

Brussels, 26.5.2003  
PMA/da A:19900/D:5955

Dr. Caroline Lucas, MEP  
European Parliament  
Office 8G103  
Rue Wiertz  
1047 Brussels

Dear Dr Lucas,

Thank you for your letter of 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003 addressed to Mr Pascal Lamy regarding the Seal Directive 83/129/EEC. This Directive was adopted in order to respond to the various concerns about the population status of the harp and hooded seals and especially doubts as to the effect of non-traditional hunting on the conservation and population status of hooded seals. This Directive is monitored by my services and I am therefore happy to answer your letter.

I fully understand the animal welfare concerns with respect to the annual seal hunt in Canada. However, the Commission has no evidence that the conservation of the species is threatened by the increase in annual seal hunting.

The seal population, as stated in Canada's recently released three-year Atlantic Seal Hunt Management Plan, seems to be healthy and abundant. The sustainable harvesting is closely monitored by this Management Plan. The hunting quota does not seem to have a negative effect on the conservation of the species. The Canadian Government emphasised that it would try to ensure humane hunting practices. It furthermore stated that commercial harvesting of the baby seal products would continue to be prohibited.

The Commission therefore currently does not see any scientific basis for proposing the extension of the above-mentioned Directive, which currently applies to products derived from the pups of whitecoat harp seals and hooded seals (blue-backs), to cover adult seals.

Yours sincerely,

  
Margot WALLSTRÖM