

Welcome Address EELRIC symposium

By Martin C. Th. Scholten

Very warm welcome at the Campus of Wageningen University & Research

My name is Martin Scholten, general director Animal and Marine Sciences at Wageningen U&R.

It is a great honour for us to host first EELRIC symposium.

Wageningen UR is ranked as the #1 University in the domain of AgroFood production: sustainable nutrition security; how to feed a world with about 10 billion well-being people within the carrying capacity of planet earth. Our mission is to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life. Within the scope of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Eel is for long an intriguing subject in our studies. Because Eel is in the heart of the Netherlands. Smoked Eel is an icon, comparable to windmills, wooden shoes and dikes. Eel is a high value product, in price, tradition and sentiments. We are #1 in world eel production on the basis of turn-over

The sentiments, however, are dual nowadays; because of the fact that our eel stocks are drastically declined over the last century. Eel suffered from water pollution and waterworks protecting our land against a rising sea. The number of glass eel recruiting our stocks are critical. But the efforts to work on restoration of eel stocks are enormous. Both from the perspective of nature conservation, as well as from the perspective of sustainable eel production by fisheries and aquacultures. Such as the DUPAN foundation of eel producers (farmers, fishers, processors, traders and sellers).

Science is challenged to foster the restoration of eel. Science is challenged to unravel the undiscovered parts of the eel biology. The eel reproduction. Exploring the potential of nature (in this case eel reproduction) to improve the quality of life (a life with the adored eel).

Eel reproduction is one of the most outstanding scientific and social issues in the world of today in which knowledge seems to be an unlimited factor. Because we try hard to understand (exploration phase), but we are not yet there to yield the achievements (exploitation phase). It is a journey of discovery that requires a lot of patience and prosecution; and: it requires global cooperation amongst all the eel scientists from a wide range of expertise's and disciplines; from all the eel regions in the world.

And that is exactly why we are so glad that you are here to participate in the EELRIC symposium. At the occasion of the start of the EELRIC, the Eel Reproduction Innovation Centre, a unique facility the foster global cooperation in eel research at the world famous Campus of Wageningen University & Research, the epicentre of life sciences for nutritious food production in a living environment for well being of mankind.

I wish you all fruitful discussions and creation of new alliances at todays symposium. Looking forward to see the results of the global cooperation in this very relevant global issue.