

European Commission confirms SNP plans would place fishing industry back under CFP

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10 May 2017



SNP plans to rejoin the EU would place Scotland's fishing industry back under the control of the Common Fisheries Policy, the European Commission has confirmed.

In a letter to Scottish Conservative MEP Dr Ian Duncan, fisheries commissioner Karmenu Vella said a new country joining the EU would not be able to opt out from the CFP, as one of the bloc's 'exclusive competence areas'.

Commissioner Vella's statement places the SNP under fresh pressure to clarify its approach to Scotland's vital fishing industry.

Nicola Sturgeon demanded a second independence referendum on the back of the UK's vote to leave the EU and her party's policy is for Scotland to join the EU as an independent state.

However, in a gesture incompatible with the policy, SNP MPs have signed a fishing pledge rejecting any move which would return the industry to CFP control.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who will visit Peterhead today, said:

"Nicola Sturgeon is treating Scotland's fishing communities with utter contempt.

"Her policy is to return to the despised Common Fisheries Policy – but she wants to pretend otherwise.

"The SNP cannot have it both ways. Scotland's fishing communities will not be fooled by them.

"Fishermen see great opportunities after Brexit so the most important thing for their industry is to secure the best deal for Scotland and the whole of the UK when we leave the EU.

"A vote for the Scottish Conservatives is a vote to leave the CFP for good."

Ian Duncan, who is also the Scottish Conservatives' General Election candidate in Perth and North Perthshire, said:

"We have confirmation once again from the EU's fisheries commissioner that no state can join the EU without joining the Common Fisheries Project.

"No ifs, no buts, no negotiation.

"If you are not in the CFP, you are not in the EU.

He added: "The SNP's claims that Scotland could somehow negotiate its way out of the CFP are worthless, as Spain for one would veto the country's membership in the first place."

Ends

Notes to editors

Commissioner Vella's letter ([link](#)) confirms the CFP is a non-negotiable cornerstone of EU membership.

Despite their party's plan to rejoin the EU, a group of SNP MPs have signed the Scottish Fishermen's Federation's 'Brexit, Sea of Opportunity' pledge, which opposes 'any policy, practice or treaty which would return the UK to the Common Fisheries Policy.

Ruth Davidson will visit Peterhead fish market today (Wednesday, May 10) to meet fishermen and industry leaders.

Welsh Government invests over £660,000 to develop higher strength steel products to safeguard the industry's future in Wales

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates has announced that £666,327 of Welsh Government Research and Development Grant Funding is being made available to Tata Steel to help the company develop new and innovative higher strength steel products at its sites in Port Talbot and Llanwern.

The grant funding is in addition to Tata's own investment in the two year project and will enable the company to develop and test new forms of steel that boast improved functionality and increased technical specifications.

The investment in the project will mean Wales is well placed to respond to

global market demand for new and advanced steel goods for the automotive and construction sectors and will place Wales in a more competitive position for the future.

Ken Skates said:

“The Welsh Government has been working to support Wales’ steel workers and this latest offer demonstrates our continued commitment to safeguarding a long-term future for the steel industry in Wales.

“Increasing the level of steel related research and development taking place in Wales is critical if we are to meet the demands of the market and secure the long term future of Welsh steel.

“Not only will increased research and development enable us to develop new products here in Wales it will also increase our competitiveness, help to reduce costs and enable us to reduce our carbon emissions.

“Ultimately it is part of our ongoing efforts to secure a long term future for our steel workers, their families and the industry as a whole.”

This latest funding agreement is part of a wider package of support from Welsh Government for Tata that includes £4m of funding towards skills development activities across Tata’s Welsh operations and a further £8m investment in its Port Talbot plant which will reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. With the exception of funding for skills, Welsh Government support will be subject to agreeing legally binding conditions with Tata.

Press release: £7,195 fine for fisheries offences in case brought by MMO

On 2 May 2017 S & P Trawlers (JACABEN) Limited, owner of the stern trawler Cerulean NN722, and its master Marcus White pleaded guilty to breaches of the Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967 and the Fisheries Act 1981 at Barnstaple Magistrates Court.

The court heard how, during investigations including inspections of local fish merchants carried out by the MMO in 2015, it was identified that in July the Cerulean declared squid catches in their fishing vessel logbook when in

fact no squid had been landed. Instead the actual catch for July was 2448.7kg of bass, some 648.7kg over the monthly limit of 1800kg. Two days following discovery of the error the vessel master contacted MMO to attempt to correct the error.

In August the Cerulean's logbook recorded a catch of 230kg of bass but on inspection by Marine Officers, the actual weight of bass landed was 367.5kg. This was an under-recording of 59.7%

The vessel owner S and P Trawlers (JACABEN) Limited were fined £3,200, with additional costs of £1,175 and a victim surcharge of £170.

