



European Museum Academy

How are museums doing in Europe?

The European Museum Academy Reports on The Museum Temperature by the end of 2022.

The European Museum Academy is proud to present for the fifth year in a row the following more subjective inside views about how museums are doing and what the museums experience as their current challenges, be it political, financial, organisational or something else.

We all think we know something about how museums are doing in our own country, and we know that we can find statistical information produced for specific research projects and in continuous statistical series from our governments, the European Union, the Council of Europe and even UNESCO.

But what is going on beneath the numbers?

We would like to thank all our dedicated representatives across Europe who make it possible for our independent network to present this report.

Enjoy reading it!
European Museum Academy

CONTENTS

- How were museums in Europe doing in 2022?

An analytical summary - Henrik Zipsane

- Country reports:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| - Albania | - Dorian Koçi |
| - Austria | - Nikola Köhler-Kroath |
| - Belgium | - Hilde Schoefs |
| - Bulgaria | - Nikolay Nenov |
| - Croatia | - Lidija Nikočević |
| - Cyprus | - Demetra Theodotou Anagnostopoulou |
| - Czech Republic | - Martina Lehmannová |
| - Denmark | - Martin Brandt Djupdræt |
| - Estonia | - Triin Vaaro |
| - France | - Samuel Cordier |
| - Georgia | - Lana Karaia and Nana Meparishvili |
| - Germany | - Dietmar Osses |
| - Greece | - Nadia Macha |
| - Hungary | - Zsolt Sári |
| - Iceland | - Anita Elefsen |
| - Ireland | - Marie Bourke |
| - Lithuania | - Gita Sapranauskaite |
| - Luxembourg | - Julia Kohl |
| - Malta | - Sandro Debono |
| - Moldova | - Elena Plosnita |
| - Montenegro | - Isidora Kovačević |
| - The Netherlands | - Dirk Houtgraaf and Arno van Berge Henegouwen |
| - North Macedonia | - Gordan Nikolov |
| - Norway | - Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg |
| - Poland | - Piotr Majewski |
| - Portugal | - Emilia Ferreira |
| - Romania | - Valer Rus |
| - Russia | - Anna Permilovskaya |
| - Serbia | - Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski |
| - Spain | - Antoni Laporte |
| - Sweden | - Anna Hansen |
| - Turkey | - Dilek Yildiz Karakaş |
| - Ukraine | - |
| - United Kingdom | - Tim Bryan |

How were museums in Europe doing in 2022?

– an analytical summary by Henrik Zipsane

This is the fifth edition of the EMA European Museum Report. It is based on reports from the representatives of the Academy around Europe who have simply been asked: 'How were museums doing in 2022 and what is going on?' The simplicity and the broadness of the question give freedom for the representatives to interpret as they wish, and this does of course mean that the many national reports which follow are heterogeneous. This reflects the individuality of the representatives but probably also the perspective which is the natural approach to the question in their own country. We also consider this reflects the richness in differences in the museums, and of course the rich diversity in Europe.

2022 appears to be the first year in which the museums throughout Europe were not preoccupied all the time with the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic was not so big, and the restrictions were gradually lifted. The most positive impact of that has been that museums across the continent as a whole have seen the return of visitors - in some cases like in Scandinavia the visitor numbers are almost up to the level before the pandemic. In other countries like the United Kingdom the visitor numbers for museums are still recovering and most severely outside the major urban areas still marked by the impact from the pandemic.

After slowly but surely putting the pandemic behind us three other major problems have arisen as realities for the museums in Europe. The war in Ukraine, sky-rocketing energy prices, and inflation on levels not seen in decades have been of growing concern across Europe. The war has called for support of the Ukrainian people and their museums. Many museums and museum organizations in Europe have been and are still engaged in massive support actions. These actions cover support to staff and safety for the collections and museum buildings. As countries pledge their support for rebuilding Ukraine after liberation and the end of the war, they also include the recovery of museums and heritage. Museums around Europe and their national and European organizations are extremely active. The thousands of refugees from Ukraine spread around Europe have been offered a variety of services from museums which range from free entrance to special programmes, exhibitions, and participation in work processes. Museums have shown hospitality and empathy to an extent which has demonstrated the true humanistic values which are so deeply enshrined in the basis of all museums.

The high energy prices and inflation create huge financial challenges for museums and in otherwise rich countries like in Denmark some museums are actually closed and other museums have reduced their opening hours. Tourism is back in some countries

and that has helped museums in Croatia financially but in Malta it is not the case, and the government has had to support them more than before. In other countries like Montenegro the museums are left with no alternative but to delay some important work and just wait for better times. But naturally some of the major trends from the past years in museum work continue even during times of financial constraints. Digitisation has clearly become an integrated part of the museum reality in all countries.

There are some political signs of developments in countries which call for some alarm. In countries like Belgium and Sweden museum organizations have thought it necessary to engage in debates about the independence of museums from political – party political – influence. Such debates do not start without any reason.

The interest of governments or regional and local councils in museums is an issue which is growing according to our EMA representatives. It is indeed an issue which deserves attention. At some time probably all museum colleagues think that it is great that government or parliament give specific directives or just point in a specific direction for museums to focus on. That is presumably the case in Norway where museums are told to pay attention to sustainability. Most museums will probably think that such a message from the political level is reasonable and not an unwelcome interference in the work or processes of the museum. But it is probably more problematic if a regional council gives a message to the county museum that they don't want to have as much contemporary art in the exhibitions, but more traditional cultural history displays, as has happened recently in Sweden.

Museum wise, 2022 can be characterised as a year when museums went from one crisis to two or three new crises. It was also a year where the importance of museums was demonstrated by the theme of the ICOM conference in Prague – 'The Power of Museums' – and museums themselves began to realise that such an importance invites welcome and less welcome reactions from outside.

Henrik Zipsane

European Museum Academy

COUNTRY REPORTS

ALBANIA

National museums in the Republic of Albania have always attracted the attention of local and foreign visitors, as storytellers of the past. The statistics for the year 2022 show a growing interest, in contrast to the years 2021 or 2020, which were hit by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The visitors are:

2020, January-December: 49,288 visitors

2021, January-December: 132 223 visitors

2022, January-December: 267,599 visitors

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

EXHIBITIONS:

- "Fate of Albanians in Mauthausen"
- "Architecture of public buildings in Pristina"
- "Our language is so good" International Mother Language Day
- "Monumenta Albanica Justinopolitana", exhibition in cooperation with the Slovenian Embassy
- "Colors and shapes"
- "Cultural heritage between generations", revealed by the National Museum of Kosovo
In cooperation with the "Emel" studio, an exhibition of paintings by the studio's children was opened.
- "Chronicle of the Russian occupation of Ukraine", on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of Ukraine's independence
- "Iatalie-Dagli Alinari ai maestri della fotografia contemporanea", in collaboration with the Italian Institute of Culture
- "I have my Albanian people in my heart", exhibition in honor of Mother Teresa
- "In symbiosis with the epic"

- "The patriotic activity of the Hero of the Nation Sali Čekaj", in cooperation with the Historical Museum of Kosovo
- "Quranic Verses"
- "Mos Harro", by the historian from Kosovo Rakip Zegolli
- "CAN for Balkans"
- "Road to Independence", on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the declaration of Independence of Albania
- "Albania and Albanians in the paintings of European authors of the 19th century"

CONFERENCES, BOOK PROMOTION AND MEMORIAL ACTIVITIES:

- "Waves and longings", book promotion
- "Museological Studies Magazine no. 11", magazine promotion
- "Kadarejane citizen metonyms", book promotion
- "Fan Noli Polyhedral", scientific conference
- "Language, future society", scientific conference on the occasion of International Mother Language Day
- "The 71st anniversary of the death of Sabiah Kasimat", the month of remembrance
- "Memorial afternoon in honor of director Kujtim Gjonaj"
- "Monumenta Albanica Justinopolitana", scientific symposium
- Activity within the 147th anniversary of the birth of Faik Konica, in cooperation with the 9-year non-public school "Faik Konica"
- International Day of Monuments, activity with the students of "Sami Frashëri" school
- Summer School on "Latin Paleography", open lecture
- Promotion of the magazine "Drita e Gonxha", in cooperation with the Institute of Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Albanians, Skopje "Drita"
- "Sadik Bejko and poetry as a sign of revival", book promotion
- Beqir Sina, "Rob in two times", book promotion
- "The History of Kosovo" by Jusuf Buxhovi, book promotion
- "41st anniversary of the inauguration of the National History Museum"

EDUCATION THROUGH CULTURE

- "Little Archaeologist"

- “My Museum”
- "A lesson in a museum"
- "A day with the curator"
- "An afternoon at the museum"
- 554th anniversary of Skanderbeg's death
- The 91st anniversary of the death of Mihal Gramenos
- The 135th anniversary of the Korca school
- Activity with Institute of blind pupils "Ramazan Kabashi"
- June 1, International Children's Day

MUSEUM OF SECRET SURVEILLANCE “HOUSE OF LEAVES”

- Opening of the exhibition "Albania's journey under communism". The exhibition was divided into three interrelated sections: "Domestic Policy", "Foreign Policy" and "Anti-Communist Resistance".
- “Remember for not forgetting”. Is a programme launched by Ministry of Culture of Albania. The project aims to acquaint the younger generations with the dark Albanian communist past and raise their awareness about the consequences of communism. Through this programme, the participating students had the opportunity not only to visit the museum but also to talk with an ex-political prisoner during communism.
- The educational programme “Impression” is an art competition involving high school students. The competition is held in the following genres: 1-visual arts (painting, sculpture, installation). 2-literary creation (essays, poetry etc). 3-music (melodies, songs). Some of the objectives of this competition are - engaging, encouraging young people to participate in creative/educational activities, acquainting them with the Albanian communist regime.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY “MARUBI”

EXHIBITIONS:

- "Memory of the air" with the research of the Italian artists Chiaralice Rizzi and Alessandro Laita about the photographs of the Marubi that are kept in family premises, accompanied by the publication with the same title
- "Exposé" during which objects from the Marubi archive were exhibited for the first time
- "Jutta Benzenberg: Albanian Biography from now to 1991"

- "Michel Setboun: the photojournalist at the right time, in the right place"
- "Pietro Marubbi, a photographer in Ottoman Albania" opened as part of the Manifesta 14 biennial at the Ethnological Museum of Pristina)

DONATIONS

Donations of the photographic collection of Safet and Gjylzade Dokle, consisting of 19,548 negatives, 31 albums containing 7,995 printed photographs in the 6x9 cm format and 33 working objects of the photographic laboratory, photographic development papers and boxes with photo notes, newspapers and photographer's correspondence). This photo collection is the largest donated to the Marubi Museum after the years 90.

HISTORICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM OF KRUJA

Thanks to the EU4Culture Albania program, the Ethnographic Museum of Kruja is undergoing restoration interventions, the process of museumization and improvement of the display of artefacts.

Specialists of the Works of Art Sector of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage closely inspected the progress of the works, which are aimed at the restoration and conservation of the wall painting and decorated wooden elements. Work is continuing in the men's room with the restoration of the decorated ceiling and mural.

Very soon this museum will be able to speak to visitors not only with artefacts but also through works of art!

The Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu Museum was visited by a military delegation from the United States

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDEPENDENCE, VLORA

"Little Cicero", educational activity with school students

Dorian Koçi

AUSTRIA

Although the Covid situation has improved and the daily work at the museum got much easier, challenges of a different kind came our way this year. 2022 was marked by two events that changed the world: the war in Ukraine and the associated energy crisis. There are currently about 90,000 Ukrainian refugees living in Austria - most of them are women and children. Many museums have reacted quickly: With the cultural pass "Aktion Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur" (Action Hunger for Art and Culture), people in precarious living situations have free access to various institutions and programmes. Ukrainian refugees could easily obtain this cultural passport. In addition, language barriers were addressed by providing multilingual staff and translations.

Along with the war, there were price increases in Austria. Above all, the prices for energy are still rising massively. Museums are often places with good lighting, ventilation and also IT equipment. City governments and museum managements have had to respond to increased costs by taking measures such as reducing heating and air conditioning. On the other hand, the increased costs would have had to be passed on to the visitors in the form of ticket price increases.

