

PRESS RELEASE

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REJECTS FREE-FOR-ALL

The European Parliament Fisheries Committee has rejected radical demands for a free-for-all in EU fisheries. The Committee was voting on a key report authored by a Spaniard on the Roadmap for the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Speaking in Brussels, SNP-Euro MP Ian Hudghton who successfully tabled a number of important amendments to the report, commented:

“The Spanish Rapporteur had rejected down to the very last detail the European Commission’s proposals on the Common Fisheries Policy. His draft report was riddled with unreasonable demands for free access, elimination of the 6-12 mile coastal zones, the abandonment of relative stability, an end to the Hague preferences and a rejection of regional management.

“However, the Fisheries Committee overwhelmingly rejected such an outrageous stance, and much of the Spaniard’s text was rejected outright. What little remained was substantially amended. The result was reassuring, and with several important reports on the reform coming up in the European Parliament, sends a clear message that extreme Spanish views will not be tolerated.”

Mr Hudghton went on to detail some of the fundamental amendments which the Committee supported:

“I am very satisfied with the outcome of the vote. In particular, the Committee supported a number of my own key amendments, including the permanent retention of the 6-12 mile coastal zones and the need for the Commission to ensure that there is no legal void which could seriously jeopardise stocks, should the CFP reforms not be implemented by the end of this year.

“The Commission was also sent a clear message that the Spanish Armada is not welcome in the North Sea. The Committee approved my amendments calling for the Commission to protect the already endangered stocks of the North Sea and ensure that any consideration of open access to the North Sea be ruled out in the absence of scientific evidence with regard to the extent and

value of non-quota species and in the absence of up-to-date and verifiable studies into potential incidences and risks of bycatches of quota species and other potential harm to the marine environment.

“Finally, the objective of setting up a zonal management system with teeth was reinforced with amendments which stress the need for a simple, coherent and transparent management strategy, where fishermen and other interested parties are actively involved in the decision-making process, not just as observers.”

- Ends