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PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION ON TRADE IN SEAL PRODUCTS

- The seal hunt in Greenland is essential for the livelihood of more than 50 % of the population, either totally or partially. The hunt provides food for humans and dogs, especially in areas where subsistence hunt takes place. The sale of seal skins is often the only cash income available. The socioeconomic and cultural value of the hunt for Greenland is thus significant.
- Seal hunting performed by Greenlandic hunters is sustainable in view of the very great number of seals in the sea around Greenland. Approx. 8 million seals are present in these waters and only 160.000 seals are taken yearly – of which an average of 63.000 sealskins are exported (2004-2007). Presently no seal species in the North Atlantic can be found on the CITES lists of endangered species, which testifies to the sustainability of the hunt.
- The hunt is supported by regulations, monitoring and enforcement. Humaneness and considerations of animal welfare is at the centre of the Greenlandic seal hunt.
- Experiences from the 1980s show that bans on seal skin products send a distinct message to consumers to avoid the product. The current proposal by the European Commission for a comprehensive ban of trade in seal products will severely impact the trade and might destroy the livelihoods of the Greenlandic sealers. Seal skins today trade at the lowest prices ever recorded due the stigmatisation of the hunt.
- As a consequence, the Kingdom of Denmark wishes to convey its deep concern in regards to the proposal for a regulation of the trade in seal skin products and the negative impact that this proposal will have for the Greenlandic society in general and for the seal hunters in particular.

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