

IAN DUNCAN

CONSERVATIVE MEP FOR SCOTLAND



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Dear Alain,

PECH committee approach to Brexit

The paper being considered by the PECH co-ordinators today is grievously flawed, and will ill-serve the committee in its future approach to Brexit.

Whilst there are a number of shortcomings relating to historical fishing rights it is the assertion that any future trade deal between the EU and the UK must guarantee EU access to British waters which is peculiar, unprecedented and counter-productive.

Despite the fact that Norway is a participant in the Single Market, there is no such guarantee of access. Indeed, it was upon this very issue that Norway withdrew its application for EU membership in 1972. Likewise Iceland withdrew its application for the same reason in 2015. Both proud fishing nations have long recognised the corrosive effect of the Common Fisheries Policy and sensibly guard access to their fishing grounds.

Not a single trade deal or access to single market arrangement brokered by the EU has included access to the fishing grounds of the participant nation.

I appreciate the urgency with which EU fishing nations need to address this matter. With certain EU fishing vessels catching upwards of 60% of their catch in UK waters, it is clear that there will be a significant adjustment in EU fishing operations. However, as with Norway and Iceland, access to UK waters can be facilitated through negotiations similar to those currently conducted between the EU and the northern nations.

There will be challenging times ahead, of that I am sure. However, to begin the negotiations in such an unbalanced manner, puts at risk the very issue we both care deeply about; the ability of fishermen to go to sea in boats and fish.

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It would be far more sensible to begin anew the drafting of this paper, and craft a more equitable approach to the upcoming negotiations.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Duncan'.

DR IAN DUNCAN MEP