

Welcome Intervention from Mr Gove & Ms Davidson Needs Clarity

Fishermen's organisation Fishing for Leave strongly welcomed Mr Gove and Ms Davidson's words but say more clarity is needed and the government needs to stop playing semantics.

Michael Gove and Ruth Davidson's interventions come days after it seemed that senior government figures would fail to rebuff the EU's demand that a condition of a Free Trade Agreement is continuation of; "existing reciprocal access to fishing waters and resources".

Mr Gove and Mrs Davidson stated their commitment that;

"As we leave the EU, we want the UK to become an independent coastal state, negotiating access annually with our neighbours..... the Prime Minister has been clear: Britain will leave the CFP as of March 2019".

Fishing for Leave says it is welcome that both have lent their support to this but say where this turns south and these statements can ring hollow is they are impossible to fulfil if fishing is trapped in a transition and clarity is needed on this.

They it is an admission that fishing will be in a transition in the words;

"during the implementation period we will ensure that British fishermen's interests are properly safeguarded."

Alan Hastings of FFL said "It's stating the obvious that the UK will officially "leave" the CFP on March 2019 as our membership ceases under Article 50. However, the transition means re-obeying all EU law after we leave meaning Brexit In

Name Only (BRINO)".

"During a transition the EU can enforce any detrimental legislation to cull the UK fleet which makes the pledge to safeguard British fishermen and a bright future academic and hollow".

"There's been well publicised representations to the government and MPs that being trapped in a transition will see a large proportion of the UK fleet culled under forthcoming inept EU policy that is already agreed".

"This would allow the EU to use international law (Article 62.2 of UNCLOS) to claim the "surplus" resources the UK would no longer have the fleet capacity to catch".

"So why does the government stop playing semantics and clearly state in unequivocal terms not that we 'leave the CFP' but that there will be no continuation of it in any way shape or form post 2019?"

"Until that assurance is forthcoming everything else is a PR exercise playing on words that folk are getting sick fed up with regards Brexit".

WELCOME COMMENT ON RESOURCES MUST BE ACHIEVED

FFL commend sboth Mr Gove and Ms Davidson for reinforcing that "we agree we must deliver a fairer allocation for the British fleet in our own waters". This echoes the PMs speech of "fairer allocation of fishing opportunities for the UK fishing industry."

Fishing for Leave highlighted that under international law and 'zonal attachment' a nation is entitled to a proportion of any shared stocks based on the abundance of that stock in its waters.

Alan continued; "We hope and look forward to Mr Gove and Defra publicising that a "fair share" is no less than the 750,000

tons of fish the EU catches in British waters every year that are rightfully ours in exchange for the 90,000 tons we catch in theirs”.

“Anything less than fulfilling the government’s commitment to work under international law and therefore this international premise of zonal attachment would see a token gesture towards fairer shares”.

It’s music to hear senior politicians acknowledge and advocate that “We believe it is vital that we regain control over our own fisheries management... we both agree that our fishing industry stands to benefit from our departure from the common fisheries policy”

“It is vital that the opportunity of repatriating the 60% of the fish the EU catches in British waters, which could double the British fishing industry’s worth to £6-8bn every year, is achieved”.

“FFL looks forward to the government substantiating the welcome whispers from Defra that new UK policy will give fair opportunity to all fishermen under a more sustainable management system to see the dividend of repatriating our waters help to rejuvenate coastal communities”.

“This is needed to replace the environmentally disastrous CFP which has forced consolidation to ever fewer boats and ports but if it is vital to regain control and they recognise fishing an benefit why trap fishing in a transition for 21months where the EU can move the goal posts?”

STILL NO REBUTTAL OF TRADING FISHING FOR TRADE DEALS

There is still no rebuttal to the PMs speech and Philip Hammond’s suggestion on agreeing shares and access to UK waters as a giveaway for a wider deal.

The PM said;

"As part of a new economic partnership we want to continue to work with the EU to manage shared stocks in a sustainable way and to agree reciprocal access to waters"

This statement and Hammond's comments openly state that fishing will be tied and sacrificed as negotiating capital for a new economic partnership.

All this flies in the face of Mr Gove and George Eustice's earlier comments at an EFRA Select Committee that fishing access and resources wouldn't be tied to wider trade negotiations.

It's time for the government to come out fighting to unequivocally succeed on this "acid test" by clearly saying there will be continuation or any ties to the CFP after March 2019 and that we really will take back control.