensus that these are the main issues that need to be addressed in the near future.

Empowering producer organizations

Due to a fragmented fishery sector and a strong concentration in the consumer end of the chain (retail), fishermen are mainly price takers. As a consequence they generate little to no added value and lack the possibility to roll-over cost increases. The participants agreed that the Producer Organisations (PO's) are the obvious institutions to improve the balance in market power between fishermen and retailers.

Defragmentation is needed throughout the entire value chain. At the base of the chain by a stronger involvement of PO's in the (co)management of natural resources, further in the chain PO's must strengthen their role by developing capacity and capability in management and marketing. According to the participants the PO's need to develop market intelligence and work on innovation. It was pointed out that in the food and bio-based economy opportunities exist for the upgrading of low value products, for example products that will come on shore in case of a discard-ban. It was emphasized that PO's should actively anticipate the specific demands of the market.

The participants saw a role for the CFP to support the empowerment of Producers Organizations. The exchange of experience and best practices can play an important role in this regard.

Consumer information

The participants noted the immense shift in the market for fishery products that has taken place in the last decade. The fishery industry has become part of the global food market, where a wide variety of different protein products are available to consumers. The market for fishery products is closely intertwined with the general food products market.

Furthermore, the sector has to a large extent lost its connection with consumers. Only a fraction of the consumers regularly buy fresh fish, most consumers eat processed fish products only.

It was widely noted that restoration of the connection between the fisheries sector and consumers is of vital importance. As a start it was noted that consumers need to be better informed about fishery products, as the participants felt that the available information is often biased and incomplete.

The comment was frequently made that providing reliable information to consumers is a public responsibility and cannot be delegated to the industry, NGO's or the retail sector. Fair and smart product labeling, including the traceability of the origin of products is a crucial topic that needs addressing. A framework for labeling standards at EU-level was considered to be needed to ensure accurate and fairly summarized consumer information for both main stream and premium fishery products.

Aquaculture

The participants briefly discussed the place of aquaculture in the market for fishery products. Although the fisheries sector and the aquaculture sector have a completely different cost structure, and are characterized by different dynamics of development, on the market caught and farmed fish compete with each other.

Despite the difference between the caught fish and the aquaculture sectors the Common Market Organization is currently oriented towards caught fish.

It is to be expected that the aquaculture sector both in Europe and abroad will grow rapidly. In time the participants expect it to acquire a substantial part of the market, possibly up to 50%. A further consideration is that both European wild caught and farmed fish will face strong competition from imports.

Improving the market position of the European aquaculture sector and stimulating the consumption of fish farmed in Europe was seen as a challenge by the participants. There was support for improving the competitiveness of the aquaculture sector by establishing strong Aquaculture Producers Organizations. Some participants also stressed the need for rules that clearly differentiate Fresh products from Fresh Frozen products. Further advice was given by the participants to simplify the administrative burden to small and medium aquaculture enterprises, support research, technological development and innovation and improve veterinary control.

A level playing field

Only when a level playing field is achieved, the fisheries sector can develop in a profitable and sustainable way. In this regard the need for equivalent standards for imported products was stressed. Many participants expressed the need for better consumer information with regard to imported products.

There was broad agreement that those standards need to cover more than sanitary issues and food safety in order to guarantee a baseline for fair socio-economic and ecological production conditions. Another issue that needs to be addressed is Illegal, Irregular and Unreported Fishery, that according to the participants still is a major cause for market disturbance. There was some support for tariff lines in cases where the equivalent standards could not otherwise be achieved. However, generally the participants agreed that the ultimate goal still is and remains an open global market, that gives proper development incentives.