Another phenomenon in the museum landscape is the contact with climate activists. Activists of the climate movements like "Last Generation" have shifted their protests from the streets to cultural institutions in many cases. For example, they have protested with an action in the Leopold Museum in Vienna. A Klimt painting was smeared with black, oily paint. In principle, museums support the concerns of the climate movement, but sticking things to works of art or exhibits or smearing them with paint is the wrong way to express their opinion. Environmental and climate protection is a major concern for museums. For example, the Technical Museum Vienna bears the Austrian Eco-label and the Museum of Modern Art (mumok) has been certified as a "Green Museum" since 2021. Museums offer programmes and workshops on climate and sustainability for different target groups and also for their staff. An example is the workshop "Climate. Activism. Museum. Cultural dimensions of the climate crisis" from the Museum's Academy Joanneum.

Since 2022, visitors and especially school classes can visit museums without restrictions again. This has been well received throughout Austria, as the visitor figures show.

2022 launched numerous initiatives to make museums more accessible. Not only for visitors with physical disabilities, but also for people who need support with language or content and those, who do not often find access to museums because of their social environment. An example of this is the exhibition "Graz Poster 1920 – 1955". The inclusive exhibition presents posters and designs from the collection of the Graz Museum, which can be experienced by listening, touching and smelling.

On 24th of May the annual meeting of the working group "Inclusive Museum" took place in the Volkskundemuseum Vienna. And ICOM Austria and the Essl Foundation are cooperation partners for a new museum guide on accessibility and inclusion, which will be published in early 2023.

Here are some highlights from the Austrian museum scene: The “Untere Belvedere” was reopened at the end of January 2022 after a general overhaul. The Viennese architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky was considered a pioneer of social housing and a resistance fighter against National Socialism. Since summer 2022, her last flat in Vienna, which is a listed building, is open for visitors. This year the Lentos and Nordico museum in Linz features a female focus in the form of solo exhibitions of female artists.

Both director positions of the Universalmuseum Joanneum were newly advertised in summer 2022. The Universalmuseum Joanneum is Austria's oldest and second largest museum and includes 19 houses and a zoo. After 20 years, the scientific management changes from Dr. Wolfgang Muchitsch to Marko Mele in January 2023.

Nikola Köhler-Kroath

BELGIUM

The Flemish Museum Network

The Flemish Museum Network is an informal network of professionals working in museums and umbrella heritage organizations in Flanders. FARO, the Flemish Institution for Cultural Heritage, facilitates and supports this network. Chair is Patrick Allegaert, former artistic director of the Guislain Museum in Ghent.

The Flemish Museum Network was established 11 years ago. It started from a small network of museum directors in Ghent, Antwerp and Bruges, and expanded gradually. Since the pandemic in 2020, the Flemish Museum Network has been growing rapidly. Currently, nearly 70 museums participate in the XL meetings. There is a very broad representation of the Flemish museum sector (ca. 85%). This strong involvement of the museums underscores the importance of this consultation and ensures its future role. The participants in the consultation belong to the management level of museums (general director, business director, artistic director, communication manager). The goal is to exchange experiences, insights and Q&A. During these meetings shared policies and museological issues, challenges and opportunities for collaboration are discussed.

The Flemish Museum Network organised 10 meetings in 2022. There were five meetings with all museums recognised by the Flemish community (both basic recognition, supra-local and national recognition) This was called the Flemish Museum Network XL. These meetings were attended by over 70 museums. The emphasis in these digital meetings was on sharing information. In addition, there were another five meetings just with the national museums (over 20). These meetings were alternately digital and live. The agenda included more moments of consultation and discussion in addition to exchange of information.

All meetings were supported substantively and methodically by FARO, the Flemish Institution for Cultural Heritage. As good in terms of deepening the content of the operation as in terms of supporting the operation via reporting, but via offering meeting infrastructure, FARO gave support which was highly appreciated by all members.

It is not the intention to revisit all the topics that were discussed, we cite the most important ones.

Policy

For museums recognised by Flanders, 2022 was dominated by a new policy period for cultural heritage (2024-28) and the policy dossiers have to be submitted for that purpose. These dossiers must be submitted by 15 January 2023 and a period of assessment and allocation of grant amounts for the new policy period begins.

The museums each make a dossier with their quantified policy choices and plans. But the Flemish Museum Network is the place where more generic positions are determined, where strategies for influencing policy are worked out, where joint communication in this regard is decided upon. The main accents of this consultation were:

- large additional cost for all museums in terms of energy, inflation
- rising costs in the organisation of exhibitions (transport, insurance, design and construction, ...)
- important necessary approach to e.g. digitisation

- strengthening international presence.

Through the Flemish Museum Network, the museums expressed to the Flemish government the absolute necessity to significantly increase the budget for museums. In the previous policy period, an impetus to increase was formulated given a large historical deficit compared to other arts organisations (performing arts, for example). But for the new policy period, a sensitive increase in the budget is once again imminent.

To this end, the Flemish Museum Network consults with the representative of the Cultural Heritage Consultation (OCE) and prepares positions that are important for all organisations within cultural heritage (museums, archives, heritage libraries, etc.). In addition, the Flemish Museum Network also prepares its own positions and discusses them with the policy level (Flemish government, Flemish parliament) as well with the officials of the Department of Culture.

COVID-19

At the beginning of 2022, the consultation still focused on Corona measures for museums. These remained open almost throughout the Corona period, in strong contact with the museums of our neighbouring countries. The support of FARO in the measures to be taken and the concrete questions in this regard were discussed at the consultation.

Museological themes

Attention to digitisation

There is a rapidly growing awareness that Flemish museums still need to take big steps in this area. To achieve digital transformation in the cultural heritage sector, the Flemish government is taking a directive role and working on a strategic policy across the boundaries of sub-sectors and specific target groups.

Digital Flanders and the Department of Culture, Youth and Media carried out a business case - 'A basic digital infrastructure for the sustainable handling of digital collections: final business case report (2021-2022)' – that was published at the end of 2022. In terms of its digital operation, the cultural heritage landscape is fragmented and consists of many actors. Therefore, this business case aims to identify initiatives that facilitate collaboration through a network model. Together, these initiatives lay the foundations of a basic infrastructure to ensure that digital content of and about cultural heritage is created, managed and preserved in such a way that it leads to sustainable reuse.

Autonomy of museums

Whereas in the previous year all attention was on museums and polyphony, in 2022 the autonomy of museums was put forward as a key theme. The fact that many museums have both Flemish and local governments as their 'structure' makes this theme really important: how can museums independently shape their content? The discussion about this has started but will be developed further in the near future. Developments regarding the ICOM museum definition are also closely followed in this context.

Communication

Internal

Together with the Dutch Museum Association, the magazine *Museumpeil* will be further developed into a truly valued magazine for museum employees.

External

Museumpassmusées (cf. infra) has reached maturity in 2022. Not only the number of participating museums as well as the number of pass holders made quite a leap. Museumpassmusées is well established. In terms of general communication about the 'state' and 'operation' of museums, Museumpassmusées is an important and valued tool.

The initiative of the Flemish Government regarding a **digital Flemish museum** is being followed up. The digital museum should be a fact by the end of 2023/beginning of 2024. As for now, the Flemish government is investing 3.000.000 euro in this initiative.

The Museum Network maintains a close consultation with the heritage sector at large (via the interest group OCE) and with SARC (the strategic advisory body for culture of the Flemish Community).

OCE

OCE, the interest group for Cultural Heritage, set out to renew itself. The old structure (VZW, juridical personality) is to be abolished and a transition will be made towards a more member driven form. This transition is taking place in 2022-23. At the same time, OCE is primarily focussed on the rewriting of the legislation concerning cultural heritage in Flanders.

Museumpassmusées

In 2022 the Museum Pass generated 564.913 museum visits and 3.190.000 euro for the 225 participating museums. At the end of 2022, the number of active pass holders was 124.927. The year started with a beautiful number of visits well above 2021. Between February and March, we had fewer visits than in 2021, but still, well above 2019, which was the first full and normal year that the Museum Pass existed. In other words: in the post-Covid situation the Museum Pass started growing again, but less than foreseen in the original business plan. Between April and June, the number of visits went down again and in June, we had the lowest number of visits. We assume that this was due to the fact that people preferred travelling now that it was possible again and wanted to catch up on concerts, theatre and performing arts, which was also possible again, and all kinds of outdoor activities and social family events. During the summer holidays, from July and August onwards, the number of visits increased, especially at the coast and in the Ardennes, typical holiday regions in Belgium. In September the museum sector started with a very strong programme and that led to an increase in visitor numbers that were far above all previous years since the very start of the Museum Pass in September 2018. The long-awaited and glamorous re-opening of the KMSKA (Royal Museum of Fine Arts) in Antwerp caused a massive boost. This provided leverage and had a positive effect on the entire museum sector. During the Christmas holidays, museums had a huge success and with some top exhibitions, with people queuing, the year was rounded off with a situation where we were almost back at the pre-Covid level. Proven value: museumPASSmusées commissioned an econometric study on the added value of the Museum Pass in 2022. The study shows that pass holders visit museums four times more often than non-pass holders. MuseumPASSmusées is therefore fulfilling its mission; namely, to generate more museum visits for museums in Belgium.

Hilde Schoefs

BULGARIA

In 2022, Bulgaria remained in a political crisis, with an irregular government, which severely limited the activities of the Ministry of Culture. At the end of the year, however, a session was opened for project support for the activities of museums in connection with the sharp increase in the price of electricity. During the year, museums received support for electricity and gas costs, similar to private companies in the country.

During the year, the museums were active in outdoor events and museum educational programs for adolescents. Some museums focus on research programs as well as working with museum holdings rather than visitor-oriented activities.

However, 2022 was relatively better than 2021 as it reported slightly more visitors and revenue. Museums with open-air exhibitions are achieving better results, with some reaching the visitor levels of 2019. In the post-Covid era, museums in Bulgaria are showing fatigue and are too passive.

This year too, museums from cross-border regions are working more actively to create digital resources - reconstructions, digital archives, exhibitions, with projects focused on common ideas about heritage between different countries. But in general, there is little attempt among museums to create digital products. The next-generation EU Recovery and Resilience Plan, supported by the European Commission, is expected to provide digitization for all museums – for 800,000 exhibits. Work on it will begin in 2023.

Some municipal authorities have won projects for new expositions, entertainment complexes or tourist attractions related to cultural heritage, but due to high inflation there is a problem with funding, which turns out to be insufficient.

The Bulgarian Museums Association organizes awards for the best museum in the country, for educational initiatives and public activities. The Ministry of Culture also gives awards, but for mobile exhibitions - individual and joint. The awards stimulate the work of museums in these hard times.

In 2022 we have two new museums – in Petrich, on the border with Greece, which again shows activity through European co-financing. The museum is in a new purpose-built building and the exhibition is chronological, with a focus on local cultural heritage. In another town bordering Greece - Madan, an old mine was turned into a museum, again under a cross-border project. Another major museum project is the renovation of the Ettar Open Air Museum in Gabrovo, with the help of 5 million euros from European co-financing. For its overall activity, the Gabrovo Open Air Museum won the Živa Award of the Forum for Slavic Cultures.

A Museum Exhibitions Fair was held, where less activity was reported in the creation of mobile exhibitions. The guest speaker at the event was Dr Sandro Debono, EMA's national representative for Malta. In a national media poll, for the top important cultural event the exhibition "Women Artists. New horizons between the two world wars" in the Sofia City Art Gallery was the winner.

A national survey of museum activities and public responses in the Covid-19 and post-Covid situation was carried out, which outlines models for the work of museums and proposes policies for sustainable activity linked to local forms of cultural heritage.

Thanks to the insistence of museums, the Ministry of Culture held a session against the energy dependence of museums for the winter season. During the year, the Ministry of Culture initiated new sessions to support museum activities, as well as new exhibitions and expositions. This was well received by the museums, which were active and massively benefitted from the opportunity, although their initiatives did not have a particularly great result in terms of attracting new audiences.

Nikolay Nenov

CROATIA

Croatian museums, unlike a large part of European ones, were not closed last year due to epidemiological measures. Tourism was intense in the summer months which was also reflected in the number of museum visitors. Out of a total of 2.5 million visitors, almost a quarter were attracted by only the three most visited museums. The Archaeological Museum of Istria (under which there is the colosseum Arena and its collections) in Pula, The Museum of the City of Split with Diocletian's Cellars, and the Museums of Dubrovnik.

Zagreb's museums, which had to close their buildings due to the earthquake in 2020, recorded the biggest drop in visitors that previously used to gather on numerous events. The Mimara Museum, the Croatian Museum of Natural History, the Strossmayer Gallery of Old Masters, HAZU and the Croatian School Museum were completely closed and had no visitors, while the Croatian History Museum and the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, which were also closed due to the consequences of the earthquake, gathered 1,000 to 1,500 visitors outside the main houses.

