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European Parliament divided on fisheries reform

Press release by SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

UK GOVERNMENT MUST JOIN STRUGGLE TO RETURN POWERS TO THE FISHING NATIONS

SNP President **Ian Hudghton MEP** has today (Wednesday) called for the UK government to back efforts to return real powers over fisheries management to Europe's fishing nations.

The call came after an important vote in the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee on the review of the Common Fisheries Policy.

The vote showed that there is a lack of consensus in the European Parliament on the future shape of European fisheries management. MEPs from diverse national and political backgrounds backed SNP calls for management powers to be returned to national control.

However, other interest groups have been calling for increased EU powers over fisheries and there remains support within the European Parliament for a Brussels-controlled CFP.

Speaking from Brussels, **Mr Hudghton** said:

"The vote in the European Parliament shows that MEPs are split on the future of fisheries management. Despite 27 years of failed control from Brussels, there still remain those voices who want complete freedom of access to all of Europe's waters.

"Fortunately we won important support today recognising the necessity for each country's historic rights to be respected. Support was also won for the principle that inshore waters must remain under national control.

"However, we believe that all Scotland's waters should come under national control and, similarly, that all Europe's nations should regain control of their own fisheries resources. Too many MEPs voted in favour of continuing the European Commission's control of fisheries by diktat.

"Today's vote was the first step in a parliamentary process which will go on for the next 3 years. There is strong resistance within the parliament to continued Brussels control of our marine assets. It is vital that all those opposed to the CFP work together to ensure that after 2013 we have a meaningful reform of fisheries management - and real national control.

"This debate is also going on in the Council of Ministers. The Scottish government are leading calls for Scotland's fisheries controls to be returned to Scotland's parliament.

"It is vital that the UK government gets onboard to fight for Scotland's coastal communities for once. We are therefore calling for the UK to become a part of the campaign to return real powers to Europe's maritime nations."

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Ian Hudghton

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