

News Release

For Immediate Release

European Union approves exemption for Nunavut seal hunt

IQALUIT, Nunavut (July 31, 2015) – The European Union (EU) has formally approved the Government of Nunavut's (GN) application to become a Recognized Body under the Indigenous Communities Exemption of the EU Seal Regime.

This means that the GN will be able to certify that sealskins were harvested according to the rules of the exemption, thereby allowing Nunavut harvesters to sell their sealskins and sealskin products in the European market again.

“This is an important step towards the recognition of sealing as a way of life for Inuit, and is the result of close cooperation between the Department of Environment, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and other sealing stakeholders. We must ensure that communities benefit in a tangible way from this positive development by continuing to promote the recovery of international seal markets,” said Johnny Mike, Minister of Environment.

Following the adoption of the EU seal ban in 2009, international demand and prices for sealskins collapsed. The GN continues to purchase sealskins from hunters through the Department of Environment's Fur Pricing Program; however, sealskin prices remain well below pre-ban levels.

Seal populations thrive both in northern and Atlantic waters. Harp seal numbers exceed seven million animals with no sign of a declining trend. The sale of sealskins will provide harvesters with an important source of income, and help to improve the economic sustainability of the seal hunt, which provides much-needed healthy food to remote Nunavut communities.

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