

The Politics of Whaling and the European Union: The Management of the Life and Death of Cetaceans and its Political Implications

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Whaling has continued to be an important element in the environmental policy of the European Union (EU). Nonetheless, for a long time the range of EU's policies regarding whaling, based on the 1992 Habitats Directive, was confined to restricting the deliberate disturbance, capture and killing of whales in the waters of EU, and no strategy related to external relations was in place. However, after the European Commission submitted the bill for regulating whaling in December of 2007 and the norm for the protection of whales became the EU's common position in 2008, whaling, that had until then been treated as an internal problem, as a result of the consensus between the member states, turned into an issue unfolding in the global arena.

The objective of this presentation is to shed light on one portion of the political power of EU, which aims to reframe the existing order, by taking up whaling, one of the factors pushing forward the EU's environmental policy, as the study case. In this presentation, I shall broadly examine EU's environmental policy (the Environmental Action Plan), and, upon determining EU's approach to the environment, look back at the process in which its whale protection took concrete shape. Building on that, I shall look at EU's logics regarding whaling and its positionality, and examine with what intentions that stance is being extended to areas outside EU borders.