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CFP reforms present new risks to fish stocks and coastal communities

Tough negotiations ahead to ensure positive outcome

SNP President **Ian Hudghton** MEP has today (Wednesday) expressed concern at the contents of the European Commission's proposals to reform the Common Fisheries Policy.

Whilst welcoming certain aspects of the reform, he expressed worries that the Commission has failed to properly address the fundamental problems of over-centralised control and has failed to propose an adequate return of powers to fishing nations and regions.

The proposals also open the door to the international trading of quotas which would devastate Scottish fishing communities and see a concentration of fishing rights in a small number of overseas companies.

Mr **Hudghton** said:

"The Commission's acceptance that the CFP has utterly failed and must be radically reformed is to be welcomed. For too long the CFP's regulations have forced Scottish fishermen to throw fish back into the sea - and efforts to eliminate discards have long been supported by Scotland's fishing industry

"The proposals however still smack of top-down Brussels control. The discards issue is a complex one and solutions must be found in conjunction with the industry. Instead, the Commission has chosen arbitrary dates after which all fish must be landed.

"The Commission has previously acknowledged that fisheries within the 12-mile zones, which are controlled by the coastal nations, have generally been one of the success stories of the last 30 years. However, they have failed to take on board the key lesson to be learned from this - that perhaps the fishing nations are best placed to manage their own waters in cooperation with their neighbours.

"And, whilst the Commission plays lip-service to historical rights, the proposal for international transferrable quotas renders that meaningless. Cross-border trading would result in multi-nationals snapping up fishing rights across Europe - and would destroy our fishing heritage.

"Fortunately these proposals are just the first stage in the process. The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers must now make amendments - and it is essential that all Scotland's politicians work with the Scottish government to ensure a positive outcome."

Contact: Ian Hudghton, +44 (0)7885 254385

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Plenary Flash: Greens/EFA Priorities 16 to 19 June

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Responsible MEPs



Ian Hudghton

Member

Contact person



Steven Cornelius

EFA Press, Communications & Campaigns Officer

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