Of the 30 museums in Zagreb, only two had no damage to either the building or the structure. During 2022, part of the restoration work began - these are museums that suffered minimal or minor damage and did not plan constructive renovation. Almost half of the museums still haven't started work on the building. A common reason for such a delay can be seen in the unsettled property relations between the museum and the owner of the building. In order for the works to be carried out at all, a large number of museums have to move out of their buildings. The prerequisite for that is finding space for the relocation of the museum fund. Of the 20 or so museums that are currently undergoing renovations or are yet to begin, only a third have found an adequate space for relocation. The problem is not only finding a large enough space, but finding a suitable space for storing materials that will meet the microclimatic and safety conditions, as well as alternative spaces for the accommodation of employees. After obtaining the space, what follows is the challenging process of moving and safe storage of the museum objects. Non-maintenance and non-renovation of historical buildings, unsettled property relations, sloppy construction documentation, often illegal remodelling of buildings, the absence of a common museum depot and the lack of funds to pay for insurance - all of this came to the fore with the earthquake in museums and a large part of Zagreb. Obviously, this is the beginning of a multi-year renovation, but certainly not its end.

Highlights of 2022

It is difficult to single out what this year could be remembered for. No new museums were opened, and the previous events that were not held for two years are gradually gaining momentum.

Of the new permanent exhibits, the one in the Ethnographic Museum of Istria in Pazin opened on the theme of different cultures in Istria, illustrated through human destinies. The multitude of different exhibitions throughout Croatia largely related to art exhibitions, but also to various archaeological, ethnographic, historical and other topics. In the largest Istrian city, Pula, as

before in Rijeka, a museum district is being formed, dominated by museum and historical buildings.

The Ethnographic Museum of Istria has participated the four-year EU project “Identity on the line” (within the “Creative Europe” program) which started in 2019 and was awarded by the European Museum Academy together with other five museums and one University. The project is about forced migrations and difficult consequences for European citizens in the second half of the 20th century.

Virovitica City Museum received the ŽIVA award for the best museum in Slavic countries, which has “discovered its theme, its object, its material, closely connected with the history of the region and with all mankind, with life on Earth and at the present time with the joint human responsibility against its exploitation. The material in question is wood. This represents the essence of the content the museum has created and transferred in an up-to-date way into a comprehensive story and a uniquely engaging exhibition project – a great attraction to the large number of visitors to both the physical museum and the virtual one”, as written in the justification of the jury.

Obviously, Croatian museums have been visible on the European map of museums. However, in the Ministry of Culture and Media the position of the Head of the Department for Museums is still vacant, for the second year. Obviously, it is not easy to find (and motivate) a person who will deal with the complex world of museums.

Some statistics

The founders of museums in Croatia are cities (56%), the state (17%), regions (9%), municipalities (7%), other founders (8%), multiple founders (3%), among which are joint museums founded by the state and the city (3) and the county and the city (1).

51% of Croatian museums operate locally, 29% have reach at the state level, 19.6% operate regionally and less than 1% internationally.

According to type, Croatian museums are divided into general (41.5%), specialized museums (48%) and museum collections (10%). Museums according to type and type are divided into general museums (83 or 41.5% of the total number of official museums and collections in the Republic of Croatia), then specialized ones (96 or 48%), which are divided into archaeological (6%), ethnographic (4%), historical (5%), natural history (2.5%), technical (1%), artistic (17%) and other (12.5%), then to museum collections (20 or 10%) and one permanent museum exhibition (0.5%).

Among general museums, there are 45 local museums (which make up 55% of general museums), 32 city museums (38% of general museums), 4 national museums (5% of general museums).

Among the specialized museums (96) by type, the most are art museums (34 or 35.4%), followed by archaeological (12 or 12.5%), historical (10 or 10.4%), ethnographic (8 or 8.3%), natural science (5 or 5.2%), technical (2 or 2.1%) and other (25 or 26%).

Among the 20 museum collections, there are six art, one archaeological, two historical, two ethnographic and nine belonging to other types of collections.

According to data from OREG, the total number of employees in museums in 2021 is 1,874, of which 1,120 are professional and assistant professional museum employees and other professional employees, not including interns.

Lidija Nikočević

CYPRUS

2022 was a busy year for the museum and culture sector in Cyprus, a small island at the far east of the Mediterranean Sea.

State and private museums, as well as cultural foundations, tried to overcome the time lost during the pandemic and planned a year full of exhibitions, lectures and specially designed educational programmes for both adults and kids, a year full of culture and art.

After years of discussions and speculation, in June the government gave the go-ahead for the establishment of a ministry dedicated to culture – a move with great importance for the development of the arts in Cyprus and their promotion abroad.

Some organisations, such as the A. G. Leventis Gallery and the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, focussed on designing programmes for the elderly, the hearing impaired and groups of immigrants. The meditation meetings surrounded by the Impressionist Collection of the A. G. Leventis Gallery and the regular visits of special groups from homes for the elderly are a few of the programmes that won the interest of the public.

Last but not least, one of the most anticipated projects in Cyprus, the new archaeological museum, is finally well under way, at an estimated cost of €121.3m, and is expected to open to the public by 2028.

Demetra Theodotou Anagnostopoulou

CZECH REPUBLIC

The year 2022 was truly exceptional for museums in the Czech Republic, as we had the honour of hosting the most important museum event, the **26th ICOM General Conference Prague 2022** from 20-28 August 2022. It was attended by 3,705 of the most important experts from museums, galleries, and other cultural sectors from 124 countries, of which 3,050 came to Prague in person and 655 participated online.

It was the first ICOM General Conference in hybrid format. The conference was accessible to all who could come in person and to all who could not travel for various reasons. The vast majority of the technical program has been digitized and is accessible until August 2023 on the gCon conference platform <https://icomprague2022.gcon.me/page/home>, after which it will be available in the ICOM digital archive. More information can be found here: <https://prague2022.icom.museum/>.

In Prague, on 24 August 2022, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM has approved the proposal for the new ICOM museum definition: **“A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.”**

The main theme of ICOM Prague 2022 was ‘The Power of Museums’. We chose this theme because museums are among the most important drivers of social development, the most important public spaces, often the most historically, architecturally and artistically valuable buildings, and they enable knowledge of the past for a better understanding of the present and the future. They have the power to make the world a better place!

In expert panels we discussed and shared ideas on current issues in the field, such as **what is the power of museums, how they can contribute to the development of society, how to use new technologies or how museums can co-create a sustainable world. They also addressed internal topics such as museum leadership or the development and direction of ICOM as a global organisation.**

The main guests on the expert panels were the most prominent figures in their fields: **Hilda Flavia Nakabuye**, co-founder of Fridays for Future in Uganda (panel Sustainability: Museums and Adaptability); **Seb Chan**, a leading expert on the application of new technologies in culture based in Australia (panel Accessibility: Museums and New Technologies); **Lonnie G. Bunch III**, 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and education complex; **Hilary Carty OBE**, a London-based museum leadership specialist (panel Vision: Museum leadership) and **Margarita Reyes Suárez**, a Colombian anthropologist specializing in community work (panel Purpose: Museums and Civil Society). The keynote lectures were followed by panel discussions, round tables and a series of expert lectures.

Many museums presented a number of new projects on the occasion of ICOM Prague 2022

Kunsthalle Praha

On 22 February 2022, the Kunsthalle Prague, a significant space on the cultural map of Prague, was inaugurated. It was founded by The Pudil Family Foundation as a non-governmental organization and non-profit platform, whose aim is to connect the Czech and international art scene. The mission of Kunsthalle Prague is to contribute to a deeper understanding of Czech and international art of the 20th and 21st centuries. It bridges the gap between the Czech and international art scene through its art collections, research and support of international artists through its residency programme. The name Kunsthalle Praha refers to Prague's multicultural past as a city of three nations, two languages and one unique charm.

<https://www.kunsthallepraha.org/en>

PLATO

One of the most remarkable museum projects for more than 10 years is the city gallery PLATO established by the third largest city in the Czech Republic, Ostrava. It reacts energetically to the latest trends not only in art but above all in the development of society and captures and helps to interpret them. Until now, the institution was located in the building of the former Bauhaus hobby market. In 2022, it was expanded to include the former slaughterhouse building, which has undergone an exemplary restoration, where the historic architecture of the 19th century meets the architecture of the 21st century in a remarkable way, but which, as is the museum's task, has not let the transformations of the building that took place during the 20th century disappear.

The author of the reconstruction, architect Robert Konieczny and his studio KWK Promes, offered a solution that makes it possible to rotate six walls and open the building from all sides. The interior also features a hydroponic lettuce farm in the café area, emphasising the importance of ecology and local (plant) production.

The openness of the institution and the building will also be reflected in the green space of almost 9,000 m², designed for PLATO by permaculture designer Denisa Tomášková, which is being built on the site. The result will be a garden and park founded in the autumn of 2022. In the years to come, caring for the green spaces and developing them further will become an important theme for PLATO.

<https://plato-ostrava.cz/en/O-Nas>

Museum of Literature

Among the most notable is the Museum of Literature, which is part of the National Literature Memorial established in 1952. The Museum of Literature exposition opened in the newly reconstructed so-called Villa Petshek is called "The World as Open Book". It presents the collection of the Museum of Literature (National Literature Memorial) in ten thematically focused exhibitions. The exhibition does not follow any specific narrative line, it captures selected artistic mediations of individual and social experience in the literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. It asks the question of what literature is in its diversity, and also what are the possibilities of its visualization. A very remarkable project copes with the complications of displaying literature in an original way and sets trends for further development in this area. Exhibiting literature is one of the most difficult disciplines of museum work. The Museum of Literature in Prague performed this task very well.

<https://www.en.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz/1568-museum-of-czech-literature/>

The Wallachian Regional Museum

Another very original permanent exhibition was opened in the museum of the Wallachia region at the Kinský Family Chateau in Wallachian Meziříčí, that was completely restored. The new exhibition "Man in the landscape, landscape in people" uses audio-visual media as the main carrier of the story. It seeks to read itself from the perspective and position of the present. The exposition and its technology does not proceed by shaping the reality of a period and telling us "look, this is exactly what it looked like back then", it offers us multi-layered images that allow us to understand how the area was shaped and why it is the way it is today. In terms of museum work, we must appreciate several elements in the exhibition that show us the past as we find it today. In the medieval exhibit, the cut through the waste pit becomes the focal point of the narrative. Graves and refuse are the most important source for understanding prehistory and the Middle Ages. Or, in the 19th century hall, the focus is on one exhibit: a jar with a pile of wood underneath. It symbolises the development of glassmaking, which went hand in hand with the cutting down of forests. The exhibit teaches visitors to put information into context and develop critical thinking skills.

<http://www.muzeumvalassko.cz/en/expozice/clovek-v-krajine-krajina-v-lidech>

Museum of East Bohemia in Pardubice

In 2022, it completed an extensive reconstruction of Pardubice Castle and the conversion of the outbuildings into modern museum premises. The museum has thus acquired exhibition halls and facilities for activities corresponding to the trends of the 21st century. The reconstruction focused primarily on the construction of modern exhibition halls, a teaching studio, an art studio, workrooms and workshops. The project was preceded by extensive construction activities at the detached workplace in Ohrazenice, where modern conservation workshops, a digitisation centre, a library, a research room, acquisition reception, a transit depository and depositories for more than a third of the museum's collection items were built.

The reconstruction culminated in the construction of a new tour circuit focused on the structural development of the national cultural monument Pardubice Castle. This exhibition combines the methods of museum work, the presentation of the monument in the form of interactive installations and the presentation of contemporary art in dialogue with the Renaissance.

<https://www.vcm.cz/en/>

In 2022, Czech museums have prepared a number of very special projects that reflect the themes of the past in an interesting way and allow visitors to get to know their future better.

Martina Lehmannová

DENMARK

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Denmark began 2022 with all museums closed. However, the restrictions only lasted a few weeks and by February all restrictions were lifted. While a full recovery from the pandemic is underway, 2022 met new challenges in the form of significant inflation and rising energy prices.

Visitor Numbers

The good news for 2022 is that visitors are returning to the museums. The total number of annual visitors at Danish museums will be published by the official Statistic Denmark in the Spring, so we don't have the exact numbers yet. However, when you compare against 2019 pre-Covid visitor numbers at the probably ten most visited museum, three of them had an increase in visitor and seven had a decline. In total, the top ten visited museums have seen a decrease by 7% of their visitor numbers compared to 2017. In 2022, we are definitely seeing an increase in the number of visitors from the 2020 and 2021 annual figures, but it seems like the use of museums is not as high as in 2019.

