

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001578/24
to the Commission
Emma Fourreau (The Left)
(2 September 2024)**

Subject: Fitness check of regulation banning trade in seal products

A fitness check of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products has caused concern amongst many citizens who care about animal welfare.

The 1983 and 2009 regulations, which banned the sale of seal products (meat, skin, fat, pelt) on the EU market, were adopted with the support of the public, who were shocked by the cruelty shown to such a vulnerable marine mammal. This ban deprived the seal industry of its main consumer: commercial hunting in Canada fell by 90%, saving the lives of millions of seals.

The reasons behind the ban, as detailed in the recitals of Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009, remain relevant. Furthermore, seals today are particularly vulnerable to the effects of overfishing and climate breakdown that are threatening their habitat.

Citizens have well-founded concerns about the pressure that the hunting industry and industrial fishing interest groups could exert to relax regulations and decrease the protections afforded to the seal population.

1. Will the Commission reaffirm its commitment to maintaining the ban on the trade in seal products and promoting the strict protection of seals?
2. Can the Commission say how far the assessment has progressed, and when we will know the results?

Submitted: 2.9.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(4 November 2024)**

The Fitness Check of the EU Regulation on Trade in Seal Products ⁽¹⁾ and the EU Seal Pups Directive ⁽²⁾ has been launched to assess whether these instruments remain fit for purpose as to their effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value. Such evaluations are common practice in the lifespan of any piece of EU legislation.

A report of the Fitness Check performed by external contractors on behalf of the Commission, which is expected in January 2025, will integrate the results of the public consultation and the call for evidence, a factual summary of which is already available on the Have Your Say portal ⁽³⁾, and of targeted consultations with key stakeholders, as well as own literature review/research to fill possible knowledge gaps.

The report will serve as input to a Commission Staff Working Document to be published in the first quarter of 2025.

On the basis of the Fitness Check findings, the Commission will consider whether further measures are needed.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2015/1775 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 October 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009 on trade in seal products and repealing Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010, OJ L 262, 7.10.2015, p. 1-6.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 89/370/EEC of 8 June 1989 amending Directive 83/129/EEC concerning the importation into Member States of skins of certain seal pups and products derived therefrom, OJ L 163, 14.6.1989, p. 37-37.

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14031-Trade-in-seal-products-fitness-check-of-EU-rules/public-consultation_en