

# Rebuilding our fleets as a maritime nation would bring more Brexit wins

During our time in the EEC/EU our merchant fleet and our fishing fleet suffered a bad decline. The ECJ striking down an Act of Parliament designed to promote our maritime activities did not help. The Common Fisheries Policy invited many more foreign fishing boats in to plunder our fishing grounds. The EU then imposed ever stricter quotas on U.K. fishing boats to reduce the impact of over fishing. A vicious circle was created denuding many of our great fishing ports of most of the trawlers that used to put to sea to fish our waters.

Rebuilding our fishing fleet should be an urgent priority. During the so called transition period we should be tougher on fishing by banning all the super trawlers of over 100 m in Length to help our fish stocks to rebuild. The government should work with private sector to put together boat finance, crew training and permits to fish to rebuild our lost fleet.

We should also reform the licensing, flagging and tax arrangements to make it more attractive for vessels to register in the U.K. Creating a larger flagged merchant fleet would stimulate more bunkering, victualling, repairs and refits in U.K. docks and yards. The MOD and other government buyers of vessels should usually buy from UK sources, to boost our shipbuilding capability. This could stimulate more private sector orders and construction. Some of our seaside towns need revival as they miss many of the maritime activities that used to be part of their commercial life.