



WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING: FRANCE24H

Or when a journalist lies about their purpose and intention when they go to interview a sector, takes statements out of context and unscrupulously manages to manipulate information for their own hidden agenda.

In these times in which we live, one of the scourges of our society has already been exposed, “**Fake News**” that is intended to manipulate and obtain benefits at the expense of the transparency and truth which should shine out in the world of journalism and, in general, within our circles. It is clear that if a professional is going to write an article on a subject and wants to document the reality, they must be stringent, scrupulous and professional, and in addition, they must address it as honestly and impartially as possible.

From the fishing sector in Almería we want to describe the event that occurred when the FRANCE24H- Élément Terre team, specifically the authors Valérie DEKIMPE | Marina BERTSCH Siga | Elise DUFFAU | Romain CALVETTI | Antonia KERRIGAN | Lucien PETIT-FELICI of the story published on 24 June 2022 “**Trawlers: weapons of marine destruction**” (a sensationalist headline, don't you think?) came to film the worrying situation of trawling in a political scenario which was unfairly pressuring the dying fishermen... They ostensibly had come to demonstrate to the world, through their work, that fishing by trawling in the Mediterranean is different to what some people think... and to defend the work carried out by family businesses that is different to trawling in other parts of the world.... And with that calling card they were welcomed into the port, the fish market and even onto the boat.

Well, in the case of the journalists signing the reportage, it is evident that there is neither honesty, or courage, or professionalism. The reporter showed up in Almeria port with intentions very different to what she really intended. She lied in order to obtain statements and for a boat to take them on board to record images, a boat that innocently opened its doors to her and which, she later daubed as “destroyers of the sea” with inconsistencies even within the reportage itself... to be more specific, the boat EL MONGUIO, carries a system of flying or hydraulic doors that make no contact with the seabed, exactly the example the scientist, Pere Puig, mentions as a sustainability-compatible option, and this boat is an example of a practice that is widely found in the port of Almeria following the initiative of Mr. Jose Maria Gallart, who is financially supporting the transition of the trawling sector to more sustainable methods... but in the reportage, Gallart has been described very subjectively and unethically with expressions such as “he says with a certain irony” as if he were the villain in a Disney movie ... in other words, these journalists have lied in order to achieve a clear objective of placing blame, and they have not even bothered to accurately document the facts because otherwise they would have seen that the boat they were boarding was one that precisely uses the trawling method with the least impact, and they then give an example that trawling should be replaced by fishing with other lesser types of fishing gear.... when this type of fishing does not minimally meet the current demand for fish and shellfish. At the same time, they say trawling is being carried out in marine protected areas, insinuating that the fishermen are breaking the law:

Seco de los Olivivos is a Site of Community Importance that has no current Management Plan with fishing restrictions and THEREFORE the fishermen currently fishing there do so in accordance with

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regulations in force, they follow the laws the fishermen want their livelihood to have a future, and we propose different lines of action in working meetings with the authorities, including protected areas for biodiversity. The argument that the fishing trawlers act in marine protected areas is a misleading accusation as the professional fisherman works wherever there are fish to catch and the regulations are legal.

But this lack of ethics and professionalism doesn't stop only with these journalists, as the channel FRANCE24H boasts that they are fighting against disinformation and claim to be upholders of the truth.

So, excuse me, representatives of this TV channel, but the truth cannot be something obtained through lies. The truth cannot be something that is contradicted in the documentary itself by saying that a boat uses destructive fishing gear when it actually carries the very equipment which, minutes later, the scientist praises as being the solution for sustainable fishing. The truth cannot be stated with ambiguity and misrepresentations.

To be a journalist you have to work with honesty, transparency and courage, that is, with professionalism.

This is not how to do truthful reporting. Not this way.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a horizontal line with a vertical stroke crossing it, and a large, stylized flourish on the right side.

Jose Maria Gallart

President of the Andalusian Federation of Fishing Associations