

ITK/ICC Press Release * Inuit of Canada: European Union Knows Proposed Seal Ban Would Be Unlawful

Ottawa, Ontario - March 27, 2009 - Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC Canada) today revealed that the Council of the European Union (EU) has been told by its own legal advisors that a proposed EU-wide ban on seal product imports would contravene both the EU's own Charter and the EU's obligations under the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The conclusions of the advice given to the Council of the EU by its legal advisors are annexed to this press release.

"We are not surprised to learn of this legal advice," said national Inuit leader Mary Simon, President of ITK, "and we note that it has been given in very clear and categorical terms."

President Simon added, "Inuit know that the European Union was founded out of the tragedy and chaos of World War II to create a new and peaceful Europe anchored firmly in cooperation among neighbors and respect for the rule of law. We have great respect for the project of a united Europe and we are confident that the EU and its peoples will be anxious to ensure that both the EU itself, and all its member countries, conduct themselves in full conformity with both EU and international law."

Duane Smith, President of ICC (Canada), said: "The Canadian Government is now equipped with compelling evidence that the EU knows that it cannot just unilaterally impose a ban on the trade of seal products. We expect that the federal government will do whatever is needed under international trade law and other avenues to insist that the EU and its members respect their international commitments." Smith underlined that it was revealing that the legal opinions offered the EU could find no valid conservation arguments for a ban in seal products trade.

Quelle/Source:

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