

A Really Fishy Business Nigel Moore 20 3 2018 v1

What little remains of our hard-working fishing industry is increasingly likely to be sacrificed as a political pawn to satisfy European Union (EU) demands and save Mrs May's skin. It will conclude the destruction started by Ted Heath, of a once thriving industry, through his decision as Prime Minister to enter the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Rather than rejuvenating struggling coastal communities as we leave the EU, their future will be as hollowed out weekend squats for the urban political class and their rich cronies; Chipping Camden, Islington and Hampstead by the sea.

The EU is clearly after continuing to plunder the rich resources in our Exclusive Economic Zone fishing grounds (*i.e.*, the waters up to 200 nautical miles from the shoreline or the median point where the sea is less than 400 nautical miles wide). The EU's demands go far beyond what is strictly necessary for trade. The EU's thinking has been recently [reported](#) by the Irish Times and in various texts published by the EU. The most recent examples are:

The EU's [proposed draft](#) Withdrawal Agreement (covering the Transition Period and with the UK still required to comply with the CFP and all EU *Acquis* or law) says:

Article 125

Specific arrangements relating to fishing opportunities

As regards the fixing of fishing opportunities within the meaning of Article 43(3) TFEU for any period falling within the transition period, the United Kingdom shall be consulted in respect of the fishing opportunities related to the United Kingdom, including in the context of the preparation of relevant international consultations and negotiations.

Article 5

Agriculture and fisheries

1. The provisions of Union law on sanitary and phytosanitary rules listed in Annex 2.5 to this Protocol shall apply to and in the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland. 2. The provisions of Union law on the production and marketing of agricultural and fisheries products listed in Annex 2.6 to this Protocol shall apply to and in the United Kingdom in respect of Northern Ireland. Article 6 S

Clearly the EU wants to remain in charge of UK fishing during the Transition Period when, if it so chooses (under EU law and the CFP), it can run down further the remnants of the UK fishing fleet through cutting back its allocation and then grabbing the fish resources that we lack the capacity to catch. At present the other Member States take roughly eight times more fish from British waters than British boats can take from the remaining EU controlled waters. So this is an unfair situation that can be made more one-sided still in the EU's favour.

For the longer term, after the Transition Period, the European Council (Art.50) (23 March 2018) - [Draft guidelines](#), 7th March 2018 state:

7. *As regards the core of the economic relationship, the European Council confirms its readiness to initiate work towards a free trade agreement (FTA), to be finalised and concluded once the UK is no longer a Member State. Such an agreement cannot offer the same benefits as Membership and cannot amount to participation in the Single Market or parts thereof. This agreement would address:*
 - i) *trade in goods, with the aim of covering all sectors, which should be subject to zero tariffs and no quantitative restrictions with appropriate accompanying rules of origin. In this context, existing reciprocal access to fishing waters and resources should be maintained.*

This EU claim is transparently bogus. The Single Market (or wider European Economic Area, EEA) exists to facilitate trade between Member States not to allocate resources. If this argument was to be accepted it could be the 'thin end of the wedge' setting a precedent for any industry or commercial activity to be treated as a common resource by the European Commission to be allocated and managed centrally as it chooses. This type of thinking has a long history within the EU extending back to its [origins](#) and [earlier](#).

Yet Mrs May and Mr Davis, rather than defend our national fishing interests, apparently accept the EU's view. In her [Our Future Partnership](#) speech at the Mansion House on 2nd March 2018 she said:

*We are also leaving the Common Fisheries Policy. The UK will regain control over our domestic fisheries management rules and access to our waters. **But as part of our economic partnership we will want to continue to work together to manage shared stocks in a sustainable way and to agree reciprocal access to waters and a fairer allocation of fishing opportunities for the UK fishing industry.***

Mrs May's words need to be seen within the wider context of the destructive absurdities of the EU's CFP and government actions over the years which have contributed to running down the UK fishing industry. The EU's need to plunder UK waters is because their policies have led to overfishing not to sustainability. An example of the human cost in this country is outlined [here](#) and more information [here](#) and statistics [here](#). Successive governments since Ted Heath agreed to join the CFP in 1972 have let the fishing industry decline precipitously or even [helped facilitate that decline](#). Currently the UK government appears to be colluding in [selling-out](#) British fishermen.

We should not be surprised at the behaviour of the government. There has been a longstanding tradition amongst British civil servants working in Brussels, together with their EU counterparts and presumably under successive government direction, to 'manage national decline' of the United Kingdom. Today the situation is potentially worse because Mrs May and Mr Davis are clearly out of their depth in [understanding the EU](#) and negotiating a satisfactory Brexit deal, and the Department for (not) Exiting the European Union lacks essential competence. The EU negotiators are 'running rings around' our dithering, clueless negotiators including 'laying out the groundwork' for negotiations (noted above) and setting unwarranted demands (such as the application of the whole EU *acquis*). Mrs May will likely [concede](#) to EU demands (with [Brexit in name only](#)) since she lacks the competence to 'beat them at their own game' and her aspiration of 'frictionless' trade through a free trade agreement and [mutual recognition of standards](#) is unachievable. If the EU does make any deal it will be on their terms and with ['strings attached'](#).

Brexit should provide an opportunity to rejuvenate struggling coastal communities by bringing jobs back to them. Also the fishing industry relies on other industries which themselves would get a 'shot in the arm'. After all Norway, Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have thriving fishing industries which they carefully protect. We could do the same although it is [not necessarily simple](#) especially if our current and ex-civil servants have residual loyalties to the EU and actively undermine change. However, by taking control of our Exclusive Economic Zone, the UK is in a much stronger negotiating position when managing migratory fishing stocks and unilaterally granting fishing concessions within UK waters to foreign fishing boats. It also provides flexibility on how fishing stocks are managed for sustainability.

Mrs May's government could correct the mistakes of the past and build an exciting new relationship with the fishing industry and coastal communities, which is an essential part of the fabric of our island nation (as noted by [John Buchan](#)). After the injustice of destroying the livelihoods of many hard-working heroic people it is now high time 'their ship came in'. Nigel Moore.