

To: Members of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee

Brussels, June 12th 2013

RE: Progress on Commission's proposal (COM(2012)0371) for a regulation establishing specific conditions to fishing for deep-sea stocks in EU and international waters of the North-East Atlantic

Dear Member of the Fisheries Committee,

We, the undersigned NGO and scientific institutes, are writing to request your support for ensuring that the debate on new legislation for the management of deep-sea fishing in the North-East Atlantic progresses without delay so that it may be concluded within the mandate of this Parliament.

The European Commission's proposal, COM(2012)0371, was released in July 2012, and your Committee began its deliberations in October. In February 2013, the Committee held a hearing with evidence reflecting the views of a broad range of stakeholders. We appreciate that members sought further information and asked for the organisation of a second hearing and a revised impact assessment. However, we ask you to ensure that this will not result in any unnecessary delay.

Many deep-sea fish species and ecosystems are vulnerable to overexploitation and damage. For the past 10 years, this threat to the ocean's health has been the subject of extensive international negotiations in which the EU has played an active and constructive role. As a result, a series of resolutions and a set of international guidelines for the management of deep-sea fisheries were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the Food and Agriculture Organization. These should serve as the basis for new EU legislation to manage deep-sea fisheries in the North-East Atlantic.

We urge the Committee to support a regulation for the management of deep-sea fisheries that would:

- **End deep-sea overfishing** by ensuring that the catch of all deep-sea species is regulated and that fishing is permitted only if the catch, including that of by-catch species, can be limited to sustainable levels based on a clear scientific understanding of the status of deep-sea stocks and associated precautionary science-based management.
- Ensure that deep-sea fisheries are managed to **minimise and, where possible, eliminate the by-catch of non-target species** and **prevent the catch of the most vulnerable species**.
- Ensure that **adverse impacts on vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems**, such as corals, sponges, and seamounts, are prevented through appropriate management of all deep-sea fisheries, including the closure of vulnerable areas to deep-sea bottom fishing.
- Require **impact assessments** for all deep-sea fisheries.
- End destructive fishing practices through a **phase-out of bottom trawling and bottom gill-net fishing** for deep-sea species.

The EU urgently needs to advance the sustainable management of deep-sea fisheries and the protection of vulnerable and ecologically important deep-sea species and ecosystems. We therefore call on the Fisheries Committee to complete its work on this important issue and confirm the schedule for consideration of this file with a Committee vote on the report no later than September 2013.

Respectfully yours,



The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition



The Pew Charitable Trusts



Oceana



Greenpeace



World Wildlife Fund



Seas at Risk



The North Sea Foundation



BirdLife Europe



Bloom Association, France



Humanité et Biodiversité, France



Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, France



Fondation GoodPlanet, France



Longitude 181 NATURE, France



NABU Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V., Germany



Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Germany



Die Meeresschutzorganisation

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