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Trade Policy Monitoring

EU Debate on Humane Trapping Standards for Certain Animal Species

2005

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Report Highlights:

After years of delay, the European Union (EU) is drafting an EU directive to comply with the "Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards" (AIHTS). The Directive, which is intended, to implement their agreement with Canada and Russia on humane trapping, is being met with opposition in EU Parliament. Although the US is not a party to the agreement, a parallel, non-binding understanding, memorialized as an agreed minute and side letters, was reached with the EU in 1997. The US is concerned that the EU Directive should accurately reflect the AIHTS and is closely monitoring developments in the European Parliament as the EU directive advances.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E3]

Summary:

After years of delay, the European Union (EU) is drafting an EU directive to comply with the "Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards" (AIHTS). The Directive, which is intended, to implement their agreement with Canada and Russia on humane trapping, is being met with opposition in EU Parliament. Although the US is not a party to the agreement, a parallel, non-binding understanding, memorialized as an agreed minute and side letters, was reached with the EU in 1997. The US is concerned that the EU Directive should accurately reflect the AIHTS and is closely monitoring developments in the European Parliament as the EU directive advances.

The Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) outlines the obligations of the signatory Parties, with the intent of leading to full implementation within specified timelines.

The current state of play in the EU:

In November 2004 the EU reported that a Commission proposal for a Directive introducing humane trapping standards for certain animal species was adopted by the Commission on July 30, 2004. The EU noted that a study was carried out on behalf of the Commission on how the obligations of the Agreement are already implemented through existing legislation in the Member States.

The Commission proposal will have to be adopted by co- decision, which is a legislative procedure under the EC Treaty. The co-decision procedure gives the European Parliament the power to enact legislation jointly with the Council.

The US is concerned that as a result of continued lobbying the EU final directive could be expanded as it moves through the European Parliament, thus not accurately reflecting the aim of the AIHTS.

The US feels the current EU proposal is focused on what is necessary to ensure that the EU meets its international obligations by ensuring that the humane trapping standards are respected in the EU with regard to the 19 animal species covered by the Agreement.

The current EU proposal covers trapping activities undertaken for the purpose of wildlife management including pest control, obtaining fur, skin or meat and for the capture of animals for conservation. In addition to the proposal on humane trapping, EU Council Regulation (EEC) No 3254/91, which prohibits the use of all leg hold traps in the EU, will remain in place after adoption of the new Directive.

The European Parliament will discuss the proposal at the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. It is expected that the European Parliament may deliver its 1st reading opinion by the end of 2005. However to complete the co-decision procedure it may take 1-2 years after that date depending on the complexity of the issues to be addressed and the possibilities to reach a compromise between the co-legislators.

The tentative schedule for Parliamentary discussions is:

Deadline for translation	11 May 2005
Examination of draft report	13-14 June 2005
Deadline for amendments	6 July 2005
Vote ENVI	13-15 September 2005
Plenary session	October 2005

Background: State of Play in the US:

Though not a party to the Agreement, the US is committed to ensuring that the US is in compliance with AIHTS. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been designated as the U.S. Federal agency responsible for technical communications related to the separate understanding with the EU on trap testing and has coordinated funding for the U.S. program in cooperation with State wildlife management agencies.

The US is committed to animal trap research. Since 1997 the US began a congressionally-authorized animal trap research program, which has been coordinated by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). This research program expands upon existing efforts of state wildlife agencies, and all 50 states support the U.S. animal trap research program.

Trapping is a management technique used to maintain healthy wild furbearer populations in the U.S. It is an essential component in wildlife population research, wildlife restoration programs, protection of ground-nesting birds and rare species, protection of ecosystems, and in surveillance for wildlife-borne disease. Trapping programs also provide for habitat protection, protection of property and public health.

Trade

The main goal of AIHTS is to ensure humane trapping standards are carried out in each of the signatories to the agreement regarding the 19 animal species covered in the agreement. Although much of the trapping done in the US is done as part of state government wildlife management programs and pest control work, a significant portion of trapped animals eventually end up constituting a part of the international fur trade. Annually, international wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars.

While trade in hides and skins from farmed animals constitutes an entirely separate trade category, available trade data on furskins from unfarmed animals is not detailed enough to show the specific trade in the 19 species covered by the AIHTS. The following table highlights EU-US trade in raw furskins (other than raw hides and skins usually used for leather (HS 4301) and tanned or dressed furskins (including heads, tails, and other pieces or cuttings (HS 4302). Of the signatories of the agreement, Canada followed by the US and then Russia accounts for the most imports of furskins into the EU, while EU exports of furskins are greatest to the US followed by Russia and then Canada.

EU – US Trade in Furskins

HS 4301 & 4302	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total EU exports to the world	591327	834737	923166	927475	859281
Total EU exports to the US	15334	22826	25286	29296	25423
Total EU exports Canada	8585	11819	12950	16750	20757
Total EU exports Russia	9391	22261	28954	30010	24509
Total EU imports from the world	696345	883838	986384	982066	980788
Total EU imports from the US	12672	17761	19498	23780	17880
Total EU imports from Canada	14643	22013	32970	31339	30987
Total EU imports from Russia	9956	12399	16360	17302	15252

Source: *Global Trade Atlas*

Additional information on EU trade in Wild Fauna and Flora can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/cites/home_en.htm

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