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EU 'power-grab' harming Scotland's fishing communities

EU Commission wrongly using treaty powers to keep centralised control

SNP MEP and Party President **Ian Hudghton** has accused the European Commission of attempting a 'power-grab' by retaining centralised control over fisheries policy in Brussels.

The SNP MEP warned that the EU Commission is using a restrictive interpretation of the EU's Lisbon Treaty as justification for refusing to decentralise real control to Europe's fishing nations.

Mr Hudghton was speaking in a debate at the European Parliament in Strasbourg with Europe's Fisheries Commissioner, Maria Damanaki. MEPs were debating the future reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and in particular the need to recognise the public good provided by the fishing industry in terms of creating jobs in coastal communities and maintaining traditional ways of life.

Speaking in the debate, **Ian Hudghton** said:

"Over the lifetime of the Common Fisheries Policy the European Commission and member state governments have gathered ever-more powers to themselves, and have extended the remit of the December Council of Ministers meeting far beyond deciding upon fishing opportunities.

"Now, the Commission and Council are taking a restrictive interpretation of the Lisbon Treaty to allow themselves to retain centralised power, and to claim that the Treaty prevents a radical approach to decentralisation.

"My constituents, in the fishing nation of Scotland, will not be impressed if CFP reform does not sweep away the failed practices which have so discredited the EU's role in fisheries management. If environmental and social sustainability is to be achieved, I think that decentralisation must be at the top of the reform agenda, and that returning real power to Europe's fishing nations would ensure that those with most to gain from successful conservation - our fishing communities - would have the incentive to achieve success."

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Ian Hudghton

Member

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