

# The Council spells it out – but David Davis doesn't

The latest draft negotiating guidelines from the European Council on Brexit couldn't be clearer when it comes to fishing. Section 7 begins as follows:-

*"As regards the core of the economic relationship , the European Council confirms its readiness to initiate work towards a free trade agreement (FTA), to be finalised and concluded once the UK is no longer a Member State. Such an agreement cannot offer the same benefits as Membership and cannot amount to participation in the Single Market or parts thereof.*

*This agreement would address:*

*i) trade in goods, with the aim of covering all sectors, which should be subject to zero tariffs and no quantitative restrictions with appropriate accompanying rules of origin. **In this context, reciprocal access to fishing waters and resources should be maintained.**"*

Let us be quite clear:- this document is not discussing a transitional agreement but a long-term trade deal. In other words, unless we allow essentially a continuation of the Common Fisheries Policy in all but name, there will be no deal on trade.

Will our government show the necessary resolve to indicate in no uncertain terms that the jobs of our fishermen are not going to be used as bargaining chips?

Given David Davis' performance at the most recent meeting of the European Scrutiny Committee, it is hard to feel confident about this. Even when it came to the transitional arrangements, he was very evasive. Questioned by both Kate Hoey MP and Richard Drax MP, he would not state clearly and unambiguously that our Exclusive Economic Zone will be managed by the UK authorities alone after March 29th 2018. He said "we

are not trading away our fishing rights” but he also said “we haven’t begun to discuss fishing”. Well, Mr Davis, the EU has made its position clear. It wants a continuation of the CFP not only in the transitional period (if it happens) but beyond. There isn’t much to discuss – only one word needs to be uttered: **NO**.

Please see also Fishing for Leave’s comments on the draft negotiating guidelines.