Declaration on banning seal products in the European Union

2006/2242(DCE) - 26/09/2006 - Written declaration

The European Parliament adopted a Declaration on banning seal products in the European Union.

The Parliament recalls that more than one and a half million harp seal pups have been slaughtered in the North West Atlantic over the last four years and the vast majority of these animals were less than three months old. Moreover, it notes that the last time the annual number of seals now being killed was slaughtered in the 1950s and 1960s the seal population was reduced by two thirds.

The Parliament notes that, on average, sealers receive less than 5% of their income from sealing, which provides only a few days' work each year. It also stresses the findings of a team of international veterinarians, which concluded that 42% of the slaughtered seals they examined may have been skinned whilst still conscious.

The Parliament also recalls that the import of whitecoat harp seal and blueback hooded seal furs and furskin products was **banned within the Community in 1983** pursuant to Directive 83/129/EEC. However, sealers now wait a few days until harp seal pups have moulted and the products of these animals are still imported into the European Union. It notes that a number of EU countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and Italy) have already taken steps to ban the trade in seal products, and others (the UK and the Netherlands) are considering action.

In this context, the Parliament requests the Commission to immediately draft a Regulation to **ban** the import, export and sale of all harp and hooded seal products. It considers that this Regulation should not have an impact on traditional Inuit seal hunting which, however, only accounts for 3% of the current hunt.