

PRESS RELEASE

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

HUDGHTON SPEAKS AT DANISH FISHERIES SUMMIT

SNP Euro-MP Ian Hudghton is a guest speaker at the World Wildlife Fund Fisheries Summit in Denmark (seat of the current EU Presidency) this week. The MEP, who has been sharing a platform with representatives from the Danish Fisheries Ministry, and the Commission has taken full advantage of the opportunity to highlight many of his outstanding concerns on CFP reform.

Speaking from the summit in Nyborg before his return to Brussels and ongoing debates in the Fisheries Committee, Mr Hudghton today renewed his appeal to Danish Presidency, to reopen negotiations on the deep sea fisheries deal, rushed through in the dying days of Spain's EU Presidency in June this year. Mr Hudghton has remained critical of many aspects of the Spanish deal and the clandestine way in which the decisions were reached. He has used his Danish visit to urge the Council of Ministers, to reopen discussions and honour Denmark's pledge to open and transparent decision-making.

Speaking from Nyborg, Mr Hudghton said:

“The so-called compromise deal on deep sea fisheries was reached at after immense pressure from the Spanish Presidency and was founded on scant scientific evidence. What really gets my back up is that the deal was brokered without any real consultation and negotiation with interested parties, including zero involvement of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Council. It simply beggars belief that the door was kept firmly closed on representatives of the fishing industries of those Member States which have the greatest interest in deep sea fishing. So much for the EU's commitment to involve stakeholders more!

“The WWF summit by contrast exemplifies how different interest groups can come together to share views. The Danish Presidency has the chance to follow this lead and reopen the debate on deep sea fisheries so that properly thought through regulations can be reached. When the Danes took the helm earlier this year, I welcomed their commitment to openness, including access

to documents and open debate. Where decisions, like those reforming the CFP, are of a highly sensitive nature and have enormous socio-economic impacts on fragile fisheries dependent communities, those involved in the industry must be fully involved.

“ It is for this reason that I renew my appeal to the Danish Presidency to uphold its policy of openness. Deals done behind closed doors inspire neither trust nor confidence and I know many in the Scottish fishing industry were astounded at the outcome of the Spanish deal on the deep sea sector. If open discussion had been permitted there is no way that total allowable catches could have been allocated where there was no clear scientific advice and the records of landings were, to say the least, unreliable, with Member States even changing their submissions at the eleventh hour. Dialogue with the industry would have allowed the case for effort limitation to be made – my own preferred option - and the need to collate proper scientific data would have been emphasised.

“Deep sea fishing is important to both Scotland and Denmark and, as a guest in this country, I believe it is appropriate for a Scots MEP to urge the Danish Presidency to ensure that dialogue is urgently reopened on this important issue.”

- Ends

NOTES FOR INFORMATION

1. WWF arranged the Fisheries summit to coincide with an informal meeting of the Council of Ministers in Nyborg taking place this week.
2. The European Parliament's Fisheries Committee (of which Mr Hudghton is a full member) will be considering a report on deep sea fisheries in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday of this week.