New Openings

2022 was also a year that saw new museums and additions to existing museums open across Denmark.

Among the most talked about was the opening of the Refugee Museum of Denmark in Western Jutland (<https://flugtmuseum.dk/>) and the re-opening of the Design Museum in Copenhagen (<https://designmuseum.dk/>). Other notable openings include; Museum Koldings Staldgården (<https://museumkolding.dk/en/staldgaarden/>), Museum Vestsjælland's reopening of Malergården (<https://vestmuseum.dk/malergaarden/>) and new building and expansion of the Art Museum in Vejle (<https://www.vejenkunstmuseum.dk>).

A number of smaller and private museums can also be celebrated; the Computer Museum in Hedehusene (<https://datamuseum.dk/>), Rock Nalle Museet in Hørve (<https://www.rocknalle museet.dk/>) and the Museum of Golden Age Art in Lemvig (<https://vestjyskkunstfond.dk/>).

Closures

Unfortunately, 2022 also resulted in a few museum closures. Museum Sønderjylland had to close three of their ten museums due to the unsustainable rise in energy costs. The Bornholm Museum and Skive Museum also chose to close buildings and exhibitions for the winter period to reduce their energy costs.

Some museums have had to find cost-saving through redundancies and a survey of members from the Association of Danish Museums showed that one in five managers foresee layoffs or other reductions in staff in 2023 because of the economic situation.

Other News

The National Cultural Analysis Institute (Kulturens Analyseinstitut) opened in 2022 where one of their aims is to support more knowledge of the importance of culture for the well-being of citizens.

A new Danish Government and Minister of Culture was appointed, with a goal, among others, to reform the museum law and the existing system of supporting museums.

Martin Brandt Djupdræt

ESTONIA

According to Statistics Estonia, there are 175 museums in Estonia in 227 locations, where approximately 6.9 million museum objects are preserved. By the end of 2020, descriptions of approx. 3.77 million museums had been entered in MuIS - the museum information system. About 1.77 million of them have digital images.

Estonia has well recovered from the impacts of the Corona pandemic and all the museums of Estonia report again the increase of visitors and income. Many Ukrainian refugees are here due to the war and all Estonian museums offered free entrance for them in 2022.

New permanent exhibitions

- The Beer World is one of the newest museums in Tartu, which reopened in 2022 in the A. Le Coq brewery after thorough renovation.
- Curious visitors can discover the seven mysteries of the cathedral in the Chamber of Mysteries of the University of Tartu Museum.

News

The Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Board continue to offer grants named “Accelerator for the Museums”. The purpose of the grant is to provide museums with the opportunity to make rapid development leaps in activities and services aimed at the public that would be economically viable once launched.

The digitalisation projects on the areas of museum education and public services are developing rapidly. For example - the National Heritage Board is developing a new prototype of artificial intelligence for describing digital objects, Kratt Folli, whose goal is to move closer to automating the description of digital objects. It would make possible to increase data quality, use the time of memory institution employees more intelligently, and make collections more accessible to the public.

Estonian museums are planning to create an annual joint ticket to make visiting easier and support the industry's recovery from the pandemic. An annual joint ticket would allow you to visit Estonian museums an unlimited number of times and the price range of the annual card will be around 50-60 euros.

On 31 January 2022, a preliminary analysis of the services of the heritage repository was completed, during which the future services offered by the heritage repository were identified and described in more detail: storage, conservation, digitization and consulting services. If everything goes according to plan, new warehouses that meet today's requirements could open their doors in 2027.

Triin Vaaro

FRANCE

Return of the public. The first observation, for the year 2022 concerns the return of the public to French public museums. The major institutions - such as the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay - have regained most of their pre-Covid crisis audience. The Louvre will have 7.8 million visitors by 2022. The Musée d'Orsay will have 3.2 million visitors in 2022. And the Centre Pompidou, three million visitors. These figures are notably linked to the massive return of Americans. While these figures are satisfactory, they remain lower - by 8 to 19% - than those of 2019. This slight drop is explained in particular by the absence of the Asian public.

Several establishments located in the regions, mainly visited by a local public, have exceeded their pre-2020 figures. This is the case for the Louvre Lens and the Mucem in Marseille, which welcomed 1,250,000 visitors.

Attendance figures at private institutions - Fondation Cartier - are following the same trend. The Bourse du Commerce, which opened recently, also reaches a large audience.

Energy costs. The rising cost of energy and raw materials has also had an impact on the institutions during 2022. This inflation, which could have an even greater impact in 2023, could be offset by state aid for certain institutions such as the Louvre and Orsay.

Other establishments are having to rethink their operating methods. Some museums have rethought their opening hours. Others are lowering the temperature to 19°C, using more natural lighting and investing in LEDs with motion sensors. As these levers have their limits, reflections are launched - notably by ICOM - to relax the conservation standards in terms of hygrometry and temperature. In addition, in-depth work is being carried out to improve the energy performance of establishments. The efforts made - validated by a "High Environmental Quality" standard - will have a long-term impact. In addition to this insulation work, some establishments are also setting up different climate systems for different areas.

This search for sobriety also involves slowing down the number of temporary exhibitions or increasing the duration of their presentation. For example, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lille has developed a global strategy for the museum that combines short-term and long-term measures for museum staff and visitors. The Lille museum's action plan is structured in four areas:

- . to move towards a more ecologically virtuous museum that reduces the ecological footprint of the building (implementation of a more efficient waste management with a "garbage can plan" that is being progressively implemented; gradual renovation of the lighting with a switch to LEDs allowing for reductions of more than 90% of our energy consumption; establishment of quantified energy efficiency objectives with the contractors responsible for the building site).

- . propose more responsible programming and displays that take into account ecological issues.

- . to produce eco-designed exhibitions, a process initiated with « Expérience Goya », for which the number of loans is controlled and especially the origin of the works to limit the use of air transport. The scenographies are reversible and can be dismantled, and the materials are sorted and reused. In 2022, the exhibition The Magic Forest marked a new stage with an objective of 70% reuse of the previous scenography, a phase of conception and realization allowing constant iterative exchange between curator, scenographer and manufacturers in order to achieve the

objectives set. Finally, a company for the reuse of the material from this exhibition will be solicited at the time of dismantling.

A more inclusive and universal museum. Welcoming the widest possible audience is at the heart of the museum's action, with the development of forms of participatory mediation to get away from the top-down approach that places the visitor in a passive posture, with an emphasis on youth, very young children, and visitors with physical disabilities (visually impaired visitors, for example, with the exhibition *Prière de toucher* in 2022) or mental disabilities (via art therapy to act on autism spectrum disorders in particular).

The year 2022 was also marked in France by a new President at the Louvre Museum. On 5 January 2023, in the *Journal des Arts*, Laurence Des Cars, the new President, wished to limit the number of daily visitors to the museum - by introducing a limit of 30,000 visitors per day, whereas the museum sometimes exceeded 45,000. The objective is to improve the comfort of visitors and ensure better security for the works. "We need to get away from the culture of numbers and find a point of balance to encourage encounters between the public and the collections at the Louvre." A small revolution for France's leading institution.

Samuel Cordier

GEORGIA

2022 was a challenging year for many museums in Georgia. After the pandemic lockdown (we had it twice in the country) state and municipal museums experienced hard times, but step by step employees returned to normal work and museums started getting back visitors. But private museums, which consist of 11 % of Georgian museums in total, experienced harder efforts in recovering.

However, 2022 turned out to be unusual for some museums and should be particularly reported. Museums from the Georgian National Museum (GNM), where the new directorate, which was created in April 2021 and is staffed by representatives of the non-museum field, dismissed up to 100 employees from different museums of GNM as a result of the so-called reorganization (new management interviewed the staff and a month after issued the order of firing the staff). Employees were evaluated not on their professional experience and competence, but decisions were based on their political views and personal critical approaches to the new management.

Another problem is the communication between the Georgian Ministry of Culture and the professional museum society, which hampers the development of the field. For instance: while the art museum building of GNM that represents the monument of the cultural heritage of national importance is under construction and is the reason why the collections have to be evacuated, the whole process is absolutely non-transparent, and the qualified staff of the museum are involved neither in building reconstruction and nor in collections evacuation processes.

Besides, the new management of GNM restricted the accessibility of museum scientific staff to the collections. These restrictions at first negatively affected the projects, already awarded by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation and other ongoing international scientific projects led by fired employees together with foreign experts. The most distinguished achievement was connected to the 1.8 million-year-old tooth of an early species of human, discovered in 2022 by museum archaeologists in Orozmani, about 60 miles south-west of Tbilisi, near Dmanisi, where human skulls of the same period were found in the late 1990s. Due to the above-mentioned restrictions, the scientific research of this world-importance discovery couldn't be started yet.

Those restrictions and accessibility issues have been reflected in the modified statute (2021) of GNM. In addition, the ministry restricted free access for ICOM members in several state museums while these museums have been offering it since ICOM Georgia's establishment (2007). In light of the recent developments, ICOM Georgia published an ICOM statement on the independence of museums and called on the controlling and governing bodies of museums that any decisions about museums should be based on the best professional practices that are consistent with the mission and interests of the museum institution. The high level of professional and institutional integrity and autonomy of museums should not be jeopardized by financial or political interests (Principle 1.10 of the ICOM Code of Ethics).

Along with all these changes in cultural policy, the Union of Science, Education and Cultural workers was established and together with the Labour inspection service started to fight for the rights of dismissed staff, up to today they have achieved some results via Civil Court (reimbursement to some fired staff, but not returning to the positions). The union organizes permanent protest actions (via TV media and demonstrations) which unite both current and fired staff of the museums.

Along with these critical shifts the Georgian museums are trying to continue their activities on a national and international level: Georgian museum and heritage professionals made small contributions to support Ukrainian colleagues within the fundraising campaign organized by ICOM Georgia jointly with Blue Shield Georgia. Besides ICOM Georgia together with ICOM Ukraine and other organizations runs a special project funded by ICOM to support Ukrainian refugee colleagues and to raise awareness about the protection of cultural heritage based on the Ukrainian war case; In August 2022 Georgian Museum professionals participated in the ICOM General Conference (on-site and remotely) in Prague.

In the light of professional achievements, several projects are worth mentioning: **Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori, Georgia** - The two-year project implemented by Blue shield Georgia and financed by the international fund Aliph; **BE Museumer** – 3.5-year consortium project funded within the EU Creative Europe Culture programme, supported the elevation of museum and heritage professionals in the South Caucasus Region (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan); **“Museum outside of the museum”** – a social and educational project for teenagers Implemented by the Special Penitentiary Service under the Ministry of Justice and Tbilisi Museums Union.

Although no new museums have been opened in 2022, some construction and rehabilitation processes are undergoing. The large-scale rehabilitation process in the State Silk Museum, the oldest museum in the Caucasus, is expected to be completed in 2023.

2022 was significant in terms of international recognition - two Georgian museums, Vani Archaeological Museum (Georgian National Museum) and Ilia Chavchavadze Literary-Memorial Museum (Tbilisi Museums Union) are nominated in the EMYA-European Year of Museum Awards 2023. The results will be announced in May 2023 in Barcelona, Spain.

Lana Karaia and Nana Meparishvili

GERMANY

In 2022, there were some successes in the further development of museums in Germany, but also new challenges became apparent.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war is having an impact on museums in Germany. Leading cultural organisations such as the German Museums Association and ICOM Germany helped coordinate aid for refugees from Ukraine, and the European network NEMO coordinated aid for museums in Ukraine. During the year many German museums gave war refugees from Ukraine free access to museums and organised exhibitions and events with artists from Ukraine.

The sharp rise in energy prices and a looming energy shortage led the museums to take far-reaching measures. In addition to savings on lighting and heating, climate standards for museum collections were reviewed and opening hours for visitors were restricted.

Beyond these acute measures, museums in Germany are aiming to reduce energy consumption by 20% to protect the climate and improve sustainability. Climate protection and sustainability are the topic of the annual conference of the German Museums Association in 2023. The actions of climate activists in museums with attacks against works of art have added new facets to the discussion on sustainability and climate protection.

The digital transformation of museums has made further progress during the pandemic and will continue to be driven forward thanks to special funding programmes at federal and state level.

Two other topics have shaped museum-related work in 2022 and also caused political debates. The intensification of provenance research, the expansion of dialogue with the global South and the return of cultural property from colonial contexts have provided important impulses. In addition, many museums are increasingly addressing questions of decolonisation and a more extensive diversity-oriented opening.

