



FIC Statement on European Court of Justice Ruling

**Thursday, October 3, 2013
Ottawa, Ontario**

One of two appeals lodged by a coalition of Inuit and non-Inuit stakeholders was today rejected by the European Court of Justice.

The European Court of Justice ruling confirmed an earlier decision of the European General Court, declaring the plaintiffs inadmissible to challenge the basic 2009 seal product trade ban imposed by the European Union.

The European General Court had ruled in 2011 that the parties within the coalition did not have legal standing to bring such a challenge and today the Court of Justice upheld that decision

The European Court of Justice ruling was based on its interpretation of recently enacted Lisbon Treaty provisions allowing for lower standing thresholds when challenging EU rules.

Today's decision was simply a procedural ruling, narrowly focused on technical issues and not a rejection of the merits of the case.

The more wide ranging appeal of the April 25, 2013 European General Court ruling, has yet to be decided by the European Court of Justice. This second appeal is based on the actual merits of the case including the lawfulness of the regulatory and implementing measures under the EU seal product ban legislation.

A decision on the second appeal is expected in the coming months. We remain optimistic that our arguments will serve to overturn the European General Court's April ruling.

The EU seal product ban is being challenged by a coalition of Inuit groups, sealers and other seal stakeholders who rely on international trade to sell their products. The coalition believes that the EU Ban on seal products impairs the ability of Inuit and small coastal communities to responsibly manage a renewable and natural resource that they rely on for subsistence.

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