

A new fishing policy

There was no slot for me to speak in the fishing debate yesterday in the Commons, such was the understandable pressure from MPs for fishing seats to speak.

What I wanted to say included the following

1. The government must not sacrifice our fish for the sake of some wider deal. The UK feels very strongly that we have been badly treated over fish from the original entry terms onwards. The Common Fishery Policy has been bad for our fish, bad for our fishing industry and bad for the marine environment.
2. When we take back control we should greatly expand the amount our own fishing fleets can catch, and require most if not all of the fish from our fishing grounds to be landed in the UK. We need to build a bigger fish processing and retailing industry.
3. The government should ban the ultra large predatory trawlers which damage the sea bed or the wider marine environment when scrambling to catch more fish, and attract too much bycatch as they do so.
4. We should strengthen our onshore protection vessel fleet to enforce our fishing rules, protecting our marine environment and managing our fish stocks well.
5. The new fishing policy should encourage a rapid expansion of our fishing fleets, with government help with the financing of suitable vessels and encouragement to the banks to lend for the purpose.
6. The new fishing policy should be part of a wider policy initiative to encourage far greater food self sufficiency and fewer food miles.