In Berlin, the Humboldt Forum was completed as a new museum centre in autumn with the opening of the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art of the National Museums.

Dietmar Osses

GREECE

In Greece, 2022 marked the centenary of the Asia Minor Disaster (or Asia Minor Catastrophe)*, when Kemal Ataturk's troops routed the Greek forces in Asia Minor and forced close to one and a half million Hellenes to abandon their ancestral lands and seek refuge in neighbouring Greece and other countries further afield. It is the single greatest upset in modern Greek history and echoes of the pain it brought continue to linger on in the collective memory. It is only normal, then, that most (if not all) museums held exhibitions dedicated to different facets of this historic event.

Thus, the **Benaki Museum** in Athens held an exhibition on "[Asia Minor Hellenism: Heyday - Catastrophe - Displacement - Rebirth](#)," curated by Evita Arapoglou (herself a descendant of refugees, vice-president of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies and member of the Benaki Museum's Board), in collaboration with the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, itself custodian of a unique Oral History Archive with the testimonies of over 5,000 first-generation incomers. Organised around three separate sections, the numerous exhibits and photographs traced the story of life the way it was and the events leading to the killing or brutal uprooting of so many people, as well as their trials and tribulations to gain acceptance and gradually become an integrated part of Greek society.

For its part, the **National History Museum** approached the subject through the artwork of the first female Greek war correspondent, in an exhibition titled "[Thalia Flora-Karavia. Asia Minor 1921](#)" **that was held** in the Conference Hall of what is now known as the Old Parliament and where the political drama of the Asia Minor Campaign unfolded. Accompanied by selected NHM historical relics, namely the military diaries of Sergeant Ioannis Giannopoulos and Private Dimitris Gergaris describing the horrors of war, excerpts from Flora-Karavia's correspondence and reporting together with drawings of nurses, the wounded and hospital visitors in pencil, charcoal or pastels depict its effects, but also highlight the contribution of women in what until then had been considered 'men's affairs'. As such, the exhibition attempts to offer an account of the experiences of those who are not part of the 'official' narrative of history.

Lastly, among the museums in the Greek provinces, one should mention the exhibitions organised by the **Basil Papantoniou Foundation** (formerly known as the Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation "V. Papantoniou") hosted two consecutive exhibitions around the theme of Asia Minor and what it symbolised for Hellenism approached through the angle of dress. Thus, "[Smyrna](#)" (28 July-21 August 2022) was dedicated to the costumes created by Greek stage and costume designer Fotini Dimou for the film by the same name, itself based on a theatrical play recounting the turbulent story of the Baltatzis, an urban and wealthy Greek family of Smyrna, from 1916 to 1923. It comprised 14 women's costumes similar to those worn in everyday life, at the opera, in various celebrations, etc. and showed the changes in fashion during this period. The constraints of space were overcome by rich photographic material featuring men's dress, working clothes and middle-class attire, as well as the clothes worn in the scenes of the persecution. The second exhibition, "Dress Codes: costumes of the Asia Minor

* The Greek word «καταστροφή» has a multi-layered meaning: disaster, catastrophe, destruction.

Catastrophe refugees from the Basil Papantoniou Foundation collection” (2 September-30 November 2022) focused on the fact that these are a way of signalling belonging to a place and a community, and even more so in moments of displacement. Its aim was to show the diversity of Greek communities in Asia Minor and the potential of dress to define cultural identities and drive memory by revealing stories and personal narratives. Regardless of their socio-economic background, the refugees all believed they would soon return home and so their clothes, hastily prepared, reflect their life “before”. At the same time, a photograph of one of the boats carrying them to Greece with parts of it isolated and enlarged illustrates the similarity of their expressions, fatigue, terror, uncertainty as well as the fact that their distressed clothes, whether characteristic of the fashion of the time or local costume, are so alike that all social and class differences have been levelled and fashion has ceased to apply.

Exhibitions on the same theme were held in Athens’ Byzantine and Christian Museum, where a special itinerary within the permanent exhibition allowed visitors to focus on the heirlooms brought by refugees to their new homeland, mainly icons, in Volos (Thessaly), where many refugees remade their lives, as well as in the network of regional museums run by the Piraeus Bank Foundation.

Nadia Macha

HUNGARY

2022 was the first year that could be considered complete after the Covid-19 outbreak. Hungarian museums returned to normal operation.

In 2022, several significant museum buildings and exhibitions were opened: the new Museum of Ethnography was inaugurated in Budapest, and the new Transylvania exhibition complex was opened in Szentendre, with its creative exhibition installations awarded a gold medal by ICOM AVICOM, the international museum professional organisation's committee on audiovisual, innovative technologies and social media. The F@IMP 2021-2022 Media Festival also awarded the animated creation of the Museum of Ethnography entitled EthnoZoom - the collection's narrative objects, and the 360-degree space installation of the Petőfi Literary Museum's exhibition titled Édes Anna / Kosztolányi - Trianon 100.

In Zalaegerszeg, the new building of the Göcseji Museum was inaugurated, including a visitor centre, an exhibition on the life of Cardinal József Mindszenty and the repression of the church under communism, as well as a presentation on the city's medieval history. The Miskolc Jewish Museum and Visitor Centre were established in Miskolc. The internationally acclaimed exhibition of the year was Heronymus Bosch at the Museum of Fine Arts, which was followed by a special exhibition of El Greco.

In 2022, the impact of the war caused by the Russian invasion also affected museums in Hungary. Museums and their staff are taking part in fundraising campaigns across the country. They collect non-perishable food, clothes, toiletries, and money, make sandwiches, organize a charity concert with the income donated to the needy, welcome refugees, volunteer at local collection points, and participate in the delivery of aid. Several museums help refugees from Ukraine by offering free admission and special museum education sessions. The Circus Art Centre and Museum provided shelter to Ukrainian artists, while students from the Kiev and Kharkiv art schools continued their studies in Budapest.

Organised by ICOM Hungary, we sent museum packing materials and protective equipment to Kyiv. ICOM Hungary has repeatedly and clearly condemned the war and Russian aggression and expressed its support for the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. ICOM Hungary strongly urges Russia to respect the 1954 Hague Convention, the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which Russia has ratified and is obliged to follow and comply with. It was advocated that ICOM Russia and ICOM Belarus should not officially participate in the various ICOM forums and that their membership should be suspended unless they condemn the war. In accordance with the decision of the Board of ICOM Hungary, President Zsolt Sári also signed a letter initialled by the heads of several national and international committees to the leaders of ICOM Russia. The letter expresses their concern about the war losses of museums and heritage sites in Ukraine. In recent months, there have been numerous reports that museums and heritage sites have not only been hit by rocket

attacks, but that many Ukrainian museums have been looted. This has been strongly condemned by ICOM Hungary.

In 2022, the energy crisis that hit Europe also negatively affected Hungarian museums. The energy bills of Hungarian museums have increased several times compared to the past. Government measures obliged state museums to reduce energy consumption by 25% and capped internal temperatures at 18 degrees Celsius. On the positive aspect, the Ministry of Culture has provided extra support to institutions in this area. The radical increase in energy prices, of more than 100%, led to the closure of many museums during the winter period, mostly those run by municipalities, but also a few smaller state-run institutions. The current position is that this will continue until mid to late March.

Zsolt Sári

ICELAND

In Iceland, a country of 376,000 people, there are close to 200 museums, exhibitions, and cultural and historical centres. But only 47 museums are accredited by the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and work according to the Icelandic Museum Act and the ICOM code of ethics. No museum has been added to the list of accredited museums during 2022. Three of the state-funded museums are listed as principal museums: the National Museum of Iceland, the Museum of National History and the National Gallery, and they have the role of forming strategies for other museums in their respective fields.

Accredited Icelandic museums are still in the process of adapting to new regulations and demands as their legal duty to collect, preserve, safeguard, and promote their collections is now monitored by the Icelandic Museum Council. Each museum reports annually to the Museum Council (i. *Safnaráð*), which has the role of monitoring all museum operations, according to the Museum Act.

Like elsewhere around the world Icelandic museums were much affected by the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020 and 2021 – but in 2022 there were no gathering limitations implemented, so museums, as well as others, had their doors open to visitors as in pre-pandemic times. Icelandic museums saw a great growth in visitor numbers in 2022, especially compared to the past two years. Yet again, quite a few Icelandic museums have never seen higher visitor numbers than in 2022. So, in many ways Iceland bounced back from the pandemic quickly.

Conferences and workshops were held throughout the year – focusing on preservation, exhibitions, visitor experiences etc. Attendees were very happy with being able to attend to such events in person again. In September the Icelandic Museums Association (FISOS) held their annual conference for museum workers. It was held in Hallormsstaður, east Iceland. More than 130 participants from museums all around the country enjoyed lectures, workshops, museum visits and learning opportunities during the three-day conference. In 2023 the annual conference will be held in Amsterdam, and therefore Icelandic museum workers will have an exciting opportunity to visit and get to know Dutch museums.

A new director was appointed for the National Museum of Iceland in August. Its new director is Harpa Þórsdóttir, former director of the National Gallery of Iceland. Her predecessor, Margrét Hallgrímsdóttir, served as director of the National Museum of Iceland for over two decades.

In general, it is safe to say that museum work is thriving in Iceland. The staff of Icelandic museums take on a wide range of projects regarding accessioning, exhibitions, research, preservation and visitor experiences. Both the museums as institutions and their staff have implemented good cooperation which has shown to be very helpful and rewarding, especially for the smaller museums.

Anita Elefsen

IRELAND

Overall, the picture in Ireland improved as the pandemic receded. There was an overwhelming sense of exhaustion as museum workers attempted to recharge their batteries, change to a hybrid system working both from home and in the museum, and to begin expanding programmes to attract audiences back to the institutions. The creation by staff of fresh exhibitions, displays and activities using social media to promote associated events, including National Drawing Day in May and Culture- Museum Night in September, was successful in gaining audience participation at the larger museums. However, due to the change in people's habits, together with a residual fear over infection and health issues, the challenge remains of the need to encourage the public to engage afresh with our cultural heritage institutions and to attend daytime and evening events. Nonetheless, everyone was happy to see visitors return, although attendance in the museums was nothing like at pre-pandemic levels.

2022 was a year of significant staff turnover, in a pattern that was and continues to be replicated elsewhere, when many people moved out of the museum sector or related areas to seek better working conditions and greater opportunities to develop. Issues that concerned museums included assisting Ukraine efforts to protect their cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, the growing climate crisis, and addressing colonial legacies in collections. This included a case where an Egyptian mummified body, a sarcophagus, and set of four Canopic jars and coverings (cartonnage) will be repatriated by University College Cork, following discussions between UCC, the Egyptian and Irish governments and the National Museum of Ireland.

The delivery of capital investment in museums slowed down due to rising costs, increasing energy charges, inflation, and the result of the impact of the war in Ukraine, together with the huge numbers of Ukrainian citizens seeking refuge in Ireland. State support of the cultural institutions continued with increases for the Arts Council and the Heritage Council, both to encourage the regeneration of the cultural heritage sector and, to revitalise the late-night economy that declined in the pandemic. Final approval was given for a major refurbishment of the Crawford Art Gallery, and the National Museum's Natural History Museum. Brexit continued to be challenging, impacting on Irish trade and business, although, it had economic benefits in strengthening Irish connections with Europe. Museums were even more aware that their ongoing participation in European projects enhanced the quality of museum work and promoted widespread networking with their European counterparts.

The positive developments included publication of the Heritage Plan 2030. Ten local authorities were approved to appoint biodiversity officers driving local action for biodiversity, funded by the Heritage Council, the CCMA, supported by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and National Parks and Wildlife Service. The Creative Ireland Programme was extended to 2027 to include creative industries, health and wellbeing, climate action, social sustainability and a shared island dimension supported by the Department of the Taoiseach. ARINS (Analysing and Researching Ireland North and South), a joint multi-year project of the Royal Irish Academy and the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies, was set up to provide evidence-based research and analysis on key questions of policy and public debate re options for the future of Ireland, north and south, in a post-Brexit context. ARINS published the report: *The future of cross border cooperation in the Arts*.

Dr Caroline Campbell, the new Director of the National Gallery of Ireland, formerly of the National Gallery, London, is the first female director in the Gallery's 158-year history. Dr Audrey Whitty, new Director of the National Library of Ireland, formerly of the National Museum of Ireland, is the chairperson of the Irish Museums Association. Nano Nagle Place in Cork won the Council of Europe Museum Prize, and The Glucksman Gallery in Cork won the EMA Art Museum Award.

