

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2118/09
by Witold Tomczak (IND/DEM)
to the Commission

Subject: Proposal for a regulation of the Council and of the European Parliament concerning trade in seal products (COM(2008)0469)

In the above proposal, the Commission proposes inter alia a ban on the marketing of products from all seal hunts. The adoption of this approach could have adverse effect on the main objective, which is to reduce the suffering of seals. In many cases, seals are pests posing a threat to fish stocks and their numbers need to be kept down. Clearly, from a humanitarian standpoint, the pain, fear and suffering experienced by seals during some commercial hunts, which are subject to no controls whatsoever, need to be kept to a minimum. However, making these hunts less barbaric should not entail a total ban on the marketing of the products derived from them. This would encourage poachers and might result in great suffering to seals, as well as depriving many people of a valuable source of income (the Inuit people, small coastal communities, fur industry). In the opinion of 17 February 2009, which it drew up for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development expressed its support for compromise solutions.

1. Does the Commission intend to impose a total ban on the marketing of products from all seal hunts?
2. Will the Commission also propose compromise solutions allowing more civilised forms of seal hunting and the marketing of products from such hunts, with due regard for sustainable management of the environment and the social and economic interests of the many persons dependent on this activity?