PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN COMMISSION QUESTIONED ABOUT
FISHING INDUSTRY EARNINGS

SNP-Euro MP Ian Hudghton has tabled a written question to the European Commission, asking for assurances that the European Commission will take account of the socio-economic impact of its management measures and the proposed reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Speaking from Brussels, Mr Hudghton said:

"I have asked the European Commission to provide assurances that it has fully assessed the socio-economic impact of its proposed reform of the Commission Fisheries Policy and its proposal in relation to the regulation of deep-sea fisheries.

"Furthermore, I have asked whether the Commission is fully aware of the economic hardship faced by fishermen and the fishing industry in general, and that Commission measures which are not based on verifiable up-to-date scientific information, as has been recently been witnessed in the regulation of deep sea fisheries and the proposals for open access in the North Sea, will only lead to a further loss of confidence in the EU fisheries management regime by the very people responsible for its implementation."

Mr Hudghton went on to outline that he has stressed the need for the Commission to act in relation to the reduced earnings of Scottish fishermen:

"I have emphasised to the Commission that Scottish fishermen's earnings have dropped in general and have plunged in three years to less than a third of the 1998 estimate for the worst hit industry sector and further stressed that the loss of earnings in the industry has led to crewing problems for many vessels, which experienced difficulties recruiting experienced hands. The lack of confidence in the future of fishing has also meant an ageing workforce, with a resulting impact on safety and threatening the very future of fisheries dependent communities.

"Finally, I have demanded that the Commission ensure that the socio-economic consequences of its policies are fully assessed prior to their implementation."

- Ends