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Early Scotland visit for new EU Commissioner

Press release by SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

SNP President **Ian Hudghton** MEP has today (Tuesday) welcomed a commitment from Europe's new Fisheries Commissioner Ms Maria Damanaki to visit Scotland at an early opportunity to witness firsthand Scottish efforts to conserve fish stocks.

The European Parliament today voted to approve the new European Commission which will serve in office until 2014. The new Commission will be responsible for establishing a new European fisheries policy, with the Common Fisheries Policy currently the subject of a far reaching review.

Mr Hudghton had previously invited Ms Damanaki to Scotland to see the Scottish fishing industry's work in the field of conservation. Ms Damanaki has indicated that she would be delighted to visit Scotland once confirmed as a Commissioner.

Mr Hudghton commented:

"Scotland has been at the forefront of European efforts to secure a sustainable future for our fisheries. The Scottish fleet, working in cooperation with the government in Edinburgh, has introduced a number of innovative programmes such as the conservation credits scheme.

"As the EU embarks upon a wholesale review of the CFP, it is important that the European Commission is fully aware of the Scottish model. The new Fisheries Commissioner has agreed to come to Scotland in order that she can see for herself the positive work of the Scottish fishing sector.

"The ongoing CFP review offers us a vital opportunity to correct all that is wrong with EU fisheries policy. Real management powers should be returned to Europe's fishing nations in place of the current horse-trading system which operates in Brussels.

"The Scottish government has shown itself willing to use innovation in the management of Scottish resources and the new Fisheries Commissioner seems willing to learn from our efforts.

"It is now essential that the UK government gets on board and backs Scotland's efforts to bring control of our waters home."

Notes for editors

- The European Parliament today voted overwhelmingly to appoint the new European Commission.
- The new Fisheries Commissioner is Ms Maria Damanaki from Greece.
- Mr Hudghton invited Ms Damanaki to Scotland in a letter of 19th January. Ms Damanaki

responded on 1st February indicating her willingness to visit Scotland subject to her confirmation as Commissioner.

- The CFP is currently under review with a new fisheries policy scheduled to come into force in 2013.

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Ian Hudghton

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