



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Council confirms strict conditions for marketing seal products in the EU

Today the Council adopted a regulation setting out harmonised strict conditions for the placing on the market of seal products in the European Union (3668/09 + 11152/09 ADD 1).¹

1 The decision was taken without discussion at today's General Affairs Council. The Danish, Romanian and Austrian delegations abstained.

P R E S S

In response to concerns about the animal welfare aspects of seal hunting practices, the new regulation provides that seal products may not be marketed in the EU. Placing on the market will only be permitted where the products result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities to ensure their subsistence. This provision concerns the indigenous peoples of the Inuit homeland in Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Russia. Goods that result from hunts conducted for the sole purpose of sustainable management of marine resources may only be marketed on a not-for-profit basis. Import is also allowed, provided it is of an occasional nature and consists exclusively of goods for the personal use of travellers.

Several member states have adopted or intend to adopt legislation prohibiting trade in seal products, and the regulation will therefore harmonise rules concerning the marketing of seal products so as to avoid fragmentation and distortion of the internal market.

The regulation covers products derived from all species of seals and includes fur skins, organs, meat, oil and blubber, which can for instance be used in cosmetics and medicine.

The new act will come into force 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU. The harmonised rules will become effective nine months later, giving the Commission and the member states time to put in place the necessary implementing measures.

The proposal for the regulation, albeit in considerably different form, was submitted by the Commission in July 2008. The regulation was adopted at first reading under the co-decision procedure, with the European Parliament having voted on 5 May 2009.