

Speech by Struan Stevenson, MEP, Senior Vice President of the Fisheries Committee in the European Parliament.

**Democracy and the role of the European Parliament within a reformed Common Fisheries Policy**

**Inter-RAC Conference on "Decision-making within a reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)"**

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I am very proud and honoured to be here today and very grateful for this opportunity to be back in Scotland and talk to you about the role of the European Parliament within the CFP.

During the last fifty years, the European Parliament has moved from being a largely consultative forum, and up until 1979 - composed only of delegations appointed by each of the Member States' national parliaments, to being a full co-legislator in many areas.

The case of the European Parliament is unique. It is the world's most far reaching undertaking of transnational democracy and multilingual to a degree unknown elsewhere in the world (23 official languages are currently used in parliamentary work). It's like the tower of Babel!

Elected for the first time in 1979, it is still a young parliament, but has developed its role and powers considerably in the thirty years that have passed since then and expanded from 410 members from 9 countries, to 736 members from 27 Member States.

Unlike most national parliaments, the European Parliament has never regarded itself as a part of a fully developed constitutional system, but rather as part of one in a process of evolution and