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PRESS

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Fishermen's Federation Statement on Current Crisis in Fishing Industry

The Federation of Irish Fishermen today sought to expedite a planned meeting with Ministers Brendan Smith and Tony Killeen to make progress on the critical issues which will be decided at the forthcoming meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers on June 23d. The Federation is extremely concerned about the gravity of the situation currently facing the industry which were set out at a meeting held with both Ministers on May 29th and further amplified in a letter submitted to the Ministers, following a protest organised by the Federation, outside Dail Eireann on Thursday 5th June.

The Federation notes the unofficial protests which have taken place in recent days and is acutely aware of the anger and frustration of those involved. It calls on the government to respond urgently to the Federation's articulation of the issues and seeks to represent as strongly as possible the views of the industry.

Many Fishermen face economic ruin, with a consequent impacts on jobs in coastal communities, unless there is a significant early intervention. The industry has been subjected to a series of difficult changes all of which have been compacted into a very short time frame. Prior to the current fuel crisis many fishermen were already experiencing difficulty in meeting operating costs; the dramatic increase in fuel prices coupled with a fall in fish prices, has exacerbated these difficulties.

In relation to the current fuel crisis FIF is renewing its call for:

- Temporary Tie up Aid;
- A ban on IUU (Illegal Unregulated, Unreported) products entering the EU;
- Marketing initiatives both at EU and national level in order to increase fish prices to the primary producer.

The Federation has also called for:

- Renewal of commitment to provision of €8 million for over 18metre fishing vessel decommissioning scheme including extension of the current eligibility rules;
- Roll out of a decommissioning scheme for Under 18 metre fishing vessels;
- Investment in joint industry/science partnerships in order to provide for more informed decision making;
- Introduction of Administrative Sanctions as a method of dealing with minor fisheries offences.

ENDS