



MARIA OLSEN

Prime Minister Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen;
Partial view of Tórshavn's East Harbour marina (right).

SERIOUS GAINS FOR FAROES

Cutting a deal with the EU and Norway to increase the Faroese share of North East Atlantic mackerel, successfully proving rights to add an outer continental shelf to Faroese territory, forging new trade partnerships—the list goes on.

FOR THE FAROE Islands, the last couple of years have seen dramatic moves in international relations. Apart from successfully negotiating a solution with the European Union and Norway after a standoff over the share of jointly managed fish quota, the Faroese saw a large piece of disputed area north of their 200-mile limit added to their territory after the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approved its appurtenance to the Faroe Islands.

Thereafter, a historic Free Trade Agreement was signed with Turkey in December 2014 and, during that month as well, an

Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation was also signed with the EU. Then, in the spring this year (2015), the Representation of the Faroes in Moscow was established with a view to further develop bilateral trade with Russia.

“In our international relations some major steps have been taken in the last few years,” Prime Minister Kaj Leo H. Johannesen noted.

“We became part of a serious dispute when our big neighbor the EU initiated sanctions against the Faroe Islands,” the Prime Minister commented on the recent row with the EU over mackerel and herring, which be-

gan in 2010 and escalated throughout 2013 before finally being resolved in the course of the summer of 2014. “We came under immense pressure but were determined to stand our ground,” Mr. Johannesen added; “but we had a just cause, as underscored with the international arbitral tribunal proceedings that we initiated.”

The Faroese were eventually proven right when the EU conceded to most of their demands amid international dispute settlement proceedings prompted by the Faroe Islands.

The normalization of relations with the EU paved the way for the signing of the Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which provided for the association of the Faroe Islands to the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation from 2014 to 2020.

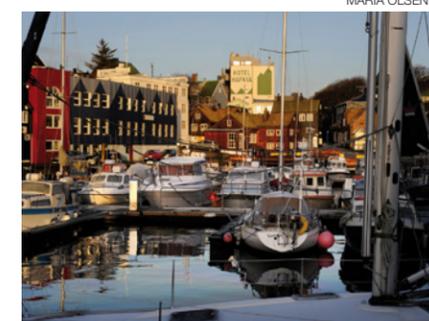
Back in 2010, the Faroes had become formally associated to the EU FP7 and a range of European projects have already seen active involvement of Faroese researchers and institutes in areas such as the environment, climate change, ecosystems and fisheries management.

“As an island nation with a robust marine-based culture and economy, we offer a strong science base with advantages in specific fields,” Prime Minister Johannesen said. “I see a great deal of potential for the Faroes to become more involved in new and emerging areas of research and innovation, such as aquaculture, renewable energy and maritime transport technologies.”

‘A SIGNIFICANT STEP’

In March 2014, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), a UN treaty organ established under the Convention on the Law of the Sea, recognized the claimed entitlement of the Faroe Islands to an outer continental shelf beyond the 200 nautical miles north of the Faroes. The area covers 87,792 square kilometers of continental shelf and was submitted to the CLCS in the spring of 2009.

As it turned out, the CLCS endorsed the entire area claimed by the Government of Denmark together with the Government



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of the Faroes. As Norway and Iceland have overlapping claims to parts of the area in question, Denmark/Faroes, Iceland and Norway agreed earlier to a prospective procedure on how to delimit the area of mutual interest. One implication is that Faroese territory will be extended by at least 27,000 sq. km.

Then toward the end of 2014, the Prime Minister signed a Free Trade Agreement in Ankara with Turkish Minister of Economy, Nihat Zeybekçi.

Mr. Johannesen welcomed the agreement as an important step forward in Faroese foreign trade policy. “Turkey is a significant market,” he said, “and a growing one for both salmon and pelagic fish, which are the main exports from the Faroe Islands. The agreement provides the Faroe Islands with duty-free access for our most important products. We can now compete on equal terms on the Turkish market with other seafood-exporting countries including the EU, Norway and Iceland.”

On 10th March this year it was time for the formal opening of the Representation of the Faroes in Moscow. Dr. Bjørn Kunoy, legal adviser in the Foreign Affairs Department, was appointed Head of the Representation.

“The friendly relations between the Faroe Islands and Russia are long-standing and have essentially been founded on reciprocal fisheries interests,” Prime Minister Johannesen said.

“The establishment of the Representation is a significant step forward in Faroe-Russian relations and will facilitate and strengthen the cooperation between both countries to their mutual benefits.”

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The Prime Minister's Office is the administrative office of the Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands. The Office prepares, carries out and follows up on the tasks with which the Prime Minister is charged according to the Constitution, including issues of governmental policy, foreign policy and public administration.

The Foreign Affairs Department is the division of the Prime Minister's Office tasked with foreign affairs.

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