

WTO meets to review EU seal products ban

February 18 2013



People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) activists stage a demonstration against seal hunting in front of the World Trade Organization (WTO) headquarters on February 18, 2013 in Geneva. The World Trade Organisation on Monday held its first hearing on the EU's contested ban against the sale of seal products, a decision opposed by both Norway and Canada.

The World Trade Organisation on Monday held its first hearing on the EU's contested ban against the sale of seal products, a decision opposed by both Norway and Canada.

The two countries, which every year kill tens of thousands of [seals](#), insist that the hunting method is ethical and asked the WTO to review the 2010 ban, imposed because of what the EU considers cruel hunting methods.

Canada's indigenous Inuits, who have traditionally hunted seal for centuries, are exempt from the ban.

Commercial seal hunters often use a hakapik, a club with a metal spike on it, to stun the seals before killing them. Animal rights groups also say some seals are skinned while they are still conscious.

Canada, home to some 6,000 commercial seal hunters, argued Monday that stricter regulations have made the hunt more humane.

"East Coast seal hunt can be, and is, conducted in a humane fashion," Canada's representative said by video link to the hearing in [Geneva](#).

The WTO, which will also hear [Norway](#) and the EU in the case, is expected to deliver a decision in a few months.

Ahead of Monday's hearing, the animal rights group PETA staged a protest outside the WTO headquarters.

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Citation: WTO meets to review EU seal products ban (2013, February 18) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-02-wto-eu-products.html>

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