

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - BAN ON IMPORTATION OF SKINS OF CERTAIN SEAL PUPS AND RELATED PRODUCTS

Canada - Request for Consultations under Article XXIII:1

The following communication, dated 9 December 1985, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Canada, with the request that it be brought to the attention of the CONTRACTING PARTIES.

On 28 March 1983, the Council of the European Communities adopted a directive concerning the importation into Member States of skins of certain seal pups and products derived therefrom, whereby Member States were required to take or maintain an import ban on seal products from pups of harp and hooded seals for two years beginning 1 October 1983. As a result of this directive and the related measures, exports of the pelts of such seals from Canada fell from 137,164 pelts in 1982 to 838 in 1984. This decrease has resulted in the loss of a major source of work and income in rural and native Canadian communities. The import ban was subsequently extended on 27 September 1985 for an additional four years.

The EC import ban in question is inconsistent with several obligations of the European Communities under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, including those contained in Article II and Article XI, and benefits accruing to Canada under the General Agreement are being nullified or impaired by the European Communities' measure.

Since 1982, Canada has attempted to reach an appropriate solution of this problem with the European Communities. Representations included two rounds of consultations with EC authorities, in October 1982 and February 1983, under the terms of Article XXII of the General Agreement¹, as well as frequent official contacts in capitals. As these representations have not yielded positive results, Canada herewith requests bilateral consultations with the European Communities under the General Agreement with a view to developing a satisfactory adjustment of the matter in question and would propose that such a meeting be held at an early date.

¹Ref. L/5384