



Mission of Norway to the EU

EU perspectives of seals and sealing

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The process in brief

- Written declaration in the European Parliament (EP) – September 2006
 - 425 signatories
- In Jan. 2007 the Commission undertook to conduct a full assessment of animal welfare aspects of the seal hunts
 - EFSA conducted a scientific study.
 - COWI conducted an assessment the regulatory frameworks and the consequences of trade bans in the different countries
 - The Commission also conducted a public consultation process on the Internet
- **Conclusion:** There was a need for legislative action to ensure animal welfare considerations in the seal hunt.





The draft regulation

- The European Commission adopted a proposal concerning trade in seals products 23 July 2008
- The proposal will be decided upon through co-decision procedure (jointly by the European Parliament and the Council)
- EEA-relevant





Ban of trade in seal products

- A general ban of trade in all products deriving from seals within the Community
- It encompasses internal trade, importation, exportation and transit of seal products from 17 different species of seals
- Seal products: meat, oil, blubber, fur skins (raw, tanned or dressed)





Derogations

- Inuit hunt:
 - Article 3, paragraph 2: "...hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit communities and which contribute to their subsistence."
 - Article 3, paragraph 3: "The Commission shall adopt all measures necessary to implement paragraph 2"





Derogations cont.

- Non-Inuit hunts:
 - Seal products from countries which have adequate legislative provisions to ensure effective killing and skinning of seals without causing avoidable pain.
 - Legislation effectively enforced by relevant authorities
 - Certification scheme





Criteria for derogations

- Animal welfare principles has to be specified in the legislation
- Hunting tools and their characteristics should be specified
- Verifying insensibility and death. The method used has to be outlined.
- Bleeding-out of all animals directly following stunning. It has to take place before proceeding to stun another seal.
- Hunting conditions have to be specified





Criteria for derogations cont.

- Training of hunters – seal biology, hunting methods and the "three-step" procedure
- Independent monitoring
- Ability of third party to monitor
- Reporting requirements for hunters and inspectors
- Sanctions and compliance





Certificates – Labelling and marking

- Certificates shall contain information to attest that the products are coming from seals that are killed and skinned without causing avoidable pain, and that the country of origin has adequate legislation which is enforced
- Products shall be labelled





Committee procedure

- The Commission shall be assisted by the so-called CITES committee
 - If the committee agrees with the Commission, the proposed measure will be implemented
 - If the committee disagrees with the Commission or has no opinion, the Commission shall forward their proposal and the committee's opinion to the Council who will decide on the measure
 - The European Parliament shall be informed about the proceedings on a regular basis





Next steps in Brussels

- European Parliament (EP)
 - The lead committee will most likely be the IMCO-committee (Internal Market and Consumer Protection)
 - PECH, INTA and ENVI will probably be consulted
- The plenary have to adopt the regulation
 - At the earliest in December 2008





Next steps in Brussels cont.

- Council of the EU
 - The Environmental Working Group will handle this file
 - Environmental ministers will discuss this matter in at least 2 meetings.
 - Possible adoption in their meeting in February 2009
 - Negotiations between the Council and the EP have to take place in parallel with the internal processes in the EP and the Council





Next steps in Brussels cont.

- European Commission
 - Has to adopt implementing measures after the regulation has been adopted
 - Inuit hunt derogation
 - Non-Inuit hunts derogation
 - Certificates
 - Labelling and marking
 - This work will not start until the Commission knows which direction the proceedings in the EP and the Council go.





Entry into force

- 20 days after publication in the official journal (OJ)
- Prediction:
 - If adopted in February and printed in the OJ mid-March it enters into force at the earliest in April 2009.
 - The operational articles, relating to bans and derogations, will apply 6 months after the date of entry into force of the regulation.
 - Ban of trade in seal products may enter into force **Oct. 2009 at the earliest.**
 - In any case not before the Commission has adopted implementation rules





Recommendations

- “Lobby” the EP
 - Animal welfare groups are very active and it is a need to create a balance
- “Lobby” the Council WG
 - French presidency
- Political dialogue
 - Nordic Council of Ministers
- Start a dialogue with the Commission as soon as possible with regard to the implementing measures





Thank you

