

## **LABOUR & TORY MEPS' SHOULD "HANG THEIR HEADS IN SHAME"**

SNP Euro-MP's Ian Hudgton and Neil MacCormick say Scots Labour and Tory MEP's should "hang their heads in shame" following a carve up of this week's European Parliament agenda to prevent discussion of the role of "constitutional regions" like Scotland in EU decision-making.

The SNP members are blaming an unholy alliance of the two largest groups in the European Parliament - the EPP which includes the two Scots Tories and the PES in which Labour's three MEP's sit. Cut from the agenda is the Napolitano Report, which, if passed would empower Scottish Ministers to represent Scotland in Council meetings.

That it should fall off the Strasbourg agenda just when talks vital to the future of Scotland's fishing industry are centre stage in Brussels, is, says Ian Hudgton "an absolute disgrace." The MEP, who is in Brussels for an afternoon meeting with Fisheries Ministers Elliot Morley and Ross Finnie, along with his SNP colleague Richard Lochhead MSP, said:

"Talk about a missed opportunity! This week literally thousands of Scots families anxiously await the outcome of the Fisheries Council in Brussels. At the same time, in Strasbourg, Scottish MEP's who are, after all, supposed to stand up for these very families had the chance to signal their support to give our Fisheries Minister some real clout in these crucial negotiations. So what do the Tory and Labour members do? They do nothing – it's an absolute disgrace and they should hang their heads in shame!"

"It may be fishermen and their families who are feeling the brunt at the moment, but next time it could be any other industry, and they needn't look to the UK parties to defend them in Europe. After Bill Miller's insulting and patronising comments about the fishing industry at the weekend, can there really be anyone in Scotland who still believes that we're better off remaining part of the UK?"

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

1. The Napolitano report should come before the EP in January, but for it to have had maximum impact at the Convention on the Future of Europe, it would require to have been considered this week.

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2. Ian Hudghton and Richard Lochhead's meeting with the Fisheries Ministers is at 2.15 pm today (Brussels time) to push the case for Scotland's fishermen.