



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

The Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park  
Minister of State

Caroline Lucas MP

Your ref: ML.ZG.N0034.SS.11.01.22  
Our ref: MC2022/01234/BK

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25 January 2022

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your email of 11 January about the Stop the Grind campaign and Grindadráp in the Faroe Islands.

The UK is strongly opposed to the hunting of any cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), other than some limited activities by indigenous people for clearly defined purposes. The Government believes that the hunting of cetaceans is unacceptably cruel and that well-managed, responsible tourism is the only truly sustainable interaction with these animals.

While Defra recognises there is a long tradition in the Faroe Islands of killing pilot whales and dolphins for meat and other products, we have long expressed our concern over the welfare and sustainability aspects of the Faroese cetacean hunts and the levels of domestic regulation currently in place.

The Government has urged the Faroe Islands to look at alternatives to the hunting of cetaceans, encouraging them to consider the many economic and social benefits that responsible cetacean watching can bring to coastal communities.

The hunt of 12 September where 1,428 Atlantic white-sided dolphins were killed is particularly alarming due to the exceptional number of animals involved. Many people in the UK have been understandably shocked.

I have written to the Faroese fisheries Minister to express the UK's opposition to the hunt that took place on the 12 September and the continued hunting of cetaceans in the Faroe Islands on both animal welfare and conservation grounds. I can assure you we will continue to engage with the Faroese Government on this important matter.

The Government welcomes the Faroese Prime Minister's announcement that the Government will start an evaluation of regulations on the catching of Atlantic white-sided dolphins and look closely at what part they should play in Faroese society. We have advocated to the Faroese Government that they expand the scope of the evaluation to incorporate all species of cetacean that are hunted in the Faroe Islands.

The UK plays a leading role championing the conservation and welfare of all cetaceans both in the UK and internationally. This includes playing an active role in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) where we are well respected and strongly support the global moratorium on commercial whaling.

The UK continues to work within the IWC to raise the profile of small cetaceans and to encourage more to be done to improve their protection and address welfare concerns. To this end, the UK has made several voluntary contributions to the IWC's Small Cetacean Fund.

Thank you once again for your email.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Paul', written in a cursive style.

**THE RT HON THE LORD GOLDSMITH OF RICHMOND PARK**