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**Seminar on  
"Traceability and fully documented fishery as a management tool"**

**"Perspectives in relation to fisheries management"**

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Thank you

I will try to put the features of electronic documentation in context with a new CFP

Features of the CFP

The Common Fisheries Policy was constructed on basis of what is controllable. And the most important requirement for the CFP to-day seems to be whether it can be controlled. The number of rules piles up in numerous layers. Probably 80% of the CFP rules are for the benefit of control.

What kind of management goal require this and for what reason?

The management goal in its simplicity is in practical terms to ensure that a certain portion of the fish stock is caught and not more.

And the reason for the patchwork of rules we have is, that fishermen do not accept top- down management because it does not take account of the legitimate choice of method he should have in conducting his fishery according to the variability of circumstances at sea.

A legitimate, choice which in other industries reflects that the industry is "treated as an economic activity"

Even so, management has given up fixing and observing the core factor of sustainable fishery – the optimal outtake of stocks.

The Basic Regulation excludes that we get these figures as it explicitly defines catches as something quite different:

"(m) 'catch limit' means a quantitative limit on landings of a stock "

Instead management has resorted to indirect measures to control the gap between catches and landings. It has:

- restricted the use of invested capital by reducing days at sea
- implemented an array of control layers
- implemented regulation on weak and average assumptions regarding fishermen's behaviour

I will take the liberty to ask a few questions pertinent to the matter.

- Should fisheries management build on reliable catch registration or is it enough to count the landings and leave the rest to speculation or so-called "none accounted for catches" in biological assessment reports?

- Is it fair to ask the fishermen, whom we have given the access to our marine resources, to be accountable for what they take out of the sea?

I think the answer is yes, and so do most ordinary people I know of.

Why don't we ask fishermen to count their catches? because

- We don't trust him to give the correct information
- We have not assessed the possibilities that new technology is bringing about, and
- We cannot comprehend a management different from the top-down system of controlled compliance we have used so much effort developing over the past 25 years.

So much for the problem, as almost everybody is agreeing that it exists and that solving it is of paramount importance for the performance and survival of the CFP.

A new approach

To-day we have demonstrated the potential of electronic documentation as a solution to the problem of correct catch registration.

But how could the instrument be used for the benefit of a New CFP. Should it be compulsory for all vessels to carry? The answer must be a clear no!

The Commission and Council of ministers would have difficulties defining the guidelines for its use. The problem of legitimacy would persist and the "surveillance issue" would blur the discussion..

Instead fishermen should have the option to use reliable electronic documentation as a tool to free themselves from the restrictions he has in landings because catches cannot be controlled, from restrictions of days at sea because discards are defined as a function of time spent at sea, and to use simplified rules regarding control, by-catch limitations etc.

Such a model of transferring responsibility to the fisher implies that the he takes upon him the burden of proof, and that the advantages given to him is conditioned by his ability to sustain that proof.

Is fisheries management willing to give fishermen an incentive to document their fishery, and is it willing to open a supplementary management track for fishermen who want to go further in relation to documentation, conservation and economy?

Such a second track should

- Allow vessels to swap vessel landing quotas into increased vessel catch quotas
- Define the necessary conditions in relation to documentation of catches
- Define conditions in relation to registration
- Lay down the necessary control provisions preferably in traceability chains

The incentive suggested is that fishermen who can prove their fishery are allowed to count their catches against a "vessel catch quota". Where the quotas are set to reflect the catches not just the landings.

According to ICES advice for 2008 there is for most of the cod stocks a large gap between the TAC and the expected total removals. The TAC for cod in the North Sea is 22 thousands tonnes in 2008. ICES anticipate that 68 thousands tonnes of cod will be removed from the stock in 2008. Total catches seems to be 3 times the landings.

If all catches were landed and accounted for we could allow the fishermen to land three times the present TAC without increasing the mortality on the stock.

Similar discrepancies are observed for cod in other areas

You may argue that the situation is more complex. However, these discrepancies clearly show that the present system does not ensure an optimal utilisation of the resources.

Far from

The benefits of a second management track would be

- A correct registration of catches.
- Precise data for biological advice resulting in better advice and management and a more uniform perception of the stock situation between biologists and fishers
- All catches count on the quota, with the effect, that the fisherman cannot optimize his economy by discarding. He has to do it by developing selective fishing methods.

This development would be user driven instead of driven by management considerations

- Simplification of rules. The complex machinery of rules does not have to apply. Why impose days at sea, when catches are documented.

- Discards can be abandoned.

From the fisherman's perspective,

- He will get additional fishing possibilities, and his perception of planning and optimizing economic performance will change
- Electronic documentation can replace a number of control rules
- His catches have access to the market for "sustainable products"

The approach where the fisherman is responsible for the documentation is in line with the development of market demands.

The prerequisite

The crucial question is of course whether it is technically possible to obtain a reliable documentation of catches.

We would not have taken your time to-day if we did not have a strong sense, that it is possible to find an acceptable solution.

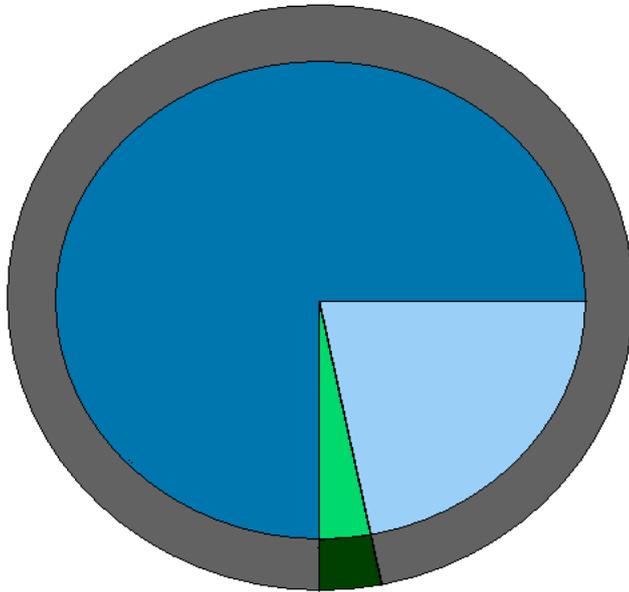
All this will be reported in October next year.

With a successful outcome of the experiment that will give time for the Commission to introduce a proposal for the second track in the TAC quota regime for 2010.

That is the perspective.

Thank you

## Perspectives in relation to fisheries management



EU TAC

National quota

Discards/misreportings

Vessel/vesselgroup quota

Incentive bonus when catches are electronically documented and registered

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