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PRESS RELEASE

Dublin 15 July 2008

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FISHERMENS FEDERATION ADAMANT THAT EU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AGREEMENT ON EMERGENCY TIE-UP AID MUST NOW BE IMPLEMENTED BY IRISH GOVERNMENT

A comprehensive package of measures including the key immediate component of temporary tie-up aid was agreed by EU Fisheries Ministers in Brussels today.

For the past three months, the Federation of Irish Fishermen has consistently advanced a package of emergency aid for the fishing sector to enable the sector to survive the current crisis it is suffering. FIF has played a major role in getting the EU to accept the need for such a package. It has also been successful in getting the Irish government to support this approach at a series of tough meetings in recent months.

FIF has supported Irish government efforts to secure additional funding from the EU to finance these measures, which reportedly was the subject of major difficulty at today's Council of EU Fisheries Ministers. However, the EU Commission's proposal for an additional €600 million to fund these measures has survived and will be delivered once technical hurdles are surmounted in coming weeks.

It is regrettable that the application of this additional EU funding will not happen until 2009, particularly in light of the fact that some EU countries with large domestic allocations under the EU Fisheries Fund will be in a position to provide their own funding to their own fleets this Autumn. This should not however prevent immediate action in Ireland.

FIF has always made clear that the extreme gravity of the situation facing the fleet right now means that the package of measures must proceed NOW, with exchequer funding if necessary to cover the programme the remainder of 2008, despite the acknowledged deterioration in the public finances. FIF cannot accept that Irish fishermen can be disadvantaged vis-à-vis their continental counterparts.

FIF expects the Irish government to move to implement temporary tie-up aid in coming weeks as the only way to ensure the short-term survival of a large portion of the sector. FIF will take every action open to it to ensure that the necessary funding is made available.

Ends

Note to Editors:

The Federation of Irish Fishermen (FIF) was established in 2007 and is the umbrella organisation for the four main Irish Fish Producer Organisations (FPOs) namely,

The Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation Ltd (IS&EFPO),

The Irish Fish Producers Organisation Ltd (IFPO),

The Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation. Ltd.,(IS&WFPO)

The Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd (KFO)

Presently, the FIF represents over 90% of the Irish fishing fleet over 12m and is run by a Board of 8 directors.