

**Question for written answer E-001058/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Saskia Bricmont (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Regulatory fitness check of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products

A landmark WTO ruling in 2014 upheld the EU's right to prohibit trade in commercial seal products on the grounds of public morality, thereby recognising animal welfare as a legitimate public moral concern.

Non-governmental organisations have reported that since the entry into force of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009¹, an estimated five million seals have been spared cruel deaths in Canada alone. Pelt prices have plummeted and most commercial sealers opt out of participating in the annual commercial hunt.

This strongly suggests that the primary objective of this legislation (i.e. to respond to citizens' concerns about the welfare of seals killed for commercial purposes) has been met. Given the existential threat increasingly posed to Atlantic seal populations by climate change, protecting seals from the pressures of commercial hunting is also more relevant than ever.

In the light of the announced 'fitness check' of the EU seal product trade ban, has the Commission considered that this action, which implies that repeal is a policy option, risks undermining not only the important legal precedent set by the WTO ruling, but also the EU's ability to include provisions on meeting minimum EU animal welfare standards in its future trade agreements?

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¹ Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on trade in seal products (OJ L 286, 31.10.2009, p. 36).