

## PRESS RELEASE

Attn: News desks, Fish correspondents Immediate Release – 3 July, 2002

### **COMMISSION MUST ACT TO STAMP OUT ILLEGAL FISHERIES**

Speaking today in Strasbourg on the control and monitoring regime of the Common Fisheries Policy, SNP Euro-MP, Ian Hudghton, called on the European Commission to ensure that there are adequate human and financial resources for control and monitoring to ensure that there is a level playing field, particularly in light of the Commission's CFP reform proposals. Mr Hudghton stated:

“Fisheries monitoring and control are central to the success of the CFP. But the existing disparities between Member States in the practical application of the monitoring and control regime undermine the overall legitimacy of the CFP management regime.

“Clearly, the Commission must step up its efforts to ensure a level playing field. Fishermen will only be convinced that they have to comply with the rules when they have a guarantee that the fish they leave in the sea in accordance with the existing rules will not be caught by someone else in breach of these rules - if fishermen perceive the monitoring and control regime as fair and equitable, there is more reason to believe that they will follow the rules.

“In addition, there must be greater co-operation between the stakeholders. Fishermen must be involved in framing and enforcing the rules within a system of zonal management, a system that will make these rules more acceptable and enforcement more effective.

“Finally, for effective monitoring and control, there must adequate budgetary and human resources. This brings me to a fundamental concern in relation to the Commission's proposals on the reform of the CFP, namely the proposal to open access to the North Sea and leave a sea area with severely depleted fish stocks managed purely by virtue of the TACs and quotas regime. Without committed investment in control and monitoring, the North Sea will be a potential free for all, which could decimate stocks further and kill off fragile fisheries dependent communities.

“I therefore urge the Commission to take these concerns on board – ensure that there is a level playing field and under no circumstances open up the North Sea when clearly the existing system is neither perceived as nor proven to be fair, nor effectively funded, to ensure illegal fisheries are stamped out.”

ENDS-