



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL



Pro Wildlife e.V. · Kidlerstr. 2 · D-81371 Munich

To the CEO of
DEUTSCHE LUFTHANSA AG
Mr. Carsten Spohr
Von-Gablenz-Straße 2-6

50679 Köln

Icelandic whaling and whale-watch tourism

Munich, 26 May 2017

Dear Mr. Spohr,

On behalf of the undersigned animal protection and conservation organizations representing millions of citizens worldwide, I am writing to express our hope that LUFTHANSA will help us ensure that Iceland's valuable whale-watch industry, and the whales upon which it depends, can continue to thrive, and that LUFTHANSA's customers do not contribute to their harm.

As you may know, Icelandic whalers are currently hunting minke whales in defiance of a global moratorium on commercial whaling agreed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1982. In addition, over the last ten years, Iceland has killed more than 700 endangered fin whales, primarily for export to Japan, despite a longstanding ban on international commercial trade in whale products imposed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The meat and other products from minke whales are primarily consumed in Iceland by tourists and sold in vacuum-sealed packages in grocery stores or served at a number of restaurants throughout the country. In addition, fin whale products have been used to make "whale beer" that is marketed to tourists, while carved whale bone, baleen and teeth are sold as trinkets. Sadly, despite the public's strong aversion to commercial whaling,¹ many tourists consume whale products while visiting Iceland² due to a mistaken belief that this represents 'typical' local food and drink. In addition, some tourists bring whale products home illegally.³ We seek LUFTHANSA's help in discouraging tourists visiting Iceland from supporting Iceland's whaling industry through the consumption and purchase of whale products.

We believe that references to edible whale products in articles or advertisements published in in-flight magazines could encourage passengers' curiosity about consuming whale meat in Iceland. Such references also imply that the airline condones the practice.

¹ See e.g. <http://www.ifaw.org/sites/default/files/research-on-attitudes-toward-commercial-whaling-2012.pdf>

<https://awionline.org/content/uk-and-german-citizens-overwhelmingly-reject-icelands-commercial-whaling>

² <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/iceland/articles/who-is-eating-icelands-whales/>

³ <http://www.wochenblatt.de/nachrichten/welt/Zoll-stellt-vermehrt-Walsalami-bei-Kreuzfahrtreisenden-sicher;art5578,321077>

We urge LUFTHANSA to:

1. refuse to publish advertisements promoting the sale of whale meat
2. refrain from publishing articles referencing the consumption of whale meat
3. make a commitment to accept advertisements only from establishments and companies that do not serve or advertise the consumption of whale meat
4. run articles in your inflight magazine which promote whale watching and ask tourists to support the 'Whale Friendly' venue initiative mounted by IceWhale, the umbrella association for Iceland's whale watch industry <http://icewhale.is/whale-friendly-restaurants/>

Please note also, that importing any whale products (including in checked or carry-on baggage) into the *European Union, United States and elsewhere, is a violation of both domestic and international laws and* can result in prosecution. Consequently, airlines can help make their passengers visiting Iceland aware of these laws by including a warning in their in-flight magazine that it is illegal to import whale meat and other whale-based products into their home countries. In addition, we encourage you to post such warnings at gates at all airports from which LUFTHANSA flights depart to Iceland. We would be happy to work with LUFTHANSA to develop the appropriate text of these warnings.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss our concerns in person with a representative from your company. Please contact Vanessa Williams-Grey (Vanessa.williams-grey@whales.org) or Dr. Sandra Altherr (Sandra.altherr@prowildlife.de) if you have any questions or to set up a meeting.

Thank you in advance for considering this information and for the courtesy of a reply.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Williams-Grey

Policy Manager
WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Dr. Sandra Altherr

Project Manager
Pro Wildlife

Organisations represented:

Animal Public

Animals Asia

Environmental Investigation Agency

Humane Society International

OceanCare

Pro Wildlife

Sharkprotect

Society for Dolphin Conservation/Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine e. V.

WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

World Animal Protection