

## PRESS RELEASE

Attn: News desks & Fish correspondents For Immediate Release – 9 July 2002

### **HUDGHTON QUESTIONS COMMISSION ON FUTURE OF RELATIVE STABILITY**

SNP-Euro MEP Ian Hudghton has tabled a series of written questions to the European Commission seeking reassurances that the legal foundation of the principle of relative stability will not be undermined in the review of the Common Fisheries Policy. Speaking today at the European Parliament in Brussels, Mr Hudghton said:

“Relative stability is fundamental principle central to the Common Fisheries Policy. This principle seeks to distribute fishing rights based on traditional fishing rights and the maintenance of fisheries dependent communities. The European Court of Justice has time and again recognised this principle as basic to the CFP and the fisheries *acquis communautaire*, and has upheld the principle against subsequent decisions which have impinged on historical fishing rights, against relative stability.

“But the European Commission, in its proposals for the reform of the CFP, has put a question mark over the future of relative stability; it ultimately wants fisheries to be governed by “economic management”, with relative stability and national fisheries entitlements being phased out. But this would be contrary to the very essence of the established Community law and ignores why the principle of relative stability was established and has been consistently reaffirmed.

“That is why I have tabled a series of parliamentary questions to the European Commission on the subject of relative stability. In particular, given that relative stability is an established principle central to the fisheries *acquis*, I have asked the Commission how it can justify any weakening of a fundamental principle, as outlined in its recently published reform package, without opening the whole reform to legal challenge.

“In addition, adjusting and/or eliminating relative stability will clearly jeopardise the future of fisheries dependent communities which depend on their historical fishing rights being protected. I have therefore asked the Commission to provide a clear explanation as to how it will bear the responsibility of destroying fragile communities where there is often no alternative employment

and in so doing, undermining or eliminating what is a firmly established fundamental Community principle.

“Finally, I have asked for reassurances that the Hague Preferences will be maintained and that the special needs of northern fishing communities will continue to be recognised in the reform of the CFP.”

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