



Andrea Zanoni  
Member of the European Parliament

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**Prime Minister of Denmark**  
[smt@smt.dk](mailto:smt@smt.dk)

**Prime Minister of the Faroes**  
[info@tinganes.fo](mailto:info@tinganes.fo)

**and FYI the Mission of the Faroes to the  
European Union**  
[brussels@tinganes.fo](mailto:brussels@tinganes.fo)

**Subject: concerns regarding the *grindadráp***

Dear Ms Thorning-Schmidt,

Dear Mr Johannesen,

I am writing you with regards to the *grindadráp*, the drive hunt of pilot whales (*Globicephala melas*) and other small cetaceans such as northern bottlenose whales (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*) and Atlantic white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*), which takes place every year on the Faroese coasts, especially during summer.

I am aware that over the past week about four hundred animals were killed by means of this brutal and inhumane hunting technique, causing them an awful agony that can last up to four minutes. I have been receiving several emails by European citizens horrified by this traditional - yet ferocious - practice, especially in these last few days after the latest *grindadráp* hunts: they all call for the slaughter to stop. Awareness in relation to this hunting activity is growing everywhere in Europe and in the world, and even among the Faroese population.

I would like to mention that, being part of the European Union, Denmark and the Faroe Islands are expected by most European citizens to respect certain animal welfare standards, as indicated in Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, where animals are defined as "sentient beings".

Having always been an animal welfare and conservation activist myself, I would really like the pilot whale hunt to be ended. Nevertheless, knowing that it is not an illegal activity and that it is regulated by Faroese authorities, I would like to call on you to adopt - at least - more humane hunting techniques, as what we can see in photo and video reports of the *grindadráp*, seems to be extremely brutal and inhumane.

In fact, it would be helpful to me to understand how the welfare of the cetaceans in these hunts is considered and I understand that there are some Faroese regulations that apply to the hunts. Could you therefore please assist me by telling me:

1) what these regulations say;

- 2) if they were followed, for example, in the case of the recent hunt on July 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Bay of Viðvík;
- 3) whether - as in other hunting and meat production activities - efforts are being made to review and improve such regulations in order to improve animal welfare standards.

Lastly, I would like to remark that besides the animal welfare aspect, the *grindadráp* raises also serious concerns regarding human health, due to the fact that pilot whale meat and blubber contain high levels of mercury and persistent organic compounds. I understand that long term independent researches on children health in the Faroe Islands have directly linked neurological delays, cardiovascular problems and other development problems to their mothers pre-natal consumption of whale meat. In addition, recent studies have shown a direct link between the occurrence of Parkinsons disease in Faroese adults and eating pilot whale meat.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards,

Andrea Zanoni

