

A common vision for the future of our industry

By Ivan Lopez, *on behalf of European
deep-sea fishing professionals*



I. Introduction

- **Our goal:** achieve **sustainable fisheries management**, as well as **ensure food security**
- **How to achieve this:** **better regulation**, developed in collaboration with the authorities and through dialogue with stakeholders
- In this presentation:
 - **Why we think the European Commission's text is not adapted** to the legal/political, environmental and socio-economic realities in which the EU's fisheries policy takes root
 - **A vision of modern deep-water fisheries** that should inspire better regulation

II. Why we disagree with the EC proposal

The European Commission's proposal is flawed on three levels:

- 1) Legal and political
- 2) Scientific and environmental
- 3) Socio-economic

2.1 Legal - political concerns

- Absence of adequate stakeholder consultation
- **Not consistent with current and future EU fisheries policy framework**
 - *No species management plan (Article 4 of the EC proposal: new “**double**” licensing system)*
 - *Fails to take into account the future discard ban*
- Proposed ban on bottom-trawling is **disproportionate** to the objectives laid out in the proposal...
- **...and is not consistent with international regulation** (NEAFC, NAFO, UN/FAO)
- **Discriminatory**
 - *Not applicable to third country vessels*

2.2 Scientific-environmental concerns

- Objective: to strike the **right balance** between **sustainable exploitation of deep-sea species** and the **protection of biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems**
- **BUT** DEEPFISHMAN and other recent scientific evidence not taken into account :
 - Tom Blasdale (ICES): *“Thanks to management measures mortality on the main commercial stocks now close to or below MSY levels”*; “Some deep-sea species such as deep water sharks need specific protection”
 - Pascal Lorance (DEEPFISHMAN): “EU legislation has been effective in reducing the fishing effort within deep-sea fisheries”

2.3 Socio-economic concerns

- EC proposal fails to properly evaluate and take into account the **economic impact of a ban** – recognised by European Parliament in its letter to Commissioner Damanaki
- Deep-sea fishing involves **more than a thousand vessels** across Europe
- Impact of discard ban
- Impact on entire socio-economic chain of interdependent service providers; cross-border dependencies; cumulative effect on vulnerable, peripheral communities

III. Our vision of modern deep-water fisheries

We have agreed on **basic principles** that should inspire future regulation of the deep-sea sector, on the three levels analysed above:

- 1) Legal and political
- 2) Scientific-environmental
- 3) Socio-economic

3.1 Legal & political

- **Strengthen EU measures to protect habitat** while harmonising them with measures in force in other jurisdictions
- **No “one size fits all” approach** - Vulnerable habitats and species do not always overlap and vulnerable habitats are not present everywhere on the deep-sea bed
- **Bottom-up approach** in order to achieve the objectives of this legislation
 - *Taking into account the work of RFMOs*
 - *FAO calls for using technical knowledge*

3.2 Scientific-environmental

- **Most deep-sea stocks are exploited close to or at MSY levels** → Further improvement in this direction is possible, radical U-turn neither is needed nor justified
- **Stock management** measures (for example: TACs and quotas) have been an effective tool for the management of deep-sea species
- **Spatial management** have proved to protect vulnerable species and ecosystems
→ *“Plaice box”, blue ling, Rockhall Bank success stories*

3.3 Socio-economic

- Need to create a **level playing field** for deep-sea fishing
 - EU fleet only accounts for 24% of the overall catches
 - Taking into account all vessels fishing deep-sea species in the North-East Atlantic (Norwegian, Russian, Faroe, Iceland) -
 - Other countries export their catches to the EU
 - Consumer demand for deep-sea stocks will remain

NEAFC measures to be incorporated into EU legislation

- **Measures to “freeze the footprint”** of deep-sea fishing activities
→ *Example: NAFO measures*
- **Measures to protect specific zones** where vulnerable marine habitats exist
- **“Move-on rules”** or similar temporary measures

Therefore...

- We need better regulation based on facts not emotions or fear
- We need to continue our good collaboration with scientists in order to gather more information on our most vulnerable ecosystems
- We are ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with European policy-makers over the coming months

Thank you!

