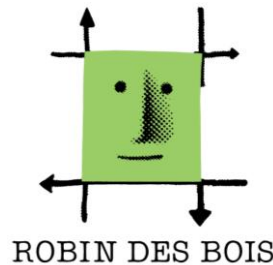




GREENPEACE



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL



Pro Wildlife e.V. · Kidlerstr. 2 · D-81371 München

To
Commissioner Janez Potočnik
DG Environment
European Commission
B - 1049 Brussels

6th May 2014

Dear Commissioner Potočnik,

The undersigning non-governmental organisations, dedicated to the conservation of the environment and animal welfare, write to urge the EU Commission to take action against ongoing commercial whaling in Iceland, including the killing of an alarmingly high number of endangered fin whales.

Since Iceland resumed commercial whaling in 2006, its whalers have killed nearly 1,000 whales, including 414 fin whales. In 2013 alone, Icelandic whalers killed 134 fin whales and 35 minke whales.

In December 2013, Iceland's Minister of Fisheries issued a block quota permitting the yearly killing of 154 fin whales and 229 minke whales from 2014 to 2018.¹ In March 2014, the Minister extended the minke whale block quota to 2019.² These quotas were set arbitrarily and unilaterally, and do not have the approval of either the International Whaling Commission (IWC) or its Scientific Committee. With these activities Iceland is making a mockery of the IWC commercial whaling moratorium and the IWC itself.

Last month, Iceland's sole fin whaling company Hvalur hf, owned by Kristjan Loftsson, exported a shocking volume of around 2,000 metric tons of whale products. The ship carrying these products is en route to Japan. It is apparently using a route via the coast of Africa, likely a conscious effort to avoid EU ports given the present EU discussion on possible transit bans. Including this shipment, more than 5,000 tonnes of whale meat and blubber have been exported to Japan since Iceland's resumption of commercial whaling in 2006.

Although this trade is occurring under Iceland's reservation to the CITES Appendix I listing for the great whales, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) highlighted

¹ <http://stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=5283fe54-318d-4fbc-a1a9-591f240020f2>

² <http://stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=e15ac6a3-c87e-4396-bf33-5a7930cd3195>

in a report of March 2013 that sizeable levels of trade under reservation “may undermine the effectiveness of Appendix I listings.”³

In a landmark verdict on 31st March 2014, the International Court of Justice, responding to a case brought by Australia and New Zealand, halted Japan’s current Antarctic whaling.⁴ Moreover, the United States recently announced a series of diplomatic measures against Iceland over its ongoing commercial whaling and international trade in such products.⁵

Our millions of EU-based supporters expect the European Union to take a leadership role in stopping the unauthorized whaling in our region. The undersigning organisations therefore ask the European Commission to consult with Member States and to:

- 1) urgently coordinate a demarche against Icelandic whaling with other concerned IWC member governments; and
- 2) prepare a resolution expressing concern about Icelandic commercial whaling and trade for the forthcoming IWC meeting in September; and
- 3) consider a suite of possible meaningful actions and measures against Iceland to be implemented if Iceland continues its whaling activities

Over the last few years, the European Union has remained silent with regards to Iceland – presumably in the hope that if Iceland became an EU Member State it would have to stop its whaling activities in compliance with EU legislation, which provides strong protection against hunting and trade for all cetaceans. The accession process has been repeatedly delayed and finally stopped unilaterally by Iceland.

We now respectfully request that the EU does not delay action any further and immediately calls for strong measures to stop Iceland’s whaling and trade.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Christoph Schmidt, Director Pro Wildlife, Germany

On behalf of:

1. Carmen Méndez López, President ADDA (Asociación Defensa Derechos Animal), Spain
2. Luka Oman, President Animal Friends Croatia
3. Susan Millward, Executive Director Animal Welfare Institute, USA
4. Andy Ottaway, Executive Director Campaign Whale, United Kingdom
5. Agnes Zolyomi, General Secretary CEEweb for Biodiversity, Central and Eastern Europe
6. A. Daniel Knaub, President Cetacean Society International (CSI)

³UNEP/WCMC. CITES TRADE–A GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF TRADE IN APPENDIX-I LISTED SPECIES 2013. CoP16 Inf. 34 March 2013; accessible at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/16/inf/E-CoP16i-34.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/148/18162.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/01/message-congress-iceland-and-fisherman-s-protective-act>

7. Solvita Vība, Board Member Dzīvnieku Draugu Fondu (Animals Friend Fund), Latvia
8. Jennifer Lonsdale, Director Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)
9. Ann De Greef, Director GAIA (Global Action in the Interest of Animals), Belgium
10. Thomas Schröder, President German Animal Welfare Federation (Deutscher Tierschutzbund), Germany
11. Undine Kurth, Vice President German League for Nature, Animal Protection and Environment – DNR, Germany
12. Jorgo Riss, Director Greenpeace European Unit
13. Hannele Luukkainen Chairman of the Helsinki Humane Society HESY, Finland
14. Dr. Jo Swabe, EU Director Humane Society International
15. Sonia van Tichelen, EU Director International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
16. Fabian Ritter, President Meer e.V., Germany
17. Tamas Papp, President Milvus Group - Association for Bird and Nature Protection, Romania
18. Leif Miller, CEO Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), Germany
19. Taffy L. Williams, Founder NY4Whales, USA
20. Sigrid Lüber, President OceanCare, Switzerland
21. Muriel Arnal, Director One Voice, France
22. Charlotte Nithart, Director Robin des Bois, France
23. Borys Kala, Vice President Polish Society for Nature Conservation "Salamandra", Poland
24. Petra Deimer, President Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals GSM, Germany
25. Birgith Sloth, Chairwoman Society for the Conservation of Marine Mammals Denmark
26. Denise Wenger, Board of Directors Society for Dolphin Conservation (GRD), Germany
27. Chris Butler-Stroud, CEO Whale & Dolphin Conservation
28. Claire Bass, Head of Wildlife Campaigns WSPA International

Cc: the EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Ms. Maria Damanaki