

Commissioner Dimas calls for prohibition of destructive fishing practices such a bottom trawling

Speaking yesterday at the high level ministerial segment of the eighth conference of the parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 8) taking place in Curitiba, Brazil, from 20 to 31 March, Commissioner Dimas called for urgent action to halt the destructive practices affecting vulnerable ecosystems and the application for the precautionary approach where necessary.

"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, said Stavros Dimas, Commissioner for the Environment, speaking at a workshop on biodiversity and agriculture. Such prohibition should be in place at least until appropriate conservation and management measures have been adopted in accordance with international law".

COP 8 aims to increase international efforts to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of 1992 and meet the UN target of "significantly reducing" the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The EU expects progress on the crucial issue of developing a global network of protected land and marine areas.

During a separate meeting with European parliamentarians in Curitiba, Commissioner Dimas who is heading the EC delegation underlined the threats that the loss of biodiversity poses for the globe and generations to come. "The threat of loss of biodiversity is bigger than climate change if we consider that once a species is lost, no mitigation measure can help bring it back, " said Commissioner Dimas. He added that much more work needs to be done to explain and communicate "why the extinction of a species can have a global irreversible impact."

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