Financial instruments

During the discussions in the workshops on the future financial instruments for fisheries it became clear that, despite the experienced problems with the current fund, all participants felt that a EFF is still necessary. However, a future fund should be aimed at policy change and become an integral part of the new, profoundly changed CFP. Participants stated that no CFP-reform can be achieved, without the availability of EFF-money. However maintaining the status quo of the current fund is not an option since it was unable to solve part of the current problems in the fisheries sector. In addition there was a general agreement that the new EFF should be in conformity with the other relevant EU-policies, such as the EU2020-strategy and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

A majority of the participants advocated that greening and innovation should become a central focus point of the new EFF. Some other participants still pleaded however, despite arguments that this leads to a distortion of the market, for scrapping- and investment schemes. In general there was agreement that priority should be given to types of support geared to the transition of the fishing industry towards greater sustainability and profitability. A need was also felt for more funding for governance, science, controls and thereby saving money in other areas, such as market intervention.

Participants also discussed whether aquaculture should be an integrated part of the CFP and the future EFF and whether or not to earmark a separate budget line for such measures. This with the aim to increase the share in the new financial framework for aquaculture, particularly in the interest of the land locked countries. Also the idea was raised that future allocation keys should be based on a mix of structural and fisheries criteria. For the coming period an intense debate on how to allocate future funds, among member states and between the measures, is still to follow.

The objective of the various funds was also discussed to ensure both complementarily and synergy. It was felt to be inevitable for the future period to define precisely "what fund does what". For example the EFF versus EFRD concerning the functioning of the "bottom up"-principle, the EFF versus EAGF concerning "aquaculture" and the EFF versus ESF in reference to "training". Or, as another example, should the future EFF's axis 4 concentrate only on fisheries and fisheries measures or also include diversification into other sectors. With reference to axis 4 some participants also mentioned that it was difficult and expensive to implement.

The advocated need for more policy coherence and uniformity between all funds also included the different fisheries funds such as the EFF, the control fund and the data collection fund. The lack of synergy and alignment between funds was currently felt to increase the administrative burden on the member states. As each fund has its own implementation rules, requirements, management systems, controls and audits, all of which increase the cost of proportionality of each individual fund. At the same time other participants cautioned that uniformity might lead to less flexibility and more policy constraints and thereby increase the administrative cost instead of decreasing it.

It was also pointed out that most member states find the administrative costs, to allocate EFF funds, too high. In order to decrease these cost result based management and subsidiarity was advocated. If the future EFF were to be managed more on results instead of processes, more flexibility could therefore also be given to the budgeting rules (eg. division over the years, more flexibility between the axis, the N+2 rules and national/private co financing).

Last but not least a greater need for exchange of knowledge and experiences was advocated. On the one hand, more partnerships and networking between stakeholders/fishermen and scientists ("collective actions") should be enhanced. On the other hand, knowledge between member states of each other's best practices should be improved. The application of a future EFF for transnational measures, such as a sea basin approach, or international collective actions, could be a step in the right direction.

Regionalisation

Once again the issue of regionalisation or decentralisation as now is the common denominator, proved to be a complex issue and was extensively discussed. The concept of decentralisation evolved quite a bit during High Level, and definitely further progress has been made here. But still many questions remain. While the very concept of decentralization is not contested by delegations it appeared from the discussions that there are still numerous question marks on the legal and practical implications. For many participants the fact that decentralisation should in any case not add more work is a key issue.

Some important issues like pelagic stocks, widely distributed stocks and third countries were not discussed during the workshops. It is however recognised that they require special attention in this respect.

What is envisaged with decentralisation? The reasons for decentralisation are manifold. By this the participants want to achieve better decision making. Decision making with a long term focus; a legitimate process and product; an effective use of resources; adaptivity/flexibility and better incentives/industry responsibility. Decentralisation would also cope with the present heavy centralised decision making and with co decision. Furthermore decentralisation would result in a decision making process which is less hampered by lack of political will. It would also offer good opportunities to align the CFP with the scale of environmental policy (MSFD, N2000). Nevertheless, decentralisation would be on a voluntary basis, with the EU level decision being the fallback.

Most discussed was a decentralised model with "essential" elements decided by Council/EP in line with the Treaty and "non-essential" elements for decentralised implementation by informal regional groups. An extra layer of bureaucracy should be avoided.

The main issues discussed during the workshops were centred around the following 4 topics:

- What elements of the CFP can be decentralised? In principle this would be limited to only the conservation pillar of the CFP. Furthermore, in order to be able to decide what could be decentralised within this conservation pillar, it is necessary to first define what essential legislation is (and therefore could not be decentralised).
- What processes can be set up for the "non-essential" implementation matters (i.e. decentralisation)?

