

Title: **How Deep Is the European Union Fleet Fishing?**

Authors: Sebastian Villasante, INIDEP. University Santiago de Compostela (Argentina)

Abstract: With the decline of main predators whose habitat is confined to continental platforms, the growth in fishing demand and new technologies has caused the expansion of fisheries towards areas which are increasingly deeper. Globally, the quantification and evolution of catches worldwide as well the expansion of deep-sea fisheries have been carried out, but there still remains the need to develop a complete quantitative and qualitative examination of the geographical expansion of the European fleet around the world. Therefore, the specific aims of this paper are to (a) test, through analysis of the mean depth of catches, if there has been an expansion of the European fishing fleet and to (b) measure the vulnerability of exploited fishing resources using the mean longevity as main index of vulnerability during the 1950-2006 period. The results obtained indicate that there is an enormous expansion towards fisheries which are increasingly vulnerable, with slow growth, late maturity and high longevity. Here, the mean depth of catches of bottom marine species of the Union European fleet was 84 m, from 164 m in the 1950s to 248 m in 2003, which duplicates the global values obtained by Morato et al. (2006) for the worldwide fishing fleet.