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Strong national control for fisheries

SNP press release from Ian Hudghton MEP

SNP President **Ian Hudghton** MEP has today (Tuesday) welcomed backing from the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee for substantial controls over fisheries to be returned to Europe's fishing nations.

The support came in a major vote on the Common Fisheries Policy reform package. MEPs backed proposals from the SNP to empower fishing nations in key areas of marine management.

The vote came despite last minute lobbying from Spanish and French interests to delay CFP reform. A final vote is expected in the full Parliament in February or March.

Negotiations will then take place between the Parliament, the Commission and the European Council.

Mr Hudghton commented:

"I'm delighted that MEPs have backed real powers being returned to Europe's fishing nations. This builds upon the previous success of the Scottish government in arguing for real decentralisation of the CFP in the Council of Ministers.

"The parliament's final vote will take place in the new year and there is still work to do before then. The committee vote was long and complex and much of the detail will need to be further amended.

"Nevertheless, there is much to welcome. In addition to the calls for national powers, the committee completely rejected Commission proposals for fishing rights to become tradable commodities.

"Such a scheme would have seen fishing quotas bought and sold on international markets - and could have seen Scotland's historic rights swept up by the Spanish fleet.

"A number of MEPs sought to delay the vote in an attempt to derail CFP reform. While dangers still lie ahead, the committee decision was an important first step.

"Scotland's MEPs must continue to work in parallel with the Scottish government to ensure that the final

reform package guarantees a future for our coastal communities".

Notes for editors

- The vote in the Fisheries Committee was on the proposed new CFP Regulation. A final vote will take place in the parliament's plenary in February or March and a final Regulation will then be negotiated between the EU institutions.
- The Commission's proposal contained text which stated that "Member States may be authorised to adopt measures" relating to fisheries management.
- A series of SNP amendments changed the formulation to "Member States shall be empowered...". This means that legally the relevant control powers must be returned to the fishing nations.
- The Scottish government previously won important concessions on decentralising the CFP in the Council of Ministers - see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/06/Eurofishtalks13062012>

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Ian Hudghton

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