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Effects of Current Cod Recovery Plan

Whereas one of the CPMR's fundamental aims is to enhance Europe's maritime dimension and to promote sustainable development on behalf of the peripheral and maritime regions.

Whereas the North Sea region is an important maritime environment and the North Sea Commission (NSC) aims to promote the region as a major economic entity within Europe and enable regions to deal with the challenges and maximise the opportunities presented by the North Sea.

The NSC would emphasise that many coastal communities in the North Sea region depend on the maritime environment for their livelihood and sustainability. While the NSC supports the need for sustainable fisheries it recognises the impacts the existing CFP is having on fisheries dependent communities and the challenges with the current cod recovery plan, namely a requirement to reduce cod mortality by 25% during 2009. For fisheries dependent communities from the Shetland Islands to the Berwickshire coast, these current measures have created a crisis situation where the local industry is under severe pressure to comply and ultimately remain viable.

The NSC wishes to draw the attention of the European Commission to the severe economic difficulties being faced by many fishermen as a result of the revised cod recovery plan. These difficulties threaten the economic viability of fishing vessels and threaten to have serious long-term impacts on fisheries dependent communities.

As a matter of urgency, the NSC urges the European Commission to review the current cod recovery plan to mitigate the impacts it is having on fisheries dependent communities. It encourages the European Commission to recognise the pressures upon the fishing industry as a result of the many technical measures, real time closures and individual cod avoidance plans, which have been put in place by the industry, to enable the sector to continue fishing whilst avoiding the capture of cod. However the Commission needs to recognise that these measures have been put in place by the industry and time should be given for their evaluation. The NSC further urges the European Commission, to set in place more realistic timeframe targets, when formulating the future CFP, and to recognise and minimise the adverse impacts of fisheries measures on those communities whose livelihood depends on it.