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PRESS RELEASE

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MOST KEY INDUSTRY PRIORITIES ACHIEVED IN FISHERIES TALKS

The **Federation of Irish Fishermen** (FIF) said today that overall, the successful defence of many key elements of the Industry's interests is a significant achievement for Ireland in the annual fishing quota negotiations concluded in Brussels last night, while acknowledging some cuts in important regional quotas.

"The Commission's proposal for splitting the quota for Prawns, which would have led to untold operational difficulties, was not implemented and the quota cut was confined to 3%" commented FIF Chairman Eibhlin O'Sullivan who added "We are also relieved that the Council did not proceed to introduce cuts on allowable fishing days off the southeast coast but has given space for an industry led management plan which is in development with strong impetus from the Federation"

The Federation acknowledged the effective efforts of Minister of State for Fisheries Sean Connick TD, his Officials and Marine Institute Scientists in making persuasive evidence based contributions in relation to many stocks at the council and in securing the vital Hague Preferences which ensure that Ireland receives a greater share of quotas for key stocks.

Important increases in Haddock and Whiting in the Celtic Sea reflect the scientific analysis of considerable improvements in the state of these stocks which is a welcome development for fishermen.

The Federation is concerned that a further 25% cut for 2011 in Demersal (Whitefish) fishing opportunities and Cod quotas in the Irish Sea and the North West is likely to lead only to enforced discarding of marketable fish although the decision reached to review management arrangements in 2011 provides for the possibility of a more common sense approach to conservation and management.

The Federation welcomed the fact that Ireland has secured 67% of the quota now placed on a newly developed fishery for Boarfish although there remains a major challenge for the European Parliament in early 2011 to put through revised Regulations needed on mesh sizes to give effect to the share-out in 2011.

The Federation welcomed another increase of 30% in the Celtic Sea Herring quota for 2011, which is the result of long term Industry led commitment to management which is widely acknowledged as a model approach.

The Federation's role is to engage responsibly to secure sustainable fish stocks and the maintenance of a viable Fishing Industry. *"Our input into the debate surrounding these critical talks has been based on detailed scientific and economic analysis and we do not accept contentions that the outcomes are at variance with good science"* said FIF Chairman, Eibhlin O'Sullivan. *"Our approach is the only effective and credible strategy on behalf of our members as we face critical issues such as those being considered at these negotiations. The results, while not without problems, provide a platform for renewed progress in 2011 which will also be a crucial year for the long term future of the Common Fisheries Policy".*

Ends

16th December, 2010

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