**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 12 September 2017 on whale hunting in Norway**

**2017/2712 (RSP)**

1. Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 128(5) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Verts/ALE and EFDD groups

2. EP reference number: B8-0499/2017 / P8\_TA- PROV(2017)0328

**3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 12 September 2017

**4. Subject:** Parliament resolution on whale hunting in Norway

**5.** **Competent Parliamentary Committee**: Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

**6. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The European Parliament resolution on whale hunting in Norway follows an oral question to the Commission that was raised in plenary session on 6 July 2017.

In its resolution, the European Parliament deplores the fact that Norway maintains its objection to the international moratorium on commercial whaling established by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1986 as well as its reservations to the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) listings on large whales, and continues to whale for commercial purpose and to trade whale products. The European Parliament also criticises the fact that part of Norway's whale meat exports transit through EU Member States ports. It however recognises that this transit is legal under EU law as long as shipments are accompanied by valid CITES documentation pursuant to Regulation (EC) 338/97.

As a consequence, the European Parliament addresses essentially four requests to the European Commission:

a) To collect and provide data on shipments of whale meat transiting through EU ports (paragraph 6 of the European Parliament's resolution);

b) To look into possible ways of ensuring that whale meat is no longer legally allowed to transit through EU ports, including by recommending a ban on such transit as an exceptional measure (paragraph 7);

c) To make use of bilateral and multilateral channels to urge Norway to stop all commercial whaling (paragraph 8);

d) To ensure, at the forthcoming IWC meeting (Brazil, September 2018) a common approach to whaling that is at least as precautionary as the present common position, and to engage with third countries in order to achieve a majority support for the creation of whale sanctuaries (paragraph 9).

**7. Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission**

The Commission takes note of the European Parliament's resolution. The EU is fully committed to the conservation of all cetaceans. The EU has also clearly positioned itself against commercial whaling at the IWC and strongly supports the global moratorium on commercial whaling to which the European Parliament refers in paragraph 1 of its resolution. The Council also recently called upon Norway to respect the IWC moratorium and to withdraw its reservations under CITES[[1]](#footnote-1).

The Commission is in the process of collecting and providing comprehensive data on shipments of whale meat transiting through EU ports. To this end, the Commission has requested the EU Member States to provide data by the end of October 2017.

As recognised by the European Parliament, under the current regime in place, Norway is legally allowed to trade whale products with other countries having the same reservations on the CITES listings of large whales, provided that such products have valid CITES export permits. Moreover, the transit of such shipments via the EU Member States is legal under international law, provided that the shipments are accompanied by valid CITES permits. The competent authorities in the Member States are aware of this obligation and operate controls when such situations arise. It is unclear for now how restrictions on the transit of whale meat through EU ports would have a tangible impact on the whaling activities by Norway. Once collected, the information on the volume of whale meat transiting through EU ports would help in getting a better picture of the situation.

The Commission will continue to use bilateral and multilateral channels to discuss the whaling issue with Norway and to promote the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling. On 4 September 2017, the Commission adopted its proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the EU in the three next meetings of the International Whaling Commission (COM(2017) 463). In its proposal, the Commission makes clear that, despite the fact that Norway is not bound by the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling, it should strictly apply the IWC Revised Management Procedure to estimate its catch limits. The Commission also proposes EU continued support for the creation of whale sanctuaries. In more general terms and in accordance with the European Parliament's request as expressed in paragraph 9 of its resolution, the Commission's proposal is as precautionary as the current EU position and even more precautionary on some specific aspects. If adopted by the Council, it should therefore be instrumental in achieving the European Union's overarching objective to the IWC, i.e. ensuring an effective regulatory framework for the conservation and management of whales that guarantees the significant improvement in the conservation status of whales in the long term.

1. Council conclusions of December 2016 on EU relations with Non-EU Western European countries [↑](#footnote-ref-1)