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1st September 2015**Report on regulating deep sea fishing amounts to a “sexed up dossier”**

A recent investigation that infers the levels of bycatch in commercial deep water fisheries outweigh the benefits derived from those fisheries is bogus, according to Europeche, the European fishing industry representative body.

The report claims that regulating deep sea fishing by depth can be justified based upon the analysis of scientific trawl surveys. The body said the report doesn't even begin to understand the nature of the commercial fisheries that take place in such areas today. Inferring that the level of bycatch from scientific trawl surveys is equivalent to actual contemporary fishing practices is like comparing apples and pears.

Kathryn Stack, Managing Director of Europeche said; *"Commercial trawling targets specific commercial species in known locations where catches are good. Bycatch is a nuisance and costly to fishing businesses so naturally fishermen try to avoid it. On the other hand, scientific surveys are located randomly and are aimed at measuring the abundance of a wide range of species in the sea and so certainly do not reflect the pattern of commercial activity. It is also important to bear in mind that the landing obligation will force vessels to be even more selective in order to have more holding space, since all catches will have to be landed. Vessels therefore will be avoiding areas where they would have directed efforts on these species."*

The report goes on to infer that there are high levels of shark species caught. This is making selective use of the facts since the survey data containing low levels of shark species were omitted from the report's analysis. Given that these species cannot be landed commercially, fishermen will actively avoid them.

The scientific trawl survey data is used to recommend that a depth based prohibition on trawling should be put in place. Europeche support the need for the protection of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, but banning fishing from areas that have been fished for many years risks displacing activity onto more pristine habitats.

What's more, many species cannot be caught by other fishing methods other than trawling, so the proposal would forgo making use of what is inherently a renewable food source, and one of the most sustainable forms of food production on the planet.

Stack continued; *"Europeche advocates a more practical solution that should give protection to Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and freeze the current footprint of fishing to areas that are already fished, enabling a more straight forward approach to both management and, more importantly, monitoring and enforcement."*

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Currently, Europeche consists of 13 national organizations of fishing enterprises from 9 EU Member states.

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