



---

COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION  
THE CHAIR

Brussels, 2 March 2009

**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR**

**Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee Chair announces Strong Committee Vote in Favour of a Ban on Seal Products in the EU**

---

Arlene McCarthy MEP, Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee of the European Parliament, hailed the overwhelming vote by the Committee in favour of a tough ban on seal products in the European Union.

Ms McCarthy said: "A clear majority of citizens across the European Union are horrified by the cruel clubbing to death of thousands of seals every year. They do not want these products on sale in the EU and today the IMCO Committee has backed citizens' demands for a ban."

"This vote is a clear mandate to persuade the 27 Member States and the Commission to back a tough ban. The Committee rejected by more than 3 to 1 the Commission's proposals for a limited ban and the labelling option."

Arlene added: "I and all the Members of the IMCO Committee have been contacted by hundreds of our constituents and by animal welfare organisations that represent millions of EU citizens, who want a tough ban on the cruel trade in seal in products."

"IMCO demonstrated with its law banning cat and dog fur that we do not just listen to citizens' concerns but we act. With this vote for a ban on seal products we have shown again that people power can win through and change the law."

**Editors notes:**

In 2006 425 MEPs signed a Written Declaration calling for a ban on seal products in the EU, while avoiding harm to the small scale trade by Inuit peoples. In 2008 [the European Commission](#) responded by proposing a limited restriction on the trade. [Alternative proposals](#) for a labelling scheme were put forward by Rapporteur Diana Wallis MEP (ALDE).

Other [amendments from Committee Members](#), including Ms McCarthy, proposed a full ban on all trade in seals and other pinnipeds (i.e. seals, sea lions and walruses) apart from limited products from traditional Inuit community hunting. These proposals were adopted and backed by the Committee by 25 votes to 7 in the final vote.

The proposal could now be discussed by representatives of the Parliament and the Council of Ministers before being adopted by a full session of the Parliament plenary, enabling it to become law across the EU.