



One of the seminal moments in terms of EU fisheries policy – certainly in my memory – came not when MEPs finally accepted what rational people had always know, or even when Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall took his 'fish fight' to Brussels in 2011, but when Hugh's fellow celebrity chef Raymond Blanc took to the sea for his BBC TV series last year and discovered to his horror just what large numbers of fish were simply dumped back into the sea, or discarded. The look on the face of the culinary wizard spoke volumes.

The actions (and reactions) of the two may have influenced the European Parliament in voting for an outright ban on discards in January. What will certainly influence the fisheries ministers of the EU is what they consider to be the most expedient short-term policy to adopt, ie whether to adopt the policy as agreed and proposed by the Commission, TV chefs and all right-thinking people or dilute it to provide a sop to their fishing constituencies. It all depends on which they consider has the most votes in it.

The ministers are meeting as this column is being written, so the result will be known by the time I commit to the screen again. I wonder if any of said ministers will wake up to find a fish's head in the bed. Horses are, of course, too valuable as a food source these days. There should be a category in the Environmental Directory for environmentally aware restaurants and chefs.

- Yet another 'flagship of the European Commission, its emissions trading scheme, has at last been rumbled for what is: just another way of pretending to act on climate change while all the time lining the pockets of corporate Europe. Basically, a carbon trading scheme is just a way for rich companies to carry on emitting carbon in place of poorer countries who can't afford to pollute on the same scale anyway.

Isaac Rojas, of Friends of the Earth Latin America and Caribbean, explained it thus: "The offset projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the biggest offset scheme, has

actually increased emissions while causing land grabs and human rights violations, community displacements, conflicts and increased local environmental destruction. Other new market mechanisms and related financial products (such as forest carbon offsets and biodiversity offsets) follow the same logic which allows, and offsets, deforestation, forest degradation, biodiversity loss and water pollution."

A loose alliance of environmental organisations has called on the EU to scrap the ETS altogether, in place of deferring – or 'backloading' – the latest process. In a surprise development, a vote on the issue in the European Parliament has been cancelled.

- BP, meanwhile, is benefitting from no such stay of execution. The producer has gone on trial in New Orleans over the 2010 *Deepwater Horizon* affair. Together with contractors on the project and the rig's operator, BP has come under fierce attack from lawyers representing the US Department of Justice and businesses affected by the spill. The entire process – which could result in the biggest civil fine in history – will liven up the environment sections of press and other commentators for many weeks to come. It will also occupy an army of experts.

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