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Press Release

SNP MEP on Norwegian Seal Culling Holidays

"No objection to culling, but making sport of it unacceptable"

Scottish National Party MEP Mr Alyn Smith has today (Thursday) written to the Norwegian Fisheries Minister expressing his unease over Norwegian proposals to offer tourists seal culling holidays from January. The proposals are reported to be that for GBP110 a tourist will be allowed one day's hunting and the killing of one seal, or for GBP650 for four days hunting and two seals. Mr Smith has been contacted by a number of constituents who have expressed their opposition to the proposals. The SNP MEP, a member of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Norway, Iceland and Switzerland, said:

"The Norwegian cull of seals causes me no disquiet in itself, the beasts compete with man for fish and are breeding like topsy after all. There are arguments that we in Scotland should take more decisive action on seal numbers and I have some sympathy with them.

"However, much like foxhunting I cannot be comfortable with the idea that the government of a near neighbour of Scotland is actively marketing such an activity as a recreational sport. The need for a cull has been identified in Norway, and it is their right to do so. To be fair to them the holiday proposals will not increase the number of seals killed, though I am of the view that the cull should be carried out by trained professionals, not trigger happy amateurs.

"As I understand it, local hunters have not managed to get achieve the cull numbers envisaged by the Norwegian authorities, so the government has hit upon the wheeze of allowing tourists a crack at the animals. I just do not think this is acceptable in the modern age, and surely a more humane way could be found to control the beasts. I hope the Norwegian authorities will take the opportunity to think again before they start this holiday venture in the new year and find a more effective way of killing the seals."

ENDS

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