The vessel master Marcus White was fined £1,500 with additional costs of £1,000 and a victim surcharge of £150.

A spokesman for the MMO said:

"In this case Marine Officers' inspections of local fish merchants and of the vessel itself revealed clear misreporting of the species and quantities of fish landed.

"The fact that the fish in question was sea bass, a species which not only commands a high market value but is also under severe pressure from potential overfishing and is, therefore, subject to increasing levels of regulation, was clearly an aggravating feature of these offences.

"The MMO recognises that the vast majority of fishermen operate lawfully and in compliance with regulations which exist to protect fisheries from overfishing and are in place to ensure healthy, sustainable fisheries for this and future generations of fishermen. In the rare instances that non-compliance is detected, we use a risk-based enforcement strategy and operate a graduated and proportionate system of sanctions, with prosecution reserved for the most serious offences."

[Chief Nursing Officer presents awards for excellence in nursing at annual showcase conference](#)

The event was held at Cardiff City Stadium and provided an opportunity for health care workers to share experiences, innovative ideas and good practice. The sixth showcase conference was attended by over 200 delegates, including nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses, health care support workers and students.

During the event, the CNO presented the Betsi Cadwaladr Scholarship

Foundation award for excellence to Corinne Hocking, sister in the Assessment and Therapy Unit, Llandudno hospital for her work in developing the infusion service provided at the unit. Debbie Tucker, senior ward sister in Prince Philip hospital was highly commended for her work to develop a new Frailty Support Worker role.

Jean White, Chief Nursing Officer said:

“It was a great honour to present the winners of the Betsi Cadwaladr Scholarship Foundation Award, to those who have achieved excellence in their field of nursing.

“I would also like to thank everyone who has contributed to this event. The enthusiasm and pride we have seen here today are a credit to all those involved.

“It was fantastic to see nurses from all sectors, as well as health care support workers and students working together, sharing ideas and experiences to improve patient care.”

The event was opened by Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, who said:

“I am glad to have the opportunity to spend time with so many nurses, midwives and health care support workers today.

“It is a chance for me to recognize and pay tribute to the fantastic work that nurses are involved in to make sure that patients have the best possible care, and I want to take this opportunity to say thank you.

“The Welsh Government has made a commitment to attract and train more nurses across Wales and we have just launched a nurse recruitment campaign, promoting the benefits of training, working and living in Wales. We are also extending the NHS Wales bursary scheme for a further year.”

Press release: Commission publishes Accounts monitoring report: double default class inquiry

Commission looked at accounts from charities that were in the class inquiry.

In a report published today (10 May) the Charity Commission has published its findings from [its accounts review](#) conducted on accounts filed by charities in the Commission's ongoing class inquiry ([see Endnotes](#)).

The [accounts review](#) looked at accounts filed by 27 charities in the inquiry and found:

- 6 charities closed and failed to tell the Commission
- 6 had filed their accounts with Companies House but failed to submit them to the Commission
- 2 charities submitted accounts without the correct external scrutiny and the Commission instructed them to re-submit their accounts

In the 2015-16 class inquiry, evidence was uncovered of poor financial management and misuse of charity funds in 3 charities and as a result 3 standalone investigations were opened.

The accounts review found that of the majority of the accounts submitted were found to be of good and acceptable quality and those who used the Commission's accounts templates were more likely to have good quality accounts. However it was clear that not all trustees understood the external scrutiny requirements.

Fourteen of the 32 charities that were placed into the class inquiry by the Commission in 2015-16 submitted their accounts to the Commission during the year, as did 13 from the 2014-15 class inquiry. The Commission's accountants closely scrutinised 69 copies of accounts from these 27 charities. The filing of these accounts led to £15.5 million of charity income being accounted for to the general public through the Commission's register and this brings the total amount reported during the course of the class inquiry to just over £75 million since September 2013.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission for England and Wales, said:

Our class inquiry has ensured compliance in the charity sector by holding trustees to account for failing to abide by their legal duty to file accounts and be transparent, a key driver of public trust in charities.

It is disappointing that it required our regulatory action to ensure these charities complied. They showed the ability to report well when they put the effort in as the majority of the charities involved in the class inquiry eventually filed good quality accounts. However, it is concerning that the underlying attitude to compliance on basic duties and accountability to donors and the

public remains poor.

This report sends a clear message to trustees that we will take robust action to tackle non-compliance so that charity funds are declared and accounted for on the register of charities.

Ends

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Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. Details of how the Commission reports on its regulatory work can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

Endnotes

1. Class inquiry into those charities who fail to file accounts properly in 2 consecutive years, so-called 'double defaulters'.