Marie Bourke

LITHUANIA

The year 2022 is marked by geopolitical challenges that were mostly caused by the war in Ukraine, which marked the political, economic, social and cultural life of Lithuania with a red line.

Lithuanian museums and museologists were actively involved in the organization of support for Ukraine or joined public initiatives. The support of Lithuanian museums to Ukraine in 2022 is very diverse and includes: financial support (targeted financial funds); civil, humanitarian (civil safety measures, IT software and hardware, TV equipment, humanitarian aid shipments); expert (participation in solving issues of cultural property protection, evacuation, etc., consultations in the field of cultural heritage protection, etc.); reception of war refugees from Ukraine (accommodation, employment, involvement in museum activities, etc.); legal/international (applications to international organizations according to the field of activity, contracts, etc.).

The Lithuanian National Museum of Art www.lndm.lt evacuated 16 museum treasures worth 3,570,000 Euros from the National Reserve "Kiev-Pechersk Lavra", 48 paintings worth 7,675,000 Euros were evacuated from the Lviv National Art Gallery of B. Voznicki, works of art were evacuated from the Odesa Museum of Western and Eastern Art, the value of which is 1,000,000 Euros. Evacuation of a part of the collection of the Bohdan and Varvara Khonenko National Museum in Kyiv is currently underway. It is planned to evacuate 642 museum values.

20 Ukrainians were employed in national and republican museums, and 32 Ukrainians were temporarily accommodated in museum-owned premises suitable for temporary accommodation. Also, support events and exhibitions for Ukraine were organized in national and republican museums, initiatives were implemented and various employment activities were organized.

Despite everything, museums in 2022 held exhibitions, renewed expositions, and carried out other activities.

Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania - the European capital of culture in 2022 - stood out for its bright and particularly intense cultural life. The European Capital of Culture programme was jointly prepared and implemented by 72 cultural institutions, but all these institutions worked together with as many as 800 Lithuanian and over 500 foreign partners. The capital of culture in Kaunas and the Kaunas district created 18,000 artists and creators from all over the world - Europe, Japan, USA, South Africa, Israel, etc. The museums of Kaunas city and Kaunas region were among the implementers of this project.

Standing in awe of the event's greatness, Kaunas – the European Capital of Culture 2022, has set an ambitious plan to present to Lithuanian public the most prominent names of art, stage and music, as well as cult personalities of the world culture. The M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art (www.ciurlionis.lt) was granted the honour and pleasure, as well as the responsibility, to host the exhibitions of William Kentridge, Yoko Ono and Marina Abramović. Huge attention to the Capital of Culture, overall advertising and appropriate communication resulted in regular, plentiful flows of people, earned the appreciation of foreign delegations, politicians and media. Famous names from the world of art and culture attracted new visitor

categories, the museum welcomed groups of people who had never been consumers of culture. Based on that, an urgent need for a mediator between contemporary art and a viewer became a challenge to get over: to consolidate a fluent team of co-workers able to communicate in several languages, to rearrange guided tour services, to get the leadership and enthusiastic support from people who work here. World-class exhibitions endowed the museum with prestige, induced a reassessment of its strategy and, what is particularly important, broke down the long-running monotony in respect of the museum's audience. The key point of success were artists and exhibition curators who highlighted important and relevant topics: time, oblivion, loss, injustice, freedom, responsibility, struggle, war, nature, love, etc. The interactivity of the exhibitions, the invitation to communicate and participate, the effective visual presentation of the exhibitions often caused the wow effect, which is necessary for the viewer to stay in the museum for a long time, and leave the museum still debating and thinking about the images seen.

In the spring of 2022, Kaunas City Museum www.kaunomuziejus.lt and MO Museum in Vilnius www.mo.lt presented a unique exhibition about two cities. The exhibition "Kaunas-Vilnius: knocking down the mountains", one part of which was exhibited in Kaunas and the other in Vilnius, analyzes the interdependence of these cities. The exhibition ran together with the events and educational programme, received 70,000 visitors and was one of the main events of the programme "Kaunas - European Cultures' capital 2022" highlights.

The Kaunas City Museum also presented the book, *Kaunas: stories about the city and its people*, preserved historical facts and individual biographical details which are used to create short stories about the city's history dating back more than seven centuries. The book is prepared in Lithuanian and English, available on the portal knygos.lt.

In addition, the Kaunas City Museum will ensure the continuation of one of the "Kaunas - European Capital of Culture 2022" initiatives - the Festival of History". It is planned that the festival will take place every two years, so the next one will be awaiting its visitors in 2024.

Gita Sapranauskaite

LUXEMBOURG

The year 2022 marked an important step towards the protection and enhancement of Luxembourg's cultural heritage. On 10 February 2022, the new law on cultural heritage was voted by the Chamber of Deputies (*Loi du 25 février 2022 relative au patrimoine culturel*) and came into force on 3 March 2022. This law introduces provisions aimed at architectural and archaeological heritage as well as movable and intangible heritage. The aim is to protect cultural heritage as a major element of sustainable development and cultural diversity, as well as to enhance the value of cultural heritage through its identification, study, safeguarding and protection. For movable heritage, the law introduces a new procedure for the classification of cultural property, as well as a modern circulation regime that implements international and European legal texts. The text includes areas not previously covered by national legislation, such as State guarantees and restitution guarantees.

In addition to the coming into force of this piece of legislation, which is of great importance for all stakeholders in the heritage field, including museums, 2022 has been interesting for the Luxembourg museum sector in several other respects.

A new call for projects has been set up by the Ministry of Culture in order to support museographic projects and the development of various concepts by Luxembourg museums. This financial aid aims to increase the attractiveness of Luxembourg's museums, to upgrade their exhibitions or to rethink their management.

The exhibition "The colonial past of Luxembourg : Luxembourgeois(e)s dans le colonialisme — le colonialisme au Luxembourg" on display at the National Museum of History and Art (MNHA) in Luxembourg City from 08.04.2022 to 06.11.2022 raised the question of restitution and gave great publicity to the question of the unequal relations between Luxembourg and Africa during the colonial era. As part of the preparations for this exhibition, the museum looked at the origin of several collections of African objects kept in its deposits. Even though the work of ascertaining these non-European collections as well as the necessary provenance research is still far from complete, some intermediary conclusions have been drawn from the work carried out over the last few years. The exhibition might be the starting point of new collaborative historical and artistic projects, as awareness of the past is often the first step in planning future collaborations.

The department of digital strategy of the Ministry of Culture further worked on the project of the implementation of a shared collections management system (CMS) for Luxembourgish museums. This joint venture with the Government IT Centre (CTIE) and the National Museum of History and Art (MNHA), envisages the creation of a formal network of museums using a common CMS, supporting harmonisation and consistency in working practices, and facilitating better exchange and cooperation between museums. This network, which was given the working title "Museonet", will gradually be implemented in 2023.

In 2022, the City of Esch-sur-Alzette, the second city of Luxembourg in terms of population, had the honour of acting as European Capital of Culture, alongside Kaunas in Lithuania and Novi Sad in Serbia. Esch2022 was an ideal opportunity to further develop the cultural offer in

the south of the country and to give a platform to new initiatives, including in museums. In this context, the renewed National Museum of Resistance and Human Rights in Esch-sur-Alzette partially reopened its doors after extensive renovation and extension works. New museums have emerged, such as the MUAR (Musée vun der Aarbecht) in Kayl, the first labour museum in Luxembourg.

The cultural year was also the perfect opportunity to host the EMA annual meeting in September. The EMA award ceremony was accompanied by an important framework programme, which allowed participants to discover a number of Luxembourgish museums as well as to take part in seminars on current topics related to museums. In the context of the Art Museum Award, the MUDAM, the Contemporary Art Museum of Luxembourg, had the honour to be awarded a special commendation.

In October, the Night of the Museums, a major annual event held by the museums located in Luxembourg City, attracted a large number of visitors in 2022, reconnecting with pre-Covid attendance and demonstrating that museums are gradually regaining their public.

Julia Kohl

MALTA

Malta's museum ecology is broadly split between public, religious, and non-governmental/private with each sector roughly representing a third of the entire museum landscape. The national museums and heritage sites are managed by Heritage Malta, an umbrella structure that also functions as the national institution for cultural heritage. Catholic cultural heritage museums and sites are run by the Catholic Church, and mostly also managed on a voluntary basis, with the exception of the Cathedral Museum in the Old City of Mdina. The private museum sector, including foundations and non-governmental organisations, includes two main non-governmental organizations and a number of house museums.

Heritage Malta continues to act as the main reference point for cultural heritage in Malta regulated by the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002 and subsequent amendments. However, the ecosystem is still missing long-overdue policies and regulatory frameworks. The most important of these is a museum registration scheme regulating the operations of private and non-governmental museums. Malta does not have either a museum law or a national museum association. These deficiencies are hindering the much-needed sustainable development of the sector.

The Maltese museum sector remains highly dependent on tourism with local participation mostly related to open days organized regularly by the national network of museums and educational events organized from time to time by museums in general. Tourism figures have improved significantly in comparison to those registered during the two-year pandemic period but have yet to reach pre-pandemic levels.

The national network of museums (Heritage Malta) has increased three-fold over the past decade, going from 35 to 90 museums and sites thus making Heritage Malta's remit prevalently and overwhelmingly concerning sites rather than museums. This has come about without a significant increase in government subvention meaning that the national agency has increasingly been under pressure to develop revenue-generation mechanisms to address this shortfall. Since 2019, the national agency has been registering a loss of around 1.5 million Euros which is made good by the Government of the day. This deficit is set to increase in 2023. Figures for private and non-governmental museums are not available.

During 2022 the national agency has increased its efforts to address these shortfalls through services-oriented revenue generation mechanisms in part intended to reduce the as yet high dependency on entrance fees pegged at roughly 88% of generated revenue. This figure is not available for private and non-governmental institutions, but it may well be the case that this is roughly on similar levels. Efforts registered by Heritage Malta during 2022 included increased exposure and marketing efforts to "sell" museums and heritage sites as wedding venues and the creation of run-of-the-mill catering services building on the café-restaurant project at MUŻA (the Malta national-community art museum). Private and non-governmental-run museums have not been particularly active in experimenting with new formulas in this respect. Some had already introduced similar measures way back, besides the specific limitations of museums and heritage sites that are prevalently small by comparison.

The main development registered during 2022 concerns the rebranding of the national agency (Heritage Malta) launched in May. This rebranding exercise has increasingly centralized the national agency, subjugating the individual identity of the museums and sites within its remit

to create a homogenous platform also covering and including conservation and other services provided by the agency. Museums and heritage sites have also been grouped by region. This strategic choice of branding has consolidated the centralized, top-down approach that the national agency has been consistently building since 2002. Whether the rebranding will decisively address the intended shift towards a public-centred heritage experience increasingly addressing and engaging with local communities remains to be seen over the medium to long term. So far this has been addressed via free access to students accompanied by adults and a second version specifically developed for senior citizens, both branded as the Heritage Malta Passport Scheme. This scheme continues to register a measure of success.

Museum projects that are currently works-in-progress include the extensive restoration of the Grandmaster's Palace in Valletta currently functioning as the President's Palace prevalently covered by European Regional Development Funding and the Gozo Regional Museum. The President's Palace project is registering significant progress with the first phase scheduled to be inaugurated in 2023. The Gozo Regional Museum project is now behind schedule and in need of a significant increase in funding. Both projects are run, wholly or in part, by Heritage Malta. Works on the Malta International Contemporary Art Space, MICAS, is yet again behind schedule and is now set to open in 2023. An extension to the Malta Science Centre (Esplora Interactive Science Centre) initially branded as Esplora Natura has now been shelved. Works on the new museum at St John's Co-Cathedral continue to register progress following the inauguration of the first phase in 2021.

The latest museum to join the Maltese museum ecosystem is the Gozo Cathedral Museum, located in the citadel of the island of Gozo inaugurated in December 2022.

In general terms, the sector is still reeling from the significant damage, both financial and in terms of visitor intake, brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. In some instances, it is trying to address financial sustainability through new or revamped initiatives. The right formula is yet to be defined.

Sandro Debono

MOLDOVA

2022 was a difficult year for the Republic of Moldova, including for the museum system. The activities of museums were focused on three main areas:

- Digitization of collections and museum activities; continuation of the republican project *Mobile cultural heritage – a step towards a new communication platform*, which we hope will be completed in 2023.
- Development and implementation of special programmes for refugees from Ukraine; from February 2022 to the present, one million refugees have passed through the Republic of Moldova, today 100,000 people are settled in various localities, of which 60,000 are children.
- Taking into account the war on the borders of the republic, the emphasis was placed on the organization of certain museum meetings, the development of specific plans for ensuring security, (evacuation) of the museum collections.

