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Regional Advisory Councils to hold Edinburgh conference on decision making after CFP reform

Six of Europe's seven Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) will meet with the European Commission, Member States, politicians, scientists, economists and stakeholders in Edinburgh next week to discuss decision-making in the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

The conference, organised by the North Sea, North Western Waters, Pelagic, Baltic Sea, Long Distance and South West Waters RACs, will be hosted by the Scottish Government and jointly funded by Marine Scotland and Defra.

Decision-making and how it will take place in future will be the main focus for the two-day conference at the Merchants' Hall on November 3 and 4.

The conference is now fully booked, with delegates coming from places including Europe, Japan, and Australia, and a waiting list for places has been started.

Delegates will cover subjects such as reversing the burden of proof and the participation of stakeholders in fisheries management, and will also discuss the legalities of regional management.

They will look at examples of fisheries management which work elsewhere in the world, with a presentation from the Australian Government Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, and at the wider environmental perspective to fisheries management.

The first day will cover scenarios and options for decision-making and governance and on the second delegates will look at defining a way forward for fisheries governance in Europe.

The conference is expected to be a forum for discussion and workshops will explore regional management, stakeholder participation, future CFP decision-making and the future need for expert advice.

Democracy and the role of the European Parliament within a reformed CFP will also be covered by Struan Stevenson MEP, vice president of the Committee on Fisheries of the European Parliament.

The conference will be attended by both Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Richard Lochhead MSP, and UK Minister for Marine and Natural Environment, Huw Irranca-Davies MP.



North Sea Regional Advisory Council chairman Hugo Andersson said: “This conference is another example of how RACs can work collectively to address extremely important issues.

“All RACs recognise the importance of having effective, sustainable future fisheries management, which is good for stakeholders, communities, fish stocks and the environment.”

Scottish Fisheries Secretary Richard Lochhead said: “This major international conference will help highlight why Scotland is so well-placed to lead the debate on future fisheries management.

“The fact that so many respected fisheries experts are coming to Edinburgh provides further evidence that our industry is at the forefront of developing innovative solutions.”

RACs are the formal channel for stakeholders to provide suggestions and advice to the EC and the Council of Ministers and Member States on fishing in Europe.

The Regional Advisory Councils are a key element of the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

They aim for better engagement of the people the policy affects and for more regionally-focused fisheries management.

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