



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Implementation & Support to Member States
Mainstreaming & Environmental Assessments

Brussels
ENV.E.1/PL/CA

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your e-mail to Commissioner Sinkevičius, who asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Commission services take note of the information that you provided on the recent activities concerning cetaceans in the Faroe Islands.


The European Union is very committed to the protection of all cetaceans, such as whales and dolphins. Within the EU, the capture or killing of cetaceans is prohibited under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. The sale or exchange of these species is also prohibited by the Member States according to the same Directive. In addition, the introduction of cetaceans into the Community for primarily commercial purpose is banned, pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) N:o 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein, which implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the EU.

The hunting that you mention in your e-mail takes place in the Faroe Islands where according to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Treaty on European Union and the TFEU do not apply. Neither these Treaties nor the secondary EU legislation based thereupon therefore applies to the Faroe Islands or activities taking place there.

As far as international measures are concerned, Denmark is a member of both the CITES and the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The Faroe Islands, however, have been excluded from the scope of application of both conventions.

The hunting is legal in the Faroe Islands and, since EU law does not apply, the Commission unfortunately has limited possibilities to intervene. The Commission has already expressed concerns to the Danish authorities about the annual hunt of cetaceans in the Faroe Islands and will continue to raise this sensitive issue.

Yours sincerely,


Sabine BOURDY
Head of Unit