In 2022, the process of accreditation of museums officially registered in the Republic of Moldova was completed. The results will be analyzed in early 2023.

During 2022, changes were made to some laws (Law on Museums, Law on the Protection of Movable Heritage) and regulations on museum activities developed in the period 2002-2012.

A distinctive feature of museum activity in 2022 was an increase in the number of visitors in general and those who entered museums without payment (including numbers due to refugees).

Elena Plosnita

MONTENEGRO

In Montenegro, 2022 was better than 2021 (due to the Covid-19 pandemic). The museums kept a new adapted methodology of work, online presentations the permanent and temporary exhibitions, audio guides etc. The number of visitors in the institutions were increased, domestic and foreign. Educational programmes were also continued.

In all museums are put into effect a law on culture, Law on Museums, which means preparing Meta DATA, digitization of finds etc.

It is important to add, there is transformation from the Center of Contemporary Art to the Museum of Contemporary Art. This means that it will be another more museum founded by the Government (State).

In many of museums there are major problems, such as a lack of exhibiting space, a lack of deposit space, a reduced number of professional staff ... but unfortunately, they will have to wait for better times and in the meantime, they keep working under these conditions.

Isidora Kovačević

THE NETHERLANDS

Luctor et Emergo for the Dutch museums

Facts & figures on The Netherlands

The Netherlands has close to 18 million inhabitants on 41.500 km² (12% of Germany) and over 625 official museums, a slowly increasing number. It is generally seen as a small, dense country, with many museums.

The years to 2021

In 2021 Corona peaks the decrease in visitor numbers came close to 65%. It was a dramatic period, although the museums did survive, not least because of governmental support.

2022

There are no official figures yet, but it is clear programming and visitors are slowly returning to 'normal'. Whereas other cultural sectors (theatre, cinema) do report lagging visitor numbers (and interest), museums seem to be on their way back earlier than other cultural sectors – and then especially the larger, more popular museums are. It is the small local museums where the pain is greatest.

Some museums – like the Kunstmuseum (Art Museum) in The Hague – do still report 30% less visitors, but other museums like the newly reopened Naturalis (Natural History) do even report growth.

It is noted that the more vulnerable, elderly visitor groups are the ones to stay home more often, to be the most careful in visiting. And of course, the decrease in tourists did cost.

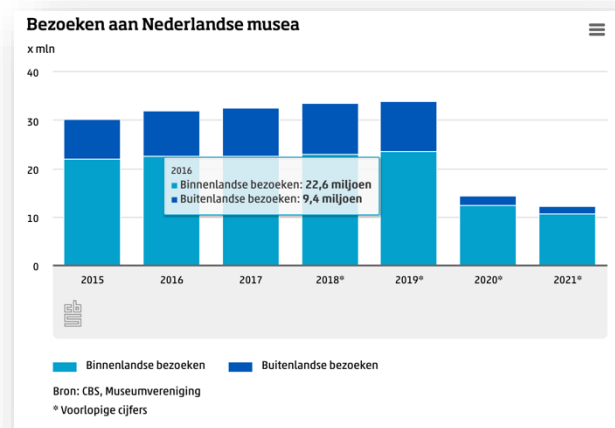
The governmental financial support was essential in the survival of the museums.

Energy

The Russian invasion of Ukraine shook up all countries. In the first half of 2022 many museums were involved in some kind of supporting actions. Later in 2022 the war-based rise in energy prices worried many. There is a governmental supported movement to re-evaluate the criteria for collection climate – for more reasons, but surely to save energy too.

Returning illegitimate acquired objects

Slavery, 'colonial collections', illegitimately acquired WW2 art objects: the attention on these sensitive topics is ever increasing. Many museums are either involved or will be in the forthcoming years, in returning objects to their countries of origin and/or to their owners.



Digitization

The digitization of the Dutch museum collections is ongoing, over 50% done (educated guess) as well as the integration of those collections in a national digital network. In 2022 the Dutch Network Digital Heritage (a national organization) refocused on networking museums as well as a national thesaurus and making collection registration software Linked Open Data ready.

Exhibitions

In line with what was said before, exhibition activities in Dutch museums are recovering after the pandemic. After a long closure, museums reopened on 26 January 2022, also with new programming. Sometimes, the new programming was based on ideas emerged during the pandemic, and sometimes there were postponed exhibitions to open. And sometimes there were large undertakings with a lot of publicity, as in the Rijksmuseum (Clara the Rhinoceros & Crawly Creatures). and the Drents Museum (Frida Kahlo).

Although visitor numbers are not back at the former level in these two examples, one in the capital and another in the outskirts of the country, they made clear that the efforts to keep museums alive were successful in most cases. The spirit is surely there. The forecasts for 2023 are positive. *Luctor et Emergo* for the Dutch museums!

However, special attention should stay focused on the wellbeing of the smaller museums.

Specials & Awards

With regards to Awards, 2022 did not see winning Dutch museums. Few candidates took part in competitions.

Dirk Houtgraaf and Arno van Berge Henegouwen

NORTH MACEDONIA

Most of the programmes of museum activities for 2022 in the Republic of North Macedonia are realized through the annual open call of the Ministry of Culture, financing more than 90 percent of the annual activities related to the museums, bearing in mind that North Macedonia has no private museums. The activities of the museums are dependent on the funds allocated through this annual call. In the post-Covid period, the museums in North Macedonia are working to strengthen contacts with visitors through the organization of temporary exhibitions, workshops for various target groups and also through visits/workshops with museum experts and artists from abroad, eliminating the stagnation in the field of international cooperation. Systematic archaeological excavations, as well as the conservation of architecture and mosaics of archaeological sites throughout the country are being actively carried out. The archaeological finds are museologically processed and conserved. In parallel with the research, the process of digitalization, protection and processing of the museum artefacts is taking place as part of multi-year projects in cooperation with domestic and foreign archaeologists and researchers. The condition of the artefacts in the permanent exhibitions and depots is currently being taken care of through the preparation of reports on their condition and conservation projects. A variety of art, ethnological and archaeological exhibitions were held with catalogues translated into several languages.

Through the museum projects in 2022, the role of museums in the educational process and raising awareness among young people about the values of cultural heritage and Macedonian traditional culture is particularly emphasized. An ongoing project is happening on modernizing the depots of the museums and modernizing the permanent exhibitions. The project for the complete renovation of the National Museum of North Macedonia, opened in 1977, the largest national museum in the country, is underway. The results of the research in the museums were published within the framework of publishing projects that were presented to the public, in the form of magazines and catalogues. Larger museum institutions work in accordance with the modern museological challenges of preparing modern guides/catalogues for visitors. The international activity of the museums in 2022 in North Macedonia is mainly focused on exhibition activities of a regional nature, that is, with the neighboring Balkan countries. The year 2022 is also marked by museum projects related to blind and partially sighted people with the creation of tactile maps from various museum objects and audio recordings. Museum institutions from North Macedonia actively worked on the realization of projects for cross-border cooperation using EU funds, especially highlighting the cooperation with Greece. It is worth mentioning that the projects are financed by the US Embassy in North Macedonia within the framework of the Ambassador Fund.

Gordan Nikolov

NORWAY

Norwegian museums have this year been affected by the world situation, not as much by Covid-19 - even though the visitor figures and incomes still are below 2019-level - but rather due to inflation and high energy costs. Some museums in southern Norway had to lock down some of their facilities before Christmas and some museums have reduced their staff or cut down activities. The Government has contributed with some economic compensation for the museums most affected by the crisis and given funding for energy-saving investments, but this has not covered all the extra costs.

Last Spring (2021), the Government launched a white paper on the future of museums towards 2050. *Museums in society – trust, things, and time*. The white paper focuses on the museums' role in democracy and the freedom of speech, increased cooperation between the museums and Ministries, and sustainability. Focus areas are research, coastal heritage, art in northern Norway and protection of built heritage. Museums are now working to fulfil their new obligations. *Sustainability* has been a quite central theme for webinars and seminars and Norwegian museums work – as the rest of the museum community – with the SDGs.

The budget for 2023 did not give incentives and investments to new building projects, but ongoing projects are still granted, as for the new Viking Museum in Oslo and Saemien Sijte. There was also some money granted for the planning of a new Sami Art museum in Karasjok, due to the focus on art in northern Norway. Also, the Preus Museum received some extra financial support for preservation of films. Earlier, museums with new buildings have received an increase in operating surplus to cover their extra costs for running larger premises. This year, only the National Museum was granted money to cover increased costs in the proposed budget from the Ministry of Culture, but in the during parliamentary proceedings Telemark Museum also received extra money for larger premises and for the 2028 jubilee of the Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen. The National Museum and the Munch Museum, both opened in 2021, have had large visitor numbers.

The Sami Museum Saemien Sijte, in the middle of Norway, opened their new museum building in June after many years of waiting. The new building contains exhibitions, a workshop, storages, a museum shop, and café. [Saemien Sijte | Sørsamisk museum og kultursenter](#) A new preservation centre at Anno Museum opened in 2022 [Anno bevaringssenter - Anno \(annomuseum.no\)](#), and a lot of museums are working hard to improve their storage facilities.

This document has been read and elaborated by Liv Ramskjær, Secretary General of the Norwegian Museums Association.

Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg

POLAND

The summary of the year 2022 in Polish museum sector prompts the following basic observations:

- 1) As in the majority of EMA member countries, 2022 marked a gradual and consistent exit of the museum sector from the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of statutory activity, recovering from the state of pandemic meant a gradual reconstruction of the level of attendance, which, however, on average, did not reach the record level of 2019 (41.6 million visits to museums).
- 2) However, the past year has brought another threat of potentially global dimension in the form of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. Poland, as a country directly neighbouring Ukraine, bears a number of burdens in this respect. In the area of interest to us, the following challenges and achievements should be pointed out: institutional involvement of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and its subordinate institutions for the benefit of the international support for Ukraine (including supporting Ukraine's voice in the field of legal and international qualification of Russian aggression, exclusion of Russia from international museum organizations), involvement of the above-mentioned entities, including museums, including cooperation with non-governmental organizations representative of the museum environment, in the organization of real aid (e.g. transport to Ukraine of fire protection equipment, materials for packaging collections, participation in the organization of aid for refugees – organization of places of residence, assistance in employment, initiating and conducting financial collections). As a result of Russian aggression, activities (in the legislative and organisational dimension – including workshops and exercises) were also intensified in the field of preparing Polish museums in the event of an imminent threat of conflict (in the field of evacuation procedures, securing storage spaces). Probably, Russian aggression and its consequences remain a constant challenge for the next year.
- 3) The year 2022 also brought the completion of ICOM's work on a new definition of museums, which finally took place in August in Prague. The new definition of a museum, touching on the basic issue of the identity of this institution, will probably be the subject of research reflection and dissemination activities in the museum environment already in 2023, and it is difficult to determine on the basis of the experience of 2022 to what extent it will be taken into account in legislation. In this context, it is worth pointing out that in 2022 the task force appointed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage completed the work of preparing necessary changes to the Act on Museums, dating from 1996.

According to the convention of this document, it is of an author's nature. At the same time, it is worth pointing out in its conclusion that the source of systematically collected data relating to the museum sector in Poland is the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (www.nimoz.pl).

Piotr Majewski

PORTUGAL

All in all, 2022 was a recovery year for museums in Portugal, with good news concerning the number of visitors and the announced political decisions with a broader investment in Culture, including museums — buildings, human resources and collections.

Visitors' data

In 2022, Museums in Portugal saw a continuous increase of visitors: 918.106 visitors in all state museums, a growth of 27,5% considering the previous year. Even if this last year did not see a progression as significant as the previous (38,8% growth in 2021), the actual number of visitors has almost doubled (522.479 in 2021 and 918.106 in 2022). We are still far from the pre-pandemic numbers: 1.556.594 in 2018 and (a little less) 1.513.419, in 2019, even if the generic number of tourists has increased in 2022 to only 1% less than in 2019.

All things considered, 2022 was a very good year for Portugal, in spite of the war, with a recovery above the European average. However, state museums have not yet reached, let alone overcome, pre-pandemic numbers, specially concerning national visitors. For example, at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, in Lisbon, in 2022, there was a total of 52.679 visitors, 17.769 national and 34.910 international.

ICOM's new museum definition and the enlarged media attention to museums

In Portugal, this was a very rich year concerning debate on museums. Both academia and media were quite interested in the subject and in debating the conditions museums have to apply - concepts like inclusion, participation, community, or digitalization - to name just a few.

