

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

October 16th 2008

Dear Commissioner,

Every year around 2,000 whales are driven ashore and cruelly slaughtered in the Faroe Islands, mid-way between the Shetland Islands and Iceland. The whales are primarily North Atlantic long-finned pilot whales, whose numbers are unknown and who are listed as 'strictly protected' by the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.

I understand that the inhabitants of the Faroe Islands have no subsistence need for whale meat, and much of the flesh is left to rot or dumped. It cannot be exported because it is polluted with heavy metals and other toxins, so does not meet EU health standards for human food. According to one campaign:

Islanders in motorboats first drive the whales into a bay. The chase may be lengthy. The exhausted, terrified and confused whales are eventually driven into the shallows. Here the bloodbath begins. The islanders repeatedly hammer 2.2 kg metal gaffs into the living flesh of each whale until the hooks hold. A 15 cm knife is then used to slash through the blubber and flesh to the spinal column. Next the main blood vessels are severed. The blood-stained bay is soon filled with horribly mutilated and dying whales.

The drive hunt is a practice abandoned elsewhere many decades ago, and now outlawed by other European states. Although the Faroe Islands have their own government and make their own laws, there are still strong links with Denmark, who maintain a protectorate over the islands. I am, therefore, calling on the Commission to raise this with the Danish authorities as a matter of urgency. Immediate pressure must be brought to bear on the Faroe Islands to stop this brutal slaughter, which is opposed by public opinion across the EU.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.