

## Exports of Whale Products

On 16 January, the Norwegian Government announced that it was going to authorise whale meat and whale fat exports again, despite the international moratorium on the hunting of whales. The Minister for Fisheries declared that the decision resulted from a new assessment based on scientific criteria.

This decision goes against the European Union and individual Member States' position expressed at the time of the CITES Convention meeting (Convention on the

International Trade in Endangered Species). Community legislation forbids any sale of whale meat or products derived from whales being sold in the European Union market place.

Even if the action now announced by Norway is not specifically ruled out by CITES itself, given that Norway had expressed reservations about the moratorium, they are still going completely against the position supported by the EU and Member States, and against Community

legislation validated in European law, which concerns not only the provisions of CITES but also those of the Habitats Directive (on the protection of endangered wild fauna and flora species).

Norway stated that the sale of whale meat and other products derived from these cetaceans would be to coun-

tries that had expressed reservations about placing whales on the endangered species list in 1983. At present, the three other countries who have expressed such reservations are Japan, Iceland and Peru. Predictably, Japan was pleased by the Norwegian decision and is likely to become the biggest customer for the products.

