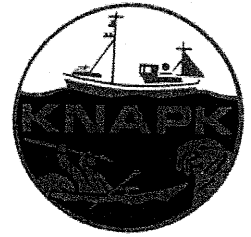


**Kalaallit Nunaanni Aalisartut Piniartullu Kattuffiat**  
**Sammenslutningen af Fiskere og Fangere i Grønland**  
**The Organization of Fishermen and Hunters in Greenland**



*By Leif Fontaine, KNAPK – Hunters and Fishermens Association in Greenland*

On behalf of the Hunters and Fishermens Association of Greenland I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our views here in Brussels regarding our honoured culture of hunting and concerning the activities that evolves around the trade of seal hunting. It is in the interests of our Association to ensure the constant development of Arctic fisheries and hunting.

As we are all aware the environment in the Arctic is undergoing rapid change over the last years and this also has an effect on the life of those who make their living from nature and the animals, the hunting activity has been especially hit hard.

Beside these factors, demands from the world around us is ever increasing as well, many of these demands stem out of ignorance of our livelihood and often put our trade in a dangerous situation. Our trade with sealskins is likewise being questioned from countries within the European Union.

It is important to clarify that we, the inhabitants of the Arctic have *the right to live off what our surrounding nature can provide*. This is a universal birth right, which all inhabitants of this planet have, wherever they reside. These rights have been endorsed and signed under the auspices of the United Nations.

Seal hunting as a means for living in our nation, has been conducted throughout millennia. Especially the ringed seal and the harp seal is an important part of the every day lives for many families.

Thus our government have established facilities to collect seal skin in all inhabited areas, since it has deemed it important that we uphold the seal hunting as a trade..

It is likewise important to clarify that our nation, with its location in the harsh Arctic region has always been a place where people made their living on the brink of existence, this is especially evident in the fall and during the Arctic winter.

Therefore it has been common practice to use nets in catching ringed seals during the unstable weather in the fall and the dark winter nights, when the sea freezes over. This practice is absolutely vital for the survival of the people and in providing food for the sled dogs.

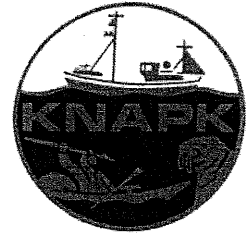
We are therefore in awe over the stance against this practice from the EU and can in no way accept the reservation the EU has put forth. The hunters in the Arctic regions can't change the way nature operates, just as the member nations of the EU can't rule over the harsh Arctic climate.

Hunters who make their living off the ringed and harp seals can be likened unto the livelihood of peasants and farmers within the EU. We are all very aware of the fact that the EU significantly subsidizes their farmers and peasants. It is beyond any doubt that this arrangement has been made by the EU because it is important for the people.

Just as the subsidy in catching ringed and harp seals is an evidence that the livelihood of those hunting seals is deemed important in our regions.

It is not only important for the provision of food but also in ensuring the health of our people. Scientific evidence shows that the consumption of seal meat and fat is as healthy for humans as it is for a baby suckling the mother's milk.

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Therefore the Europeans have to understand that, are they to have a negative influence on our livelihood for the future, just as they had back in the 1980s, this will have negative and far reaching effects on our way of life in the Arctic regions.

The Hunters and Fishermen's Association will clarify beyond measure that, should such an effect recur, this will be a violation of human rights. And the KNAPK will use its utmost power in making sure that the EU will be brought forth to the International Human Rights of the United Nations International Court of Justice.

**We as inhabitants of the Arctic regions are very aware of the fact that the Arctic climate has been affected in such a way that our trade and our way of life is undergoing even harder conditions because of the massive pollution from the Americas, Asia and Europe.**

**This effect the rich nations have had on our lives in not acceptable. We all know that not only has the climate been affected, but the animals, the fish, minute organisms and even the bodies of people living in the Arctic have been polluted with mercury, PCBs and dioxin, which have found their way to our regions through ocean currents and air from these countries. This has been well documented through scientific evidence. We can use pollution to people from mercury as an example. Last year scientists reported that mercury pollution alone cost our society 320 Million Danish Kroner every year.**

**According to the hunters, if one is to adhere to human rights, compensation for those afflicted should be sought.**

**The hunters in Greenland are also of the opinion that, are we to maintain our way of life and continue our abode in the Arctic, we should fight back, we should not merely concern ourselves of our trade but also fight to safeguard freedom, the very foundation of life and that which ensures our livelihood.**

Our livelihood as hunters is not a museum exhibit for the world to watch!

We have made our living by hunting seals for numerous generations, and it is the foundation of our present life. This land was entrusted to us by our ancestors and the Creator to ensure it for the generations to come, so they can live here and make use of its riches, indeed an awesome place to live in, and endowed a wealth of animals which are healthy to eat and this must be so for a long time hereafter!

Qujanaq – thank you.