

Treaty's 50th year resolve: stem Antarctic tourist tide

Tourism in Antarctica will be restricted by Antarctic Treaty signatory governments, through a new measure announced at the treaty's 50th anniversary meeting in the American city of Baltimore in May.



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Although no specific mechanism was detailed to enforce the restriction, signatories will be required to prevent ships with more than 500 passengers from reaching landing sites in Antarctica and allow no more than 100 passengers on shore at any given time.

Antarctic tourism numbers have been doubling every five years over the past decade. It has been estimated that more than 38 000 mostly ship-borne tourists travelled to Antarctica in the 2008–09 austral summer. The projected numbers for the next season are estimated at around 43 000.

Nearly 400 diplomats, experts and polar scientists from 47 countries attended the anniversary meeting, which tackled a range of environmental and territorial issues affecting the Antarctic.

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