- What would be the role of the RACs ? How can we ensure genuine stakeholder involvement?
- How to provide a framework for industry self-regulation and incentives?

When discussing solutions participants agreed that the following principles should apply. Point of departure should be a good decision making setup. In second stage this set up should be evaluated in light of the possibilities the Treaty offers, as far as possible within the Treaty options. Furthermore a status quo is not an option. The question is not if we will regionalise or decentralise the CFP, but how we will do it.

There is little legal guidance on the issue of *definition of "essential" legislation*. It is defined by political will and the Council/EP has a wide frame to decide on. Questions put on the table related to whether or not Council/EP should decide on just the principles, similar to National Standards as applied in the US? And what about management plans, should they decide on these too? Or should the co-legislators just decide on the principles for the management plans like timelines, criteria for targets, ecosystem targets? And should co-legislators decide on technical measures? Or should co-legislators only decide on principles for example by catch etc.

Within this discussion there was special attention for the (annual) setting of the TACs. In the Treaty this is now a Council competence, but couldn't the Council delegate this if it wants to? According to some of the participant the annual TAC level would be an outcome of management plans.

Essential matters would follow the so called downstream model, which is decision making as defined by the Treaty and with co-decision. Here it would be the Commission that proposes. Also here there is room for a so called upstream process: member states in consultation with RACs – could propose or inspire the Commission. However here there is no legal certainty of the outcome (because of right of initiative Commission and decision making by Council/Parliament). So it is up to the parties how they want to use this upstream model when essential matters are concerned, whether or not they want to put any effort in it.

Non essential (implementation) matters could of course be delegated to the Commission. But possible there is little political support for that. Also it would be possible to decentralise implementation to member states together with an obligation to cooperate regionally. It would be up to the member states to establish some form of regional cooperation. The RACs would continue their consultative role but would be strengthened as they would have a regional counterpart. Here some process would be needed whereby the Commission could check candidate decisions against the standards or audits outcomes. If no agreement amongst member states would be achieved than we would fallback to decision on EU level.

What could a member state cooperation mechanism for implementation issues look like? How could this work? There should be a kind of obligation for cooperation as condition for decentralisation of non essential issues. Should this be a formal body? Some participants are of the opinion that there is no legal basis for this or say no because it would create an extra layer in decision making. Other participants say yes because they are of the opinion that it is necessary to support an infrastructure. Building on informal groups such as Baltfish and the Scheveningen group emerged as possible informal regional groupings. Further questions that should be addressed are who would be the parties then? Should it be the fishing nations or all member states? Should the Commission participate? And how will the stakeholders be involved in this? Through consultation of the RAC? And how do we ensure common implementation standards across Europe (level playing field/implementation drift)?

The participants were of the opinion that next to decision making on Central/Brussels or Regional level also co-management with industry (result based management) is a crucial element of decentralisation which should be further elaborated. Incentives should be reversed: there should be a self interest in deciding on detailed measures, achieving outcomes and compliance. Industry should be engaged in self-regulation, for example PO's managing quotas or fully documented catch quota systems. This self management should be "outcome based",

with reversed burden of proof. Here the industry would take responsibility for setting specific measures to meet outcomes and for documentation.

Furthermore when discussing decentralisation it is important to recognise that any chosen system will require an intensive input of work input and that it would be just shifting around. As government and Commission resources are not increasing the question is whether one could sustain a certain degree of decentralisation/regionalisation.

Another issue that was discussed during the workshops was alignment with the MSFD/habitat directive. It was recognised that due to different competences CFP structures are different from environment structures. They should however cooperate. Complicating factor here is the lack of regional structure which could act as a partner for environmental policy issues.

Plenary and synthesis of the chair

In the Friday morning panel discussion the main point of discussion from the workshops were presented and discussed. The different members in the panel agreed that three identified topics of the high level 'the role of the market', 'financial instruments' and 'decentralisation' will turn out to be crucial in the coming reform of the CFP. The chair reflects:

„It was a great pleasure to Chair this High Level Conference on the future of the CFP. The timing of the Conference was perfect. It enabled delegations to evaluate the feed-back of the Green Book consultations and to compare notes on the various options for policy reform. It offered also the opportunity to provide additional input to the European Commission in view of its formal proposals on CFP reform later this year. The Commission services were very well represented and actively engaged in the discussions both in the workshops and the plenary meetings. The Master class on fisheries management organized by the WWF and involving various stakeholders gave us a very useful insight in the potential of successful fisheries management by the industry itself at a regional level. The format of parallel workshops on the role of markets, financial instruments and decentralization was well chosen. We had excellent presentations by experts and good interaction between delegations and Commission services. The Chairpersons reports on the various workshops offer a good overview of the main problems and possible solutions. Let me just add a few personal impressions.

It has been clear from the discussions in both the workshops and plenary that the CFP requires a fundamental reform. There is widespread agreement that the 2002 CFP reform failed to address the deep rooted problem of a far too high fisheries pressure. Ecological sustainability is the precondition for the preservation of the social and economic viability of fisheries in the EU.

It has been equally clear from the discussions that the present practice of micro-management by the Council is no longer sustainable in an enlarged EU with moreover the perspective of co-decision by Council and EP. A one size fits all policy does not work any more. More tailor made solutions for fisheries management at a regional level involving the industry itself are required. Hence the Commission calls for decentralized implementation.

While the very concept of decentralization is not contested by delegations it appeared from the discussions that there are still numerous question marks on the legal and practical implications.

What can be centralized, which process should be set up, how to ensure genuine stakeholders involvement and how to provide a framework for self regulation are some of the questions which came up. There was however a widespread feeling that the industry should be engaged in self regulation and that some forms of co-management at regional level should be worked out.

In the discussions on the role of the markets a stronger role of producer organizations to balance producer and retailers powers was advocated by most delegations. As far as labelling standards are concerned there was a general call for more fair and accurate consumer information.

Most delegations favoured a more fundamental reform of the EFF prioritizing conformity with EU 2020, greening and innovation.

Some divergence of views emerged on scrapping and investment schemes, particularly between old and new Member States. There were also question marks on the desirability to include diversification within the scope of the EFF. Most delegations complained about the high administrative burden across the funds under the present system.

Those are just a few impressions. Most importantly the Conference has certainly contributed to clarify issues, to narrow differences and to define various policy options. Reforming the CFP is a huge challenge. Policymakers will need to let long term interests prevail over short term political gain. We know from experience that this is a tall order. Let us learn from our failings in the past and engage in close cooperation between policymakers and stakeholders in preserving a sustainable future for EU fisheries. I hope that this High Level Conference has contributed to this objective.”

Programme

Chair of the conference:

Mr. Carlo Trojan

Wednesday 9 March

13:30 – 14:00 : Opening Session

Opening speeches by
Mr. Henk Bleker, Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Trade

Ms. Lowri Evans, Director General Maritime Affairs and
Fisheries - European Commission

14:00 – 15:00 : CFP Reform: State of the Art
Introduction by European Commission ,
Mr. Ernersto Peñas Lado, Director

15:15 – 17:30 : Master class Fishery Management
organized by WWF, in co-operation with the fishery industry

Thursday 10 March

Parallel Sessions of Workshops:

- The role of the market and what it can contribute to sustainability and profitability
- Financial instruments and how these should be deployed in support of the new CFP
- Regionalisation, the way to go forward

09:30 – 10:00 : Introduction by the chair

10:00 – 12:00 : Round 1 of workshops

13:30 – 15:30 : Round 2 of workshops

15:45 – 17:45 : Round 3 of workshops

Friday 11 March

09:00 – 09:45 : Feed back from workshops

10:00 - 11:30 : Forum discussion chaired by Mr. Carlo Trojan

11:30 : Concluding remarks

12:30 : Field trip
- Fishing trip North Sea with pulse wing ór
- Visit to Aquaculture facility with turbot