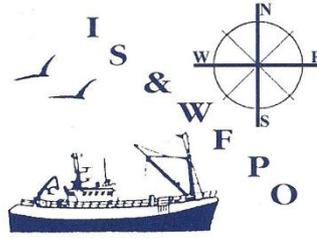


*Irish South and West
Fish Producers' Organisation Ltd.*



P R E S S R E L E A S E

Proposed discard ban could lead to the decimation of the Irish Fishing Industry

Eibhlin O'Sullivan, CEO of the **Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation** today expressed her concern that the discard ban proposal agreed at the Council of Ministers meeting in Brussels this morning could lead to the death of the Irish Fishing Industry.

“The Council’s decision to ban discards for pelagic species from the 1st of January 2014 is ill-thought through and, once again, it will be the Fishing Industry who is left to pick up the pieces as it is the Fishing Industry who will have to make the ban operational” comments Ms. O'Sullivan.

“Over the past number of years the Fishing Industry in Ireland has implemented a number of measures to reduce discards such as seasonal closed areas to avoid catching spawning stock and using bigger and more selective mesh to avoid catching juvenile fish” continued Ms. O'Sullivan. *“We have consistently stated that the EU is approaching the discarding issue from the wrong side by introducing a landings obligation as this simply moves the discarding from sea to land, the fish will still be dead! The approach which should be taken is to avoid these catches in the first instance and thereby minimise discards to their lowest possible level. Instead of implementing unworkable discard bans the EU should instead be supporting these types of initiatives”*.

“While no fisherman wants to discard fish they are obliged to do so as a result of the current restrictive quota situation which Ireland finds itself in. There is a lack of detail in the current version of the proposal particularly as to the sequence for the implementation of the ban and whether and the extent of additional quota that Member States may receive in return for landing all catches but whatever the figure agreed on it is unlikely to be sufficient from an Irish perspective and will likely lead to significantly reduced fishing activity and an attendant loss of revenue and jobs both in the Fishing Industry and in the rural coastal peripheral areas which are supported by and depend on the Fishing Industry for survival. Once again, the future of the Fishing Industry seems to be dictated by the whims of public opinion. It is vital that over the coming months Minister Coveney liaises closely with the Irish Fishing Industry to ensure that he fully appreciates the difficulties the Industry will face from the implementation of the discards ban.” concluded Ms. O'Sullivan.

ENDS

27th February, 2013.

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