

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003846/25
to the Commission
Anna-Maja Henriksson (Renew)
(2 October 2025)**

Subject: Ban on the trade in seal products

In 2009, the European Union introduced a ban on the trade in seal products. The ban has had an adverse impact on coastal communities and fishers, especially in Finland and Sweden. In recent decades, seal populations in the Baltic Sea have increased sharply, resulting in damage to fishing gear, affecting fish stocks and hampering the economic sustainability of small-scale fishing.

The possibilities of managing seal populations effectively are limited by the continued trade ban, and there are no incentives for regulated and ethical hunting. The ban makes it impossible to use seal products from hunting in a circular and sustainable way. Such use could contribute to the EU's objectives as regards sustainable resource management, biodiversity and the circular economy, and help safeguard small-scale commercial fishing.

The issue has recently been raised by Finnish and Swedish professional fishing associations. They have expressed serious concern about the ban's impact on the fisheries sector and called for a review of the rules in force, taking into account scientific and socioeconomic factors.

In the light of the foregoing, and with reference to the fitness check that the Commission is currently carrying out on the rules governing the trade in seal products, I would like answers to the following question:

How will the Commission specifically take into account the socioeconomic impact on coastal communities and professional fishers in Member States with burgeoning seal populations?

Submitted: 2.10.2025

**Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(22 December 2025)**

The fitness check of the EU Seals Regime ⁽¹⁾ is currently ongoing. It includes an assessment of the socioeconomic impacts of the legislation on coastal communities and professional fishers, particularly the relevant Baltic Sea EU Member States. Extensive consultations have been carried out, including a public consultation, a Call for Evidence and targeted interviews with stakeholders such as fishers' organisations, public authorities and hunting representatives in the Baltic Sea region.

Once the fitness check is finalised, the Commission will consider whether any further measures are needed, with due regard to international commitments.

⁽¹⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/trade-seal-products_en.