



Implementation of HUMANE TRAPPING STANDARD in the EU

1991-2005

In 1991, **Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91 (FR - DE)** “prohibiting the use of leghold traps in the Community and the introduction into the Community of pelts and manufactured goods of certain wild animal species originating in countries which catch them by means of leghold traps or trapping methods which do not meet international humane trapping standards” was adopted.

This regulation, popularly known as the Leghold trap regulation, is completed by a Commission Decision listing those countries from whom specific animal pelts and manufactured goods can be accepted. **Commission Decision (98/596/EC) (FR - DE)** allows the imports of furs into the EU from Canada, the Russian Federation and the USA as a result of the commitment of those countries to implement humane trapping standards.

In 1997 the Community concluded an **Agreement (FR - DE)** with Canada and the Russian Federation on international humane trapping standards. The Agreement was

inspired by the desire to agree on international humane trapping standards as well as to avoid trade disputes with the main international fur exporters. The aim of the established humane trapping standards is to ensure a sufficient level of welfare of trapped animals, and to further improve this welfare.

A substantially similar agreement concerning the standards but in the form of **Agreed Minutes (FR - DE)** was reached with the USA.

The European Community ratified the Agreement on international humane trapping standards between the European Community, Canada and the Russian Federation in 1998 and the Government of Canada in 1999. Moreover, from June 1, 1999, the EC and Canada agreed to apply the Agreement on a provisional basis pending formal ratification by the Russian Federation which would allow the Agreement to enter into force. The ratification of the Agreement by the Russian Federation is expected to occur soon and the schedule for the implementation of the provisions will start then.

Each Party must implement the commitments and obligations arising from this Agreement in accordance with its internal procedures. Accordingly, the EC, Canada, the Russian Federation and the USA are committed to establish appropriate processes for testing and certifying trapping methods in accordance with the international humane trapping standards. Furthermore, the use of traps that are not certified in accordance with humane trapping standards must be prohibited within an agreed time table. The Parties must promote research on the ongoing development of the standards and the Agreement also obliges the Parties to improve scientific knowledge for evaluating the welfare of trapped animals.

The Commission receives information on the implementation of the Agreement by Canada, the Russian Federation and the USA. According to the regular status reports on the fulfilment of the commitments and obligations arising from the Agreement adequate progress has been done and the Parties have indicated that they will be in a position to fulfil their obligations by the given deadlines. Canada expects to fully implement the Agreement by 2007. The testing of trapping methods is ongoing in the Russian Federation. The trap-testing program in the USA is on schedule as outlined in the understanding between the EU and the US in form of the Agreed Minutes.

The Commission adopted in July 2004 a **proposal for a Directive (FR - DE)** of the European Parliament and of the Council introducing humane trapping standards for certain animal species which will implement in the EU commitments and obligations arising from these international engagements.

The proposal's objective is to ensure that the EU meets its international obligations with Canada, Russian Federation and the USA by ensuring that the agreed humane trapping standards are respected in the EU with regard to the 19 animal species such as wolf, beaver, otter, lynx, sable, muskrat, raccoon dog, badger etc. covered by the Agreement. The proposal requires Member States to designate competent authorities which have the responsibility to certify traps where the traps and the trapping methods have been tested to demonstrate their conformity with the humane trapping standards. All traps which are not certified by the given deadline of 8 years as being in conformity with the humane trapping standards may no longer be used. Derogations may be granted on a case-by-case basis for defined purposes. After adoption of the new Directive, the use of all leghold traps will remain prohibited within the EU. The new Directive will therefore only apply to traps other than leghold traps with regard to the animal species listed.

The Commission proposal needs to be adopted by the co decision procedure which gives the European Parliament the power to enact legislation jointly with the Council.

last update: 02/03/2005