

CATCA GOES TO THE EU TO LOBBY FOR THE CANADIAN SEALS!

As a result of the total lack of interest from our Canadian Government to the opinions of the Canadian public about the seal hunt, fifteen months ago CATCA launched an awareness campaign targeting the Polish Government. This turned out to be very positive, so 13 months ago, CATCA launched and coordinated an international campaign together with anti sealing groups in Europe and Canada.

Our goal has been to target all Ministries of Environment at the European Union, and all the EU Parliamentarians, to explain them what really happens during the seal hunt and why this hunt can't be done in a humane way. We want these decision makers to support the total ban on the trade of Canadian seal products (or even better of all seal products and derivatives) at the European Union (there is a very important upcoming decision coming in February at the European Parliament and Council, that could end the seal hunt in Canada between the next 4-7 years).

If the ban on the trade of seal products (from Canada and also from the seals killed for fur in Russian, Namibia, Greenland and Norway) is approved, this would harm quite a lot the trade on seal products and the Canadian seal hunt particularly. The sealers are getting barely any money from the seal hunt now. It is risky and the weather conditions are extreme, so this is what has the power to end it up once and for all. The Atlantic Canadian fisheries are also getting the pressure for the Seafood Boycott that has made them lost millions of dollars in revenue.

During 2008, our President and Founder Ericka Ceballos went 3 times to Europe, relaying on the good will of fellow animal colleagues and volunteers, who sent us whatever they could to pay for these trips.

CATCA doesn't get any funding due that we lobby against our Canadian Government openly for the seals, whales and Polar bears. However so far we have succeeded in lobbying in person with the majority of the decision makers in Europe for over three years, thanks to the generosity and involvement of many people all over the world.

CATCA was created over 20 years ago in Europe, to promote awareness and support international, national and local campaigns against animal abuse.

Check our website: www.catcahelpanimals.org to do your share to stop animal cruelty worldwide.

PLEASE GO TO: Seal campaign in Europe (last and recent webpage: www.catcahelpanimals.org/sealseuropa.html), to know what it's going on there and updates of our campaign in Europe and go to "2009 seal campaigns" page for our latest e-mail campaign: <http://catcahelpanimals.org/2009sealcampaign.html>



CATCA SEAL TOURS AT THE EUROPEAN UNION

Dear all,

First, I want to say thank you to all of you who have supported me this year for the CATCA SEAL TOURS to Europe.

For all these Seal Tours at the EU, I want to thank from the bottom of my heart to all the people who made this almost impossible trip a reality, starting with Dr Andrzej Kepel (PTOP Salamandra of Poland), Brendan Price and the Irish Seal Sanctuary, Mark Beazley and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Annelise Sorg, Bruce Foerster of Victoria Save the Seals, Bernard from Friends of Animals Croatia, Diane of Harpseals.org, Rosa from the Anti Fur Society, Carl Schlyter and to all the other fantastic colleagues, members of the governments and supporters who helped me one way or the other to go to Europe or supported us in this last crusade for the Canadian seals.

And last but not least, to all my contacts in the governments in Europe who helped me to arrange these meetings with the Decision Makers during this and the last three Tours for the seals this year.

To all of you a **BIG Thank You!**

Best regards,
Ericka Ceballos



CATCA FIRST SEAL TOUR IN EUROPE

(February-March 2008)

We are glad to announce that CATCA just returned from lobbying for the seals and whales in Europe.

The campaign was focused in Poland, England and Ireland. Ericka was there for three weeks lobbying. In England she was talking to NGO's and Decision Makers of several European Union member countries, about the ban on the trade of Canadian seal products.

As a result, this week CATCA will start new campaigns with EU countries in Europe that are quite interest it in the ban. As well, CATCA will push the issue with some countries that are already planning to adopt the ban at a National level.

CATCA also will launch a new campaign to get more delegations send to the International Whaling Commission in 3 months time in Chile, and will use the opportunity to get more support for the EU Seal products ban.

In Poland, Dr Andrzej Kepel from Salamandra organized an event together with the organizations Viva and Empathia, for CATCA to meet national media. Mr. Kepel also organized other meetings for CATCA

with Parliamentarians, Marine Scientists, regional media and NGO's. So far, things are going really well there for the seal products ban and we are also urging Poland to send a delegation to the next IWC.

A BIG THANK YOU to Dr. Andrzej Kepel for all his very hard work, amazing dedication to this ban and for his fantastic hospitality.

Also I would like to extend my deep gratitude to Borys Kala for his valuable help towards this campaign. Thank you Cezary, Darek, Katarzyna, Iwona and all of you involved in Warsaw. It was very nice to meet you. You are doing a great job over there!

In the Republic of Ireland, Mr. Brendan Price from the Irish Seal Sanctuary was the person who kindly organized the CATCA seal activities there. The ISS and the ISPCA fully supported this campaign.

To Brendan, Mary, Orla and Cormack, Pauline, Lauren and all the volunteers at the Irish Seal Sanctuary, THANK YOU for your support and for such a wonderful time with all of you. (Thanks for showing me all the wild seals and the rescued ones at your incredible sanctuary). You are fantastic!

Unfortunately due to lack of time in Ireland, I was unable to meet John from ARAN and Iratxe. But thank you so much for your efforts to end the seal hunt in Canada and your actions! I also want to specially thank Brendan for organizing a release of a rescued seal in my honor, and to John Carmody of ARAN, who organized a demo for my arrival in Dublin, and also to all my Polish Colleagues and to Bernard of Animal Friends Croatia for his amazing help and support.

