

## **Castle Debate, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014, London.**

### **Common Fisheries Policy: managing fish stocks.**

Highlighting environmental science, law and policy.

#### **Background**

The purpose of the debates is to provide objective and factual clarification of selected current environmental issues. To this end, a panel of three experts addresses the applicable science, law and policy. Each speaker has 15 minutes to present and then the floor is open for a question-and-answer session from which a summary of the Debate is produced. Chaired by Pamela Castle OBE, they are held approximately on a monthly basis from October 2013 to June 2014 at various locations across London in association with Sykes Environmental and sponsored by Legal Sector Alliance and the ENDS Report.

#### **About the event**

Since its creation in (1970), the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has failed in its objective of protecting EU fish stocks through the imposition of national fishing quotas. Fish stocks have crashed due to overfishing and imports now account for more than 50% of fish consumed in the EU.

This was addressed in a proposal for reform by the European Commission in 2011 aimed at restoring fish stocks by 2020. In February 2013 the European Parliament voted to support reforms including measures to protect endangered species and ending the practice of meeting quotas by discarding edible fish.

The new CFP is due to come into effect from 2014 but discussions with EU governments are ongoing. In May 2013 these discussions led to an agreement to rectify the situation which if approved by Ministers and MEPs will be phased in over the coming years.

#### **Speakers:**

**Science:** Callum Roberts, Professor of Marine Conservation, University of York.

**Law:** James Thornton, Founder and CEO at ClientEarth

**Policy:** David Baldock, Executive Director, Institute for European Environmental Policy.

Organised by Pamela Castle in conjunction with Sykes Environmental.

## **Marinet Submission to the Castle CFP Debate, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014.**



5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

**Castle Debates : Common Fisheries Policy Reform - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**  
at the Athenaeum Club, Pall Mall, London.

**A Personal Reflection by David Levy**, Chair Marinet, Nationwide Marine Network of Community Groups.

For the CFP Reform to stand any chance of succeeding I would recommend that the Government has fish food security (we source 100% of all of our fish from our waters/ seas) as its focal point.

At present we are only providing 50% of fish from our waters, which means we export our problem to other countries around the globe and unethically rape other poor coastal communities of their fish.

We must make sure that we do not use European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) subsidies for ships that fish outside of British offshore seas (200 nautical miles).

This means that all UK fishing quotas must be owned and controlled by British companies and landed at British ports, by British fishermen.

EMFF subsidies, following reform in 2013, have been increased for data collection and enforcement relating to fishing practices. The UK government now has to legislate to ensure that all fishing fleets operating from British ports have CCTV and GPS (i.e. on board monitoring) fitted as standard to all fishing vessels and that these cannot be turned off.

CCTV operators terrestrially are volunteers trained by the police to monitor and advise authorities. This could and should be rolled out by the UK IFCA's (Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities) to deliver two things:

- (i) the gathering of data for the MMO (UK Marine Management Organisation), and
- (ii) the provision of evidence for enforcement.

Nationwide there is ample evidence that the fishing industry is riddled with illegal landings and sales. The requirement above will facilitate a change but it needs to be across the whole industry. We cannot insist on this for other countries, but if we are committed to cleaning up our seas then we have to enforce our own management structures.

Have British fishermen learnt from the Reform of the CFP or even from the UK's Marine and Coastal Access Act? They have lobbied strongly for their own interests, and have to an extent gone along with sea "rest areas" (areas closed to fishing, enabling threatened stocks to recover) which have delivered an improvement in some fish stocks, but what comes next?

If Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Fish Fight programme was accurate, then the fishermen are saying that the science on fish stocks is wrong, that stocks are healthier than the scientists are saying, and therefore they need to be given more and larger fishing quotas.

If you want to see the results of this (re-introducing quotas to fish recovering stocks), read Charles Clover's *The End of the Line* and view the repeated crash and burn scenarios.

I don't believe the fishermen have learnt much, and my justification and evidence for saying this is the current plight of the unregulated (non-CFP) Sea Bass stock which the fishing industry has and is over-fishing to the point of extinction.

Finally the UK Government made a commitment on a coherent network of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs under the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009), placing a letter at that time in the House of Commons Library confirming this. The letter had no legal validity, and the succeeding government has reneged on this promise, delivering only a patchwork of sites mainly identified under the Habitats Directive.

The UK Government must, if they are serious about reform, deliver this coherent network of MCZs by 2015.

David Levy.