

IFTF Statement - Rushed Seal Ban Is A Lost Opportunity For Animal Welfare – 27 July 09

The EU Ban on products from seals, rushed through into law today, is a lost opportunity for good legislation, based on science and WTO principles to improve the welfare of *all* hunted seals. This is the opinion of the International Fur Trade Federation (IFTF), a federation of 42 fur trade associations in 35 countries.

Andy Lenhart, Chairman of the IFTF says: "This ban only succeeds in punishing Inuit and other remote coastal peoples by ensuring that the market for their goods has collapsed. Seals in countries from Canada to Namibia will continue to be hunted, for a variety of good reasons."

In fact, in Scotland MEP Struan Stevenson has just talked about the need to manage seal populations there - "The grey seal population in Scottish waters is now at a record high and is no longer ecologically sustainable... it is high time this problem was addressed."

Says Andy Lenhart, "Apparently it doesn't matter to the European Parliament how seals are hunted, so long as there is no trade in seal by-products.

"We are not the only ones to have been asking the EU to lead the way in setting international welfare standards for all seals. A benchmark could have been established in co-operation with sealing nations, so that only the by-products from accredited hunts would be allowed to enter the market, which would create an incentive to continue improvements.

"Instead, we now have a rushed ban that is no more than a cynical political move to pander to MEPs' idea of public sentiment. It completely ignores all the very serious legal, WTO and welfare concerns of many and is an example of the kind of bad legislation the European Parliament claims it tries to avoid. "

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