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-Professor El Thalassinos, in December you will attend the 2nd Open Russian Statistical Congress in Rostov-on-Don. Having the experience of similar Congresses all over the world what are your expectations from such an event?

First, I would like to congratulate the organizers for their idea to launch such a big international event in Rostov-on-Don. This will be a great opportunity for the participants to analyze peripheral problems of the Russian Federation and to present innovative ideas for a sustainable regional growth model. Rostov-on-Don is an ideal place to start a series of conferences that will take place in different cities across the Russian Federation. The academic institutions in the periphery of the Russian Federation should start circulating ideas regarding research, economic and social projects in an effort to catch up with Moscow. The host University, Rostov State University of Economics, is among the top Russian Universities, with a number of international collaborations that will act as the center point for this event. Thanks to the Rectorate for taking the initiative to host the event. Second, I would like to express my admiration from the preparation stage. A number of people have worked hard to set up a successful international event with a lot of participants coming from other countries. In a globalized world, internationalization is a necessity since a

multicultural environment is the best place to develop innovative ideas and to analyze and formulate actions. Third, I would like to thank the university for the invitation to attend. I accepted it with pleasure and great honor because, among other reasons, as a Professor of quantitative methods and econometrics I have a real interest in statistics and econometrics. I am excited to discuss and work next to Russian colleagues on various subjects for the benefit of the Russian society. In today's digital era, being an expert in statistics gives you an additional advantage. You can actually convey messages to your colleagues through numbers and statistical analysis. In this Congress, I expect to see a number of high-quality articles, eligible for publication in international journals that could be used for the development of policies in economics, politics and the military. Of course, I expect to see many attendants not only from the academia but also from the industry, the government -national and regional, the city officials etc.

-As a Professor in this subject how do you evaluate the discipline "statistics, econometrics and projections" relative to economics, politics and public policy analysis?

The worldwide expansion of statistics and econometrics to formulate research models, techniques and methods has been one of the most significant trends throughout the social sciences since the 1990s. Starting from the rational-choice framework of neo-classical economics, it expanded to mathematical models of risk analysis, to game theory then spreading into the political and military domains, state forms and ethno-linguistic identities. As a result, economics, statistics and quantitative political science are now playing a central role in formulating policy options. Therefore statistics, econometrics and projections along with advanced computing methodologies and data mining are the three pillars for scientific research. These three pillars are key in analyzing complicated cases with multiple data parameters and thousands of observations. Of course, there are limitations, the most important being the set of assumptions used to eliminate alternative options making the system more accurate or more visible in results, however less sensitive to unforeseen changes. The motto "one size fits all" does not apply in this case. Every model has each own characteristic, assumptions, limitations because of the different parameters involved in each case. For example, an excellent regional growth model, fitting quite well in the region of Rostov-on-Don for example, might not be applicable in a different region. In another instance, during the recent financial crises, IMF failed to establish valid projections for the economy of a European country, because the growth model applied was developed for the case of a Latin American country. Each country has its own culture, economic and financial structure thus different models should be applied in order to deal with the different issues faced by them.

-Therefore, even today with advanced technologies, tested theories and large-scale econometric methods the possibility of a failure is still possible?

Yes, of course it is possible. In fact, there are 7 myths relating to failure in statistics. Some of them are attributed to assumptions, some to data and some to unqualified people. It is very important to have qualified people in data collection, data evaluation and data analysis processes because the most important part in statistical inference is the way that a conclusion is formulated and the way the proposed model is applied in order to generate projections. Eurostat is employing thousands of specialized people in order to have the most reliable statistics, by running a continuous on the job training program for employees to keep up with the new developments and the problems that arise in its member states.

-Having the experience of an editor, actually you are the founder and the editor-in-chief in two journals indexed in many data bases, how do you evaluate articles coming from the Russian Federation states?

Yes, you are correct. I have been managing two scientific journals for quite a long time, besides my other activities. One for 21 years and the second one for 5. I have evaluated a great number of articles written by Russian scientists and most of them have been of high quality. However, many articles are closely related to regional issues within the Russian Federation and this is not of great interest to the international audience. In many cases I have recommended to the authors to generalize their articles in order to make them more interesting to an international readers' base. Some of the articles have a references' problem since many authors use only Russian references. Globalization, as I mentioned above, requires open minds and open borders. Internationalization is the next goal of most governments and as such we have to be able to follow this trend. With regards to the statistical methodologies followed, I would say that in many cases they are not up to date. It might be the case that statistics and econometrics are not wide spread disciplines among Russian Universities. My recommendation is to expand the teaching of statistics, advanced econometrics and time series analysis in the academia. A professional certificate awarded through a public or private institution could be an idea for further discussions. In the meantime, the employees in the statistical offices of RUSSTAT should follow an on-the-job training program in addition to visits to other statistical offices around Europe for a better understanding of new methodologies in sampling, data mining, risk evaluation, inferences etc. Continuous education is exactly what the ancient Greeks had in mind by saying "giraske aei didaskomenos" which means "to learn as you grow older" and in Russian "Я учусь, когда я становлюсь старше".

I wish a very fruitful Congress and thank you for giving me the chance to express my views.

- Thank you very much for your answers and support of Russian statistics.