

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party  
*for the South East of England*

Commissioner Dimas  
DG Environment  
The European Commission  
200 Rue de la Loi  
B1049 Brussels  
Belgium.

March 20<sup>th</sup> 2008

Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for your letter of February 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 responding to the Campaign Whale petition and correspondence on the subject of whale protection. I am pleased to learn that the Commission is fully committed to upholding the moratorium on whaling and is seeking to use its observer status at the International Whaling Commission to this end. However, I would argue that the EU should be taking a far more proactive role in the protection of whales.

The government of Iceland has just last week issued a statement that it is likely to approve the commercial hunting of whales this summer, despite global opposition. According to news reports from the BBC, the go ahead will include quotas for 100 minke whales and up to 150 fin whales. The latter are currently categorised as endangered and the majority of the meat from 2006's hunt has still not been sold, leading to the government in Iceland announcing in 2007 that renewed whaling would be suspended because there was no market for the meat.

Norway has also recently announced a quota of 1,052 minke whales for 2008, in defiance of the IWC moratorium. This quota is at the highest level since Norway resumed commercial whaling in 1993, despite the fact that its whalers could only kill around half this number in both 2006 and 2007.

If these whale hunts go ahead they will be in direct contravention of the global moratorium, so IWC members and observers must take decisive action against Iceland and Norway, including exploring the possibility of economic sanctions. The Commission is rightly proud that EU waters are a sanctuary for whales and dolphins, yet these species do not respect political or geographical boundaries. Whales can live in safety in some parts of the Atlantic Ocean yet face new risks from hunting in other parts of the same ocean. This is surely not acceptable to the Commission, which is well placed to challenge Iceland and Norway's position, directly and with other members of the IWC. I hope that pressure will be brought to bear immediately on the Icelandic and Norwegian authorities and on member states that may be able to influence the government.

I welcome the Commission's recognition that there needs to be a common EU position and strategic approach to whaling, as well as an effective international regulatory framework. The actions of Slovenia, Greece, Cyprus and Croatia in joining the IWC and supporting the moratorium are positive and I would like to congratulate the Commission for encouraging their membership of the IWC. Bearing all this in mind, will the Commissioner be actively seeking the views of member states about both Norway and Iceland's latest whaling proposals and issuing a common EU position, should there be member state consensus?

The governments of Iceland and Norway intend to start whaling in early May. The whales being targeted migrate through EU waters where they are given the protection they need. I call upon the Commission to take the strongest possible action to remove the threats faced elsewhere because of renewed whaling.

I look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.