

## Sad days for seals

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On March 2nd, the European Parliament's internal market and consumer protection committee backed a full ban on the trade in seal products and rejected a proposal for a product labelling scheme based on international or EU welfare standards which has been proposed by Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, (IMCO) rapporteur Diana Wallis.

The proposed amendments to the ban in the trade in seal products offered the EU a unique opportunity to drive up welfare standards for all seal hunts, which the European Parliament has now rejected.

Seal hunting nations around the world will continue to hunt seals, but they won't be following any international welfare standards. Victims of this ban will be the growing seal populations and the communities that depend on them. In many countries, including: Canada, Greenland, Namibia, Norway, Russia, South Africa and Uruguay, sealing provides essential food supplies and a rare opportunity to earn cash income for Aboriginal and coastal communities.

Conservation groups have now joined Inuit leaders and seal hunting nations to condemn the current attempts of the European Parliament and Council of Ministers to rush through a ban on all products from the hunting of seals. WWF Canada points out that the ever-increasing population of Harp seals in the North Atlantic is currently at a near record high of more than 5 million. In Canada, the hunt is monitored by veterinarian scientists and is carried out to strict quotas. WWF Canada says that there are no conservation grounds for ending the seal hunt and that they recognise that hunting seals is an important part of the local economy, culture and heritage of many coastal communities in Atlantic Canada, the Arctic and many other maritime nations.

Andreas Lenhart, Chairman of the International Fur Trade Federation sums up the frustration felt by many: "If MEPs and EU member states were truly interested in animal welfare, they would vote for derogations to the ban thereby creating an incentive to continue to improve welfare standards. In voting for a total ban, ongoing seal hunts have no reason to achieve EU welfare standards. Furthermore, vulnerable communities will suffer unnecessarily and the North Atlantic eco-system is distressed."

For more information, please contact the BFTA at [info@britishfur.co.uk](mailto:info@britishfur.co.uk)

### **About BFTA:**

The BFTA (British Fur Trade Association) represents the fur sector in the UK, promotes high standards and champions fur fashion.

BFTA is a member of the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF). The IFTF promotes strict codes of practice that meet or exceed established and accepted animal welfare standards for wild and farmed fur. The BFTA and the IFTF strongly condemn cruelty to animals and their members do not trade in endangered species.

[www.britishfur.co.uk](http://www.britishfur.co.uk)

### **About Origin Assured:**

The new fur industry initiative gives consumers assurance about the provenance of fur they are buying. Just as people wish increasingly to know about the sources of their food, coffee and clothing, research among designers and consumers has shown that they too would like to know about the source of their fur.

When consumers see the OA™ label they can be certain that, wild or farmed, the fur comes from a country where national or local regulations or standards governing fur production are in force.

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