

# Kluwer Mediation Blog

## Mackerel war: Scotland calls for international mediation

Rafal Morek (DWF LLP) · Saturday, February 9th, 2013

Mackerel has recently been taken off the 'Fish to Eat' list of the Marine Conservation Society (MCS). Due to overfishing, MCS has downgraded its rating of this popular oily fish. The society believes that international arguments about mackerel quotas mean it is no longer a sustainable choice. MCS advises that mackerel should now only be eaten occasionally and that consumers should opt for herrings or sardines. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which advises governments on fishing issues, has also warned that the stock is being overexploited.



Mackerel quotas have been the source of a dispute among the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Faroe Islands since at least 2010. Short-term economic interests have so far outweighed overfishing warnings.

As the most recent development in this story, mediation was proposed. Just a week ago, Richard Lochhead, the Scottish Fisheries Secretary requested the assistance of an international mediator to resolve the dispute. Scotland hopes that mediation will help solve the problem, since negotiations

have continued to remain at a stalemate despite multiple attempts to quell the conflict. In the third straight year of talks, negotiations failed again in December 2012 to yield an agreement.

While the other parties to the dispute have not replied yet to this proposal, the idea is **backed by the Scottish Government**: “*It is clear that there needs to be meaningful and productive talks over this situation as too many rounds of talks have not moved us closer to a solution (...) Obviously something needs to change and the idea of international mediation is one that needs to happen.*”

The Mackerel dispute has the potential to become another casebook example of successful international mediation in a conflict over limited natural resources. Let’s keep our fingers that it turns out this way. For mackerel, and for mediation.

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