

Inuit Call EU Seal Product Ban Cynical and Unjustified

Monday July 27, 2009 - Ottawa, Ontario – Inuit are united in calling the actions of the European Union cynical and unjustified following today's EU announcement that the Council of Ministers officially passed an import ban on seal products entering into the EU market.

"The seal ban is an abomination because it directly attacks cultures, communities, and livelihoods that represent a basic means of living for many here in Canada, using groundless accusations influenced by animal rights propaganda campaigns," said Mary Simon, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and national leader of Inuit in Canada "And today we are witnessing the EU's willingness to ignore its own trade rules and relations to please certain myopic self-interests while trying to claim some moral high ground—it doesn't add up." EU Ministers are now abandoning core international commitments and principles in order to secure short term domestic gain.

"All Inuit from Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland are standing in solidarity against the EU on this, as hunting sustainably and humanely is something we have done for thousands of years and continue to do so." said Violet Ford, Vice-President of International Affairs at Inuit Circumpolar Council (Canada).

"We are deeply disappointed that EU Ministers did not show more insight and courage than the EU Parliament in confronting the misinformation campaigns targeting Europe in recent years", said Mary Simon. "This is a very cynical and unjustified decision by the EU Ministers and it flies in the face of the EU's own conservation, veterinary and legal advice.

The EU seal product ban leaves the EU open to a variety of trade and human rights responses. The Government of Canada is already committed to taking legal action under World Trade Organization rules, and Inuit leaders in Canada have discussed possible legal and human rights actions last June at the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Annual General Meeting. "Inuit leaders across the Canadian Arctic did discuss options on responding should a ban receive passage," said Mary Simon, "And we want to keep our options open and effective domestically and internationally based on the protection of our human rights, our culture, and our economic interests in the Arctic."

"I commend the Government of Canada's strong reaction to today's vote," said Mary Simon. "Inuit count on the federal government following up

immediately and energetically on its previous, and now re-stated, promise of WTO action. It is a very sad day for us and for Europe that we have come to this. For our part, Inuit will continue to hunt seals. It is my hope that European politicians will come to understand the mistake they have just made.”

Quelle/Source:

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