Thanks to Carl Schlyter for his wise advice.

Also thanks to Alice Bruckenstein for sending me her very nice seal song CD's and seal documentary in DVD's, for me to deliver in Europe and to the HSUS for sending me informative sheets.

And last but not least, A MILLION THANKS to Annelise Sorg, Vice-President of the Canadian Marine Environment Protection Society for all her support and for sponsoring this campaign. Without you this "seal-whale tour" would have been an impossible task to achieve.

Dziękuję bardzo, Go raibh maith agat, Thank you!



CATCA SEAL TOUR II

(April-May 2008)

This time CATCA on behalf of the Western Canada Anti Sealing Coalition/Atlantic Anti Sealing Coalition, went back to Europe, to meet with Mr. Andreas Pappaconstantinou, the Member of Mr. Stavros Dimas Cabinet in the European Commission in charge of the seal hunt in Brussels, Belgium. The meeting went better than expected there. Before that Ericka had a meeting at the European Parliament in Brussels with some Parliamentarians.

The meeting that was supposed to last 20 minutes lasted almost 2 hours. Ericka was delighted to hear that Mr. Andreas expected to be a one way meeting, and that after the presentation and discussing all scientific arguments about why this hunt can't be done in a humane way, it is wasteful and senseless, Mr. Andreas said to Ericka that he was going to write a letter to be on Mr. Stavros Dimas desk a couple of days later, recommending that the EU Commission supports a ban on the trade of seal products.

After that Ericka went to Germany and kept lobbying in Poland and in the Czech Republic, where she met a Parliamentarian and a member of the Ministry of Environment.

Then Ericka went to Stockholm, Sweden where she was invited by the MEP Carl Schlyter (the Swedish Parliamentarian who initiated and proposed the ban at the European Parliament in 2006 - the Father of the Seal Ban), to have a joint National Press Conference at the Swedish Parliament. Ericka was honored to receive such an invitation.

In Sweden, Ericka had several meetings with MEP's and also had a meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture.



CATCA SEAL TOUR III (October 2008)

After a disastrous start, when I had no choice but to cancel my meetings at the end of September at the Ministries of Environment in Bulgaria, Rumania, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia due to lack of funds, I was desperate to keep my meetings, so I even asked to borrow money from certain NGO's that work with seal issues, only to get critics for taken on this initiative or to get the \$1,000 US/CAD that I requested denied.

Luckily, my contacts at the governments understood the situation, and I was able to go back to Europe with the help of the amazing support of my colleague Bruce F., my Irish Colleagues of the ISS and ISPCA and D. Andrzej Kepel of PTOPI Salamandra in Poland. I managed to keep my new appointments at the Ministries of Environment and to meet Secretaries of State, Deputy Ministers and representatives of the Ministries of the governments of Portugal, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland in less than a week, and from there I went to Spain, where I met people of their government, and among others was the UK, Ireland, Italy, France, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland, the Baltic Countries, Greece, so on.

I managed to lobby during the IUCN Convention, with each one of those governments where I wasn't able to go on my last two CATCA SEAL TOURS.

This last trip turned out to be a big success, and I had several days to lobby with the decision makers of the European Union. Some of these decision makers took my opinions and reports that I submitted them, to further discuss the issue a couple of days later with their Ministries of Environment or Secretaries of State.



Lobbying with the UK



In Slovakia with my colleagues



In Barcelona, during the IUCN where I managed to lobby for the seals with the other EU Governments



Concerns about the Canadian seal hunt animal welfare issues

The European Commission supports the ban on seal products as of a couple of months ago, BUT now as a result, the European Parliament has sent to all Ministries of Environment/ Agriculture at the European Union, a Proposal of a Resolution asking for their opinions about the issues concerning the seal ban and those opinions will affect not only the Canadian seals, but also the ones from Namibia, Norway, Russia and Greenland too. Once this Resolution is decided and approved, the seals fate will be in those pages.

My main concern is the “animal welfare” issue.... If the decision makers go for it, they would literally condemn all seals! A country like ours could compromise to “kill the seals in a HUMANE way “without doing it at all, especially when these decision makers don’t know that for 60 years there has been complains, reports of infractions and extremely cruelty on the side of the sealers toward the seals, plus the geographic aspects of the hunt and the terrible weather conditions the sealers are exposed to. All these facts when added together, just makes it impossible to control and to ensure that the veterinarians or that any other official observers, can check that no violations are inflicted.

There are so many aspects of the seal hunt in Canada that can’t make it “humane” at all, when in reality this hunt is nothing less than barbaric, but this is what these decision makers understand, so in good faith they could just go for that, but then the seal pelts and other seal products could end up in an open trade widely at the EU and what would happen is that the seal hunt will ever end!!!

Another reason is that Canada is lobbying right now in Europe trying to convince these decision makers that the aboriginal hunt is the same as the commercial hunt, which is not true, but that could mess up things for the seals big time, when these Canadians meet politicians who doesn’t know a thing about the seal hunt and swallow their words!

Remember that any amount you donate will help the seals and a 100% of your money will go for this campaign.

Unfortunately time is running out so there is no time to spare.

PLEASE DONATE TODAY TO SAVE THE CANADIAN SEALS!

Thank you so much on behalf of our Canadian seals and seals worldwide!

Best regards:

Ericka Ceballos

**Coordinator of the International Campaign for the Total Ban
on the Trade of Canadian Seal Products at the EU
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