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Member of Parliament
Committee on Health
Committee on Food, Agriculture
and Consumer Protection

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Ms. Helle Thorning-Schmidt
Chairwoman of the Social Democratic
Party of Denmark



Gabriele Hiller-Ohm

Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages



Berlin, 24 May 2007

Denmark's Position on whaling

Dear Ms. Thorning-Schmidt,

we are writing to you as the current and former Spokeswomen of the Social Democratic Party parliamentary group of the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) on whale protection.

Next week the 59th annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) will take place in Anchorage, Alaska. We are deeply concerned about Denmark's present position on whaling, which is now incompatible with its otherwise good environmental record, its standing within the European Union, and the views of the majority of Danish citizens. The international efforts particularly of the EU to protect whales will be undermined by the Danish position.

In 2006, Denmark voted with 32 pro-whaling nations of the International Whaling Commission to support the St Kitts Declaration that the Moratorium on commercial whaling is "no longer required". Furthermore Denmark has repeatedly rejected the consensus of the rest of the European Union to oppose a resumption of international commercial trade in whale products. Denmark has abstained on these proposals at CITES meetings and gives the floor to Greenland to support them.

We strongly urge you to rescue Denmark's international reputation and bring its policy on commercial whaling back into line with the rest of the EU and the majority of the Danish population who oppose it.

We invite you to join the position of the German Social Democratic Party parliamentary group, the German Parliament, and the German Federal Government who has been in favour of the whaling moratorium from the beginning and, in collaboration with other leading whale-protecting nations, is working in the IWC negotiations for it to be maintained. At the same time the killing of thousands of whales under the guise of science and the sale of whale meat and fat undermine the whaling moratorium and must be termed illegal. The preservation of biological diversity is a focus of the German EU Council Presidency, just as the conservation of marine species will be a focus of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) that will take place in The Hague in June 2007. Enclosed you will find the current motion of the German Parliament to ensure the protection of whales.

We request you to argue for

- the maintenance of the existing moratorium on commercial whaling and the rejection of any proposals that would lead to the resumption of commercial whaling;
- a renunciation of Denmark's vote in favour of the St Kitts Declaration;
- an assurance that Denmark will join the rest of the EU in opposing international trade in whale products;
- the ending of deadly, so-called scientific whaling;
- the creation of further sanctuaries for whales and dolphins;

at the Danish Parliament, the Danish Government, and the Danish delegation at the IWC.

We are looking forward to collaborate with you to protect whale stocks world-wide.

Yours faithfully

Mechthild Rawert

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