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Press release | 28.05.2013

CFP Reform Battle Enters Critical Stage

Press Release from Ian Hudghton MEP

SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** has reiterated the case for substantial reform of the Common Fisheries Policy as EU negotiations reach a critical stage.

Negotiations between the European Parliament and the EU Council of Ministers will be held tonight and tomorrow (Wednesday 29th) in an effort to reach a compromise.

No further negotiations are planned beyond this week and, should the talks fail, there are fears that the reform process will be stalled until autumn. Should this happen there is a risk that time will run out for the reform to be complete before next year's European elections.

Whilst the Parliament and the Council have so far failed to reach agreement on various key issues, both institutions have committed themselves to greater regionalisation of decision-making and an elimination of discards.

Mr Hudghton commented:

"This week's negotiations are the final scheduled to take place during the Irish presidency of the EU and, if they fail, the whole reform could be kicked into the long grass.

"There are some European nations who would be content for the existing failed CFP to continue and for the whole reform to collapse. Any delay in the timetable will only play into their hands.

"It is clear that the current one-size-fits-all approach has failed and that there must be greater flexibility in the system. Neither the Parliament nor the Council's positions are perfect - but they both allow for greater decentralisation and so a compromise must be reached.

"It is clear that for there to be no reform would be a disaster and that the long term future of countless coastal communities are dependent on agreement being reached.

"Everyone involved in these talks must realise that livelihoods are dependent on these reforms - and that the negotiations must succeed."

Notes for editors

* The European Parliament and the Council have been negotiating to reach a compromise on the CFP since March of this year. There have so far been five rounds of talks.
* The final two rounds are scheduled for tonight (Tuesday 28th) and tomorrow (Wednesday 29th). The outcome should be known by about midnight tomorrow.
* The talks have been held under the Irish presidency of the Council of Ministers which ends on 30th June.

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Ian Hudghton

Member

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