



“Sweden supports the idea for a temporary moratorium on deep sea bottom trawling...” It is the intention of the Government that this fundamental position will continue to be promoted in those discussions within the EUs biodiversity- and fisheries group where bottom trawling in deep waters will be discussed before a common EU position in these questions can be formulated.”

Lena Sommestad
Swedish Environment Minister
Parliamentary question, January 2005

“France will support a moratorium on all deep species fishing techniques where that are no RFMOs (75% of the oceans) [...] France encourages the adaptation of the mandate of RFMOs to integrate to the protection of biodiversity [...]”

French Government
2005

Even the Spanish government states ...



Spanish government,
August 2005

“This suspension of trawling will only affect new areas whereby Spanish vessels will not be allowed to trawl on seamounts, hydrothermal vents and cold water corals anywhere in the high seas [...] Bottom trawling on the Patagonian shelf will continue [...]. In the event that vulnerable ecosystems had been located in this fishing area, they would now be gone due to past trawling.”

GREENPEACE

The case for a moratorium on
HIGH SEAS BOTTOM TRAWL FISHING



The EU is dragging out the inevitable ...

The European Community (EC) has been negotiating its position on a UN General Assembly moratorium on bottom trawl fishing on the high seas, with a view to protecting vulnerable deep sea ecosystems from destructive fishing practices.

However, the Council Working Party on the Law of the Sea (COMAR) appears deadlocked, with those wanting to protect some of the most diverse habitats on this planet at loggerheads with countries unwilling to accept limits on their fishing fleets.

Here is what they say....

“Deep sea bottom trawling is an act of insanity and should become subject to prosecution.”



Achim Steiner, IUCN Director General and future UNEP Director General
(June 2006-2010)

“Evidence of actual destruction of ecosystems is overwhelming [...] we know sufficient about growing human pressure on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction to [...] tak[e] further steps [...] on the basis of the precautionary principle [...]”



Gerhard Haffner - Austrian EU Presidency on behalf of the European Community

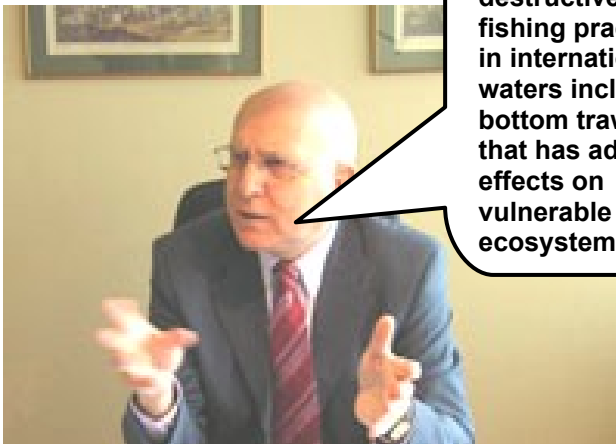
UN Working Group, February 2006

“We have committed the UK publicly [...] to continue to pursue a strong EU position on destructive fisheries practices through international co-operation, including the use of prohibitions against deep-sea bottom trawling on seamounts and other vulnerable ecosystems. We see this as an important part of our commitment to the WSSD target to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.”



Ben Bradshaw, UK Fisheries Minister,
Letter to Greenpeace 2005

“We should put in place an interim prohibition of destructive fishing practices in international waters including bottom trawling that has adverse effects on vulnerable marine ecosystems”



Stavros Dimas, EU Environment Commissioner
Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Curitiba, March 2006

“We must commit to safeguard parts of the deep marine environment that are particularly rich in biodiversity”



Jacques Chirac
French President
2005

“Everyone must be aware (that) without intact coral reefs, warm and cold water reefs, you will not be able to restore fish stocks fully.”

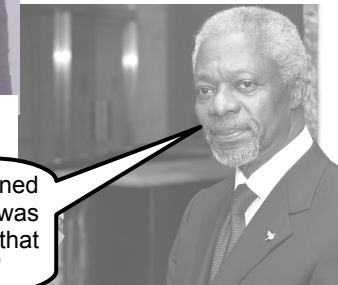


Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director
(1997-2006)

“Global fisheries authorities must agree to eliminate bottom trawling on the high seas by 2006 to protect seamounts and other ecologically sensitive habitats.”



Jeffrey Sachs
UN Millennium Project



“If at one time what happened on and beneath the seas was ‘out of sight, out of mind’, that can no longer be the case.”

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the UN

The European Community to date has failed to respond to the recommendations, resolutions and calls for URGENT measures to protect deep-sea biodiversity on the high seas.

Protecting deep-sea life for the benefit of future generations is good policy and makes good sense. The European Community must adopt a position in support of an immediate UN moratorium on high seas bottom trawling, if it is to remain a credible voice in sound fisheries management and on the protection of biodiversity across the planet.