

Press release from AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (for immediate release):

# AECO signs declaration to combat illegal wildlife trade

The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) has signed the Travel and Tourism Declaration on Illegal Trade in Wildlife.

AECO is an industry association dedicated to managing responsible expedition cruise tourism in the Arctic. On December 7, the Association signed the [Buenos Aires Declaration](#), which states that signatories cannot knowingly facilitate the carriage or sale of illegally traded wildlife products.

According to Executive Director Frigg Jørgensen, signing the Buenos Aires Declaration is a natural step for AECO.

“Our members are subject to a strict non-disturbance principle when it comes to wildlife and AECO operators actively support wildlife protection through education, wildlife sighting programs and contributions to science and conservation societies. Signing this declaration reaffirms our dedication to showing the utmost consideration of the natural environment in all aspects of operations,” says Jørgensen.

The Declaration on Illegal Trade in Wildlife covers wildlife products, where the trade in those products is contrary to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and as such is illegal under international laws.

AECO has committed to a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal trade in wildlife products and encourages visitors to the Arctic to support local communities by buying legal and sustainable products.

“For millennia, people in the Arctic have harvested animals and plants to produce food, clothing and artisanal goods. This includes fur products, carved bones and tusks, and local foods such as meat and fish. Buying locally made products generates income for the community and can contribute to upholding local craft traditions. When buying animal or plant products, it is important to make sure that they have been harvested and produced legally. In some cases, you will also need a permit to export the product,” says Jørgensen.

AECO has additional guidelines in place to protect Arctic nature. Guests travelling with AECO operators are not permitted to collect stones, bones, antlers, driftwood, flowers, plants and other items from nature. However, purchasing local souvenirs and products is encouraged.

### Suggested illustration photos

High resolution illustration images can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5numb2bo0hgx0v9/AAC7OalhDp73dd-iVBdWsTcEa?dl=0>



AECO has committed to a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal trade in wildlife. Photo: Lisa Maria Haglund.



AECO encourages visitors to the Arctic to support local communities by buying legal and sustainable products. This photo shows cruise guests from MS Fram shopping for souvenirs from Uummannaq in Greenland. Photo: Mads Pihl, Visit Greenland.



When buying animal or plant products, it is important to make sure that they have been produced legally. Visitors to Repulse Bay, Nunavut can buy pins and brooches carved by Inuit residents from tusks of walrus and narwhale harvested for their meat and blubber. Photo: Mike Beauregard, Wikimedia Commons.

### **AECO - Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators**

Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators is an international organization for expedition cruise operators and associates in the Arctic, dedicated to managing environmentally friendly, safe and considerate cruise tourism. With approximately 70 international members – including 40 vessel operators, owners and management, and 50 expedition cruise vessels that are organized by the association – AECO represent the great majority of these operations in the Arctic. AECO's members carried a total of 26 000 passengers to Svalbard, Greenland, Iceland, Canada, and Franz Josef Land in 2018.

Website: [www.aeco.no](http://www.aeco.no)

### **World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC)**

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is the body which represents the Travel & Tourism private sector globally. Our Members include over 170 CEOs, Chairs and Presidents of the world's leading Travel & Tourism companies from all geographies covering all industries. WTTC works to raise awareness of Travel & Tourism as one of the world's largest economic sectors, supporting one in 10 jobs (313 million) worldwide and generating 10.4% of world GDP.

Website: [www.wttc.org](http://www.wttc.org)

**More information**

Edda Falk, Communication manager, [edda@aeco.no](mailto:edda@aeco.no), cell phone: +4747632550