In 2022, deepening the political decision issued the previous year, museums were informed of the specific plans conceived to requalify them (recovery of historical buildings, climate adaptation, modernization and digital transformation).

Also, the Rede Portuguesa de Museus [Portuguese Museum Network], founded in 2020, an organized and voluntary structure, aiming the promotion of decentralization, mediation, accreditation and inter-museum cooperation, was finally relaunched, after almost ten years of stagnation.

Also, new political decisions arose, such as the opening of new jobs for museum guards, and for museum art restorers. Although the numbers will not be enough to face urgent museum needs, this was celebrated by museum professionals as a first and urgent step.

Plus, following a 2021 call for PhD candidates, in 2022, 30 researchers started their investigation on museum collections. This protocol was signed between the Direção-Geral do Património Cultural (DGPC) [Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage] and the Foundation for Science and Technology.

'New' museums and enlarged support

After several years of dispute on the legal rights on the Berardo Collection (considering the collector's debt to the State and to several private investors), the Portuguese State is now responsible for the Collection that integrated Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém (CCB) and is now known as MAC-CCB. In order to complement this international collection, the Ministry of Culture just announced the decision to enlarge the National Museum of Contemporary Art, founded in 1911, and in desperate need of an enlarged support. This means a significant investment in contemporary art museums, that will be complemented by the creation of an acquisition committee to enlarge these and other museum collections.

Patronage laws

In 2021, the Government created new rules to the private financing of museums. Such rules were kept in 2022. However, the collaboration between the private and the public sector remains complex in Portugal, and sponsors are scarce.

Online communication

As mentioned in last year's report, in spite of aspiring to a major digital transformation, the ageing of human resources and the scarcity of financial and technical means and expertise, along with a lack of adequate hardware and software in museums pose considerable obstacles. Plus, and different from previous years during lockdowns - when museum teams were focused on creating new ways of communicating through digital media, namely social media - the return to normality caused a necessary abandon of the previous solutions. The dimension of the teams and the financial and technological resources forced a stronger focus on presential programmes. Nevertheless, there is still a significant demand on online tours, and talks, and education departments still provide them, whenever possible.

Emília Ferreira

ROMANIA

According to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, 435 basic units officially operated in Romania in 2021, consisting of 383 museums, 8 monuments, 20 botanical gardens, zoos, aquariums and 24 natural reservations. Museum activity is carried out in 435 headquarters, to which are also added 324 branches and sections, i.e. a total of 759 entities that manage heritage of all types. We mention these dates because they appear in the second half of 2021, so we will not have updated data for 2022 until the second half of 2023.

According to the area of territorial coverage, we note an unusually large number of museums of national importance (59), to which are added 26 museums of regional importance, 58 museums of county level importance and 292 museums of local importance. From the point of view of the property regime, we note an increase in the number of private museums (94), to which 341 state museums are added.

The number of cultural assets owned by museum cultural operators was 32,506,000, a slight decrease compared to 2020, amid the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to the temporary or permanent closure of some museums in 2021. The number of visitors to museums in Romania increased significantly in 2022, against the background of the relaxation of restrictive health measures and the end of the state of alert in March 2022. This situation allowed the resumption of exceptional activities such as the Night of Museums, which in 2022 saw a spectacular increase compared to 2020-2021, with an approximate return to pre-pandemic values. According to the data provided by the National Network of Museums in Romania, 466,355 visitors participated in the event, of which 106,257 were in Bucharest alone.

The number of employees in the Romanian museum system was officially 7,367 in 2021, half of which are specialized staff (56.1% staff with higher education). There is still a favourable ratio of women among Romanian museum employees (58.2% of all employees).

In 2022, several new museums were opened, among which we mention the Bucharest Football Museum, the Museum of Communism for Children - Pitești, the Communism Memories Museum - Brașov, the Border Police Museum - Bucharest, the "Constantin Brâncuși" Center in Craiova or the "Gheorghe Zamfir" Museum in Găești .

From the point of view of the digitization of heritage, we highlight the appearance of the website www.culturalia.ro, which presents the results of the project "E-Culture. Digital Library of Romania", in which a number of 722,801 cultural assets have already been published.

The non-governmental activity of museums in Romania is further concentrated in three professional associations, i.e. the National Network of Museums in Romania, the National Association of Open Air Museums and ICOM Romania. This last association changed its board of directors in 2022, the new president of the association being Dr. Virgil Ștefan Nițulescu.

Valer Rus

RUSSIA

A large number of museum events and exhibitions took place in Russia in 2022. The main museum expositions and exhibitions are presented in this report.

The Museum of Russian Impressionism presented the exhibition «Avant-garde: on a cart into the 21st century». These are works of avant-garde art, which a hundred years ago, in 1921, remained in the Vyatka province after traveling exhibitions. More than 300 canvases could not be returned to the capital because of the autumn impassability, and all these years they were kept in local museums. Visitors saw works by Wassily Kandinsky, Alexander Rodchenko, Alexandra Ekster and other avant-garde artists. The New Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow) hosted an exhibition of contemporary Indian art «India! New Art». The exhibition includes works by more than 80 artists, including Amar Kanwar, Anita Dube and Anish Kapoor. Among the exhibits are paintings, video installations and three-dimensional art objects. The works came from private collections and foreign museums, including the Kiran Nadar Museum (New Delhi). The State Historical Museum presented the «Treasures of the Museums of Genoa» from the collections of the ancient Italian city: canvases from the Basilica of St. Lawrence and from the funds of Strada Nuova, which contain objects from historical palazzos. The exhibition also featured paintings by the Flemish painter Anthony van Dyck and the Genoese master Alessandro Magnasco. Currently, the exhibition «Igor Grabar. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth» in the Tretyakov Gallery. I.E. Grabar entered the history of art not only as a painter, but also as a master of museum and restoration work, an art critic and teacher, and a researcher of Russian wooden architecture. Grabar headed the Tretyakov Gallery, the Commission for the Disclosure and Preservation of Monuments of Old Russian Painting, the Moscow Institute of Fine Arts. The exhibition presents not only paintings, but also scientific works of Igor Grabar. In the Hermitage (St. Petersburg) more than 400 exhibits were presented at the exhibition «Albrecht Dürer. To the 550th Anniversary of the Birth» These are the engraving series «Apocalypse», «The Passion of Christ», «The Life of Mary», sheets «Triumphal Arch» and «Triumphal Procession». The exhibition also includes the artist's drawings, sketches of church stained-glass windows, sketches and portraits. The 4th Photobiennale of historical and archival photography from Russian museums was held at the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg). The exposition introduced the life of Russia in the 1870s-1930s. The organizers of the project collected photos from regional museums that depict the daily life of people from different cities. These are more than 150 photographs from Nizhny

Novgorod, Voronezh, Simferopol, Omsk, Yakutsk. In the Russian Ethnographic Museum at the exhibition «Images of the Arctic» visitors got acquainted with the artistic traditions of the peoples of the Far North - the Yakuts, Eskimos, Khanty, Chukchi. The exposition includes articles made of birch bark, carved figurines made of wood and bone, devices for hunting and fishing, clothes and shoes with ritual patterns, which were embroidered with deer hair, threads and beads. The “Taltsy” open air museum (Irkutsk) worked interestingly in 2022. In addition to the transportation and restoration of new monuments of folk architecture, the museum became the venue for the festival of opera music.

Anna Permilovskaya

SERBIA

During 2022, there were no major changes in museum activities in Serbia. After the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, museums have returned to their regular activities and programmes. The Law on Museums became law, and museums began to apply its provisions, which contributed to the organization and improvement of the system in the museum profession. At the same time, a significant number of different researches as well as educational seminars and workshops were done. Their aim was to perceive rationally the situation in museums and to contribute to the permanent education of museum experts.

The previous year, 2022, was marked by the return of international cooperation, but also by a great number of large-scale exhibitions that indicated a significant improvement in museum activities. These activities were related to improving the conditions of exhibition organization in general. Many museums were reconstructed, which also resulted in the improvement of the condition of preservation and exhibition of museum objects. The increased number of activities contributed to the increase in the number of audience in museums, but also to the media's interest for museum programmes. Therefore, one gets the impression that museums have never been in the focus of the public as much as last year.

The fact that Novi Sad was the European Capital of Culture in 2022 contributed to a great extent to putting culture in focus. Consequently, this led to numerous innovative exhibitions. Attractive topics, new technologies, visiting exhibitions and artists from abroad increased the number of the audience, as well as tourists, and raised the movement of the population between cities in general. At the same time, the work on the preparation of these projects showed that there is a willingness of European museums to cooperate with museums in Serbia, especially when it comes to loan of artworks for exhibitions. However, the exchange of artworks with European museums is more complicated due to the fact that Serbia is not a part of the European Union, and therefore the organization of transport, insurance and other formal documents still represents a kind of obstacle. Therefore, the harmonization of legal regulations is a task that should be worked on in the future together with the permanent education of experts and the improvement of exhibition conditions in Serbian museums.

Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski

SPAIN

2022 has seen a return to normality after the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a huge impact on museums. This impact, in 2020 and to a lesser degree in 2021, had an effect on exhibition activities and attendance as well as on income for the extensive network of Spanish museums.

Spain is the third largest recipient of tourists in the world after the United States and France and, consequently, the number of visitors to its museums is highly dependent on tourism. It is worth noting that the pandemic has not only affected tourist attendance but also that of the local population (particularly the elderly), as well as group visits, including school groups. The change in the choice of museum by school groups is also worth noting, with a preference, since visits restarted, for local museums rather than travelling to visit large museums in big cities. Organised groups of senior citizens have almost disappeared from the map.

In terms of figures, the volume of museum visitors in 2022 grew by between 40 % and 100 %, depending on the type. However, visitor numbers have still not reached those of 2019, before the pandemic. The evolving trend is that, in 2023, if no other global phenomenon affecting the movement of people occurs, museums will return to their pre-pandemic pace of activity.

Finally, it should be noted that the momentum to digitise museum collections and activities continues, although it is no longer as urgent a matter as it was in 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, museums are increasingly focusing on social and community projects. Projects related to health, inclusion, participation, and equality are becoming more and more important in their work. It seems that this will not be a short-lived anecdotal episode but a line of action that is strengthening its presence and will become part of the regular activities of Spanish museums.

Antoni Laporte

SWEDEN

During 2022 the museums have started recovering from the pandemic and many museums have experienced visitor numbers close to those in 2019. During the pandemic many museums expanded their digital offers, and the number of digital visitors is still higher than before the pandemic, and in particular to collections. Digitisation of collections and making collections digitally available to the public has been important to many museums for a long time. The pandemic has increased this focus and the use of the digitally accessible material. However, there are differences between smaller and larger museums. Larger museums, such as national museums and regional museums have resources to work with their collections in this way and also to produce other offers. Smaller museums do not have the same resources and have less digital presence.

During the autumn of 2022 general elections were held and Sweden got a new government. The immediate consequence of this was that free entry to national museums was abolished and their funding cut. With short notice national museums had to introduce ticketing systems and charge entrance fees. The overall budget for culture was reduced and further cuts are expected in the coming years. Together with high inflation and increasing costs for electricity many museums struggle with their financial situation.

A report published in 2022 about people's habits and preferences concerning culture shows that approximately 55% of the population visits museums. Most of the visitors are highly educated and live in cities, while far fewer people with a lower educational level or living in the countryside visit museums. The most common cultural activities people take part in are in their own homes, listening to music, watching films and also various forms of crafts are popular.

Another report showed that museums have high credibility among the public. The only type of organisation with higher credibility was the health care sector. Museums are rated at +59 in the credibility scale, while universities are rated +53, political parties -28 and large companies +2. This is an image shared by the museums themselves, where many museums feel they are perceived as credible through their work with research-based exhibitions, presenting different perspectives and producing exhibitions and activities relevant to the public.

Many museums have started looking at their plans for various types of crises. The climate change is a threat, causing floodings and other extreme weather conditions which might affect museum buildings. The war in Ukraine has made many museums reflect on how they should act to protect their cultural heritage in case of war. The threat of shortage of electricity is also to be taken into account. Preparation for various forms of threats and disasters is thus something that many museums have started working on.

Anna Hansen

TURKEY

For the museums of Turkey, 2022 was a year when the pandemic ended and physical access restrictions to museums were eliminated. ICOM's new definition of museum and some of the terms included in the definition were among the most discussed and talked about by museum professionals and academics. "Inclusiveness, accessibility and sustainