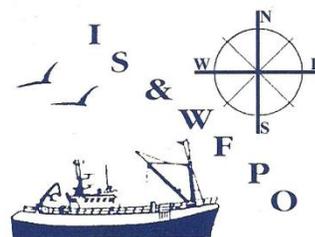


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PRESS RELEASE

IS&WFPO Addresses Oireachtas Sub Committee on Fisheries regarding the Impact of Severe Weather on Fishermen

The **Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO)** together with the Federation Irish Fishermen (FIF) colleagues appeared before the Oireachtas Sub Committee on fisheries in Dublin today to highlight the hardship suffered and continuing to be suffered by fishermen as a result of the severe weather which Ireland experienced during the first two months of this year.

“At the hearing the IS&WFPO together with our (FIF) colleagues highlighted the losses suffered by fishermen as a result of the severe weather conditions experienced in January and February of this year. Inshore fishermen were doubly hit as they experienced loss of income due to being unable to fish in the stormy weather but also suffered the loss of the gear they use such as pots. Fishermen on the South West coast were unable to fish for an extended period of time from the middle of December until the end of February and therefore had no income during this period” explained Eibhlín O’Sullivan, CEO of the IS&WFPO.

“We also brought to the Committees attention the Schemes which both Northern Ireland and the UK have put in place to compensate their fishermen and a recent statement by Commissioner Maria Damanaki highlighting the view from the European Commission that the European Fisheries and Maritime Fund can be used by Member States such as Ireland to provide such compensation” continued Ms. O’Sullivan.

“We made a number of recommendations to the Committee including the recommendation that an adequate Compensation Scheme be put in place before the end of April both for those Inshore fishermen who have vessels and who have suffered gear and income loss and also those trawler owners who have

suffered considerable loss of income and would hope that the Sub Committee will make a similar recommendation”.

ENDS

15th April, 2014

Contact: Eibhlin O’Sullivan, CEO, IS&WFPO Ltd. - Mobile No. 086/2360001.

Note:

Commissioner Damanaki written Statement “The new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) may co-finance mutual funds to pay financial compensation to fishermen for economic losses caused by adverse climatic events. Member States choosing to co-finance these types of measures from the EMFF should include them in their respective Operational Programme and ensure that the contribution complies with relevant provisions in the Regulation. The EMFF can also co-finance investments to improve fishing port infrastructure to improve safety and working conditions. State aid to make good the damage caused by natural disasters and exceptional occurrences is, in accordance with Article 107 (2) (b) TFEU, compatible with the internal market. Once the existence of a natural disaster or exceptional occurrence has been demonstrated and a direct causal link between those events and the specific losses incurred has been established, an aid of up to 100 % to compensate for material damage is permitted. The Commission is currently reviewing the Block Exemption Regulation applicable to the fishery and aquaculture sector and envisages exempting from notification this type of compensatory aid measure.”