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Powers must be returned to fishing nations

Press release from SNP MEP Ian Hudghton

During a debate in the European Parliament on fisheries policy today, SNP President **Ian Hudghton** slammed the Common Fisheries Policy as a complete failure. He went on to call for powers over fisheries management to be returned to Europe's fishing nations as a matter of urgency.

MEPs had been debating a report by a Scottish Tory MEP. Today's development follows discussions earlier this week in Luxembourg by European Fisheries Ministers on reforming the CFP (Common Fisheries Policy).

Commenting, Mr Hudghton said:

"There is now absolutely no doubt that the CFP has been a complete failure. Centralised control from Brussels has been disastrous as far as properly and sustainably managing Europe's fish stocks is concerned.

"There is a renewed urgency to return powers over fisheries to the member states, and ministers meeting in Luxembourg this week recognised that. It's now high time for the European Parliament to face up to reality on this and back the repatriation of fisheries powers to the member states."

Speaking earlier in the debate Mr Hudghton said:

"The fact is that the Lisbon Treaty has created a confused and unsatisfactory situation in relation to fisheries management decision-making.

"The CFP Reform process provides an opportunity to re-examine and radically change the structure of fisheries management by sweeping away the over-centralised methods which have failed us so badly. Instead of obsessively safeguarding the rights of EU institutions, we ought to be designing a decision-making framework which will succeed in its stated objectives.

"In my view that means maximum decentralisation so that Europe's fishing nations, working together in logical sea basins, can be empowered to conserve stocks for their own future benefit in the long term.

"But the Commission claims the Lisbon Treaty prevents them from proposing substantial decentralisation. The

EP legal services take a different view. The result is confusion and endless wrangling about EU institutional rights rather than focussing on the job in hand.

"I hope that this Parliament will put the preservation of fish stocks and fisheries dependent communities first. That means returning real powers to fishing nations such as Scotland."

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Ian Hudghton

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