

PRESS RELEASE

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SNP EURO MP IAN HUDGHTON ATTACKS INSENSITIVE BRUSSELS COMMISSION

Speaking at a Debate in Strasbourg on CFP Reform yesterday evening (18 November) SNP Euro MP Ian Hudghton lambasted the European Commission, in the presence of Commissioner Fischler for its "insensitive attitude" to the Scots in relation to ICES advice on Cod stocks.

Mr. Hudghton declared:

"To announce the possible closure of the Scots fishing industry with the 'we know best', 'its all your own fault', statements attributed to Commissioner Fischler, seems to fly in the face of the stated intention to involve stakeholders more.

This tough guy approach, presumably designed to make the actual outcome for next year seem relatively palatable, should have no place in a new CFP. The sad truth is that irreparable damage has been done by the Commission in the past six months to the confidence of Scots that Europe is capable of managing fisheries at all."

Note: full text of Ian Hudghton's speech attached.

Contact: Ian Hudghton mob. tel. 07885 254385

SPEECH BY SNP MEP IAN HUDGHTON
CFP Reform Debate - Strasbourg 18 November, 2002

"The management of EU fisheries is at an important juncture, key stocks in the North Sea and elsewhere are in decline and the future of the fishing and processing industries is under threat. It is therefore essential that the Commission gets it right, proposing a management system which ensures sustainable fisheries, backed up by up-to-date, independent and verifiable scientific evidence, involving stakeholders and instilling confidence in the system.

As the first set of CFP reform proposals nears a conclusion I find myself more cynical about the process, and less optimistic about the future for Scotland's fisheries dependent communities than ever before.

Why should this be so? Is a workable EU Fisheries Policy achievable?

I have always believed that the only way to succeed in achieving the necessary balance between resource harvesting and conservation, and to better encourage compliance with any management regime, is to have a regime which the stakeholders can have some faith in.

That is why I have welcomed the Commission's support for Regional Advisory Councils as a step in the right direction towards a much needed new and better way of doing things. But actions have to accompany words, and I have been shocked at the recent attitude displayed by the Commission in relation to Cod and other White fish quotas for next year.

To announce the possible closure of the Scots fishing industry with the 'we know best', 'its all your own fault', statements attributed to Commissioner Fischler, seems to fly in the face of the stated intention to involve stakeholders more.

This tough guy approach, presumably designed to make the actual outcome for next year seem relatively palatable, should have no place in a new CFP. The sad truth is that irreparable damage has been done by the Commission in the past six months to the confidence of Scots that Europe is capable of managing fisheries at all.

With Mr. Fischler's about-turn on deep water management, followed by the insensitive presentation of the ICES advice on cod, and its repercussions for Scotland, it is little wonder that conspiracy theories abound.

Commissioner, do you want to be remembered as the architect of a new and successful EU fisheries policy, or the one who brought desolation to communities and destruction to a way of life.

Sadly, at this moment you seem to me more likely to achieve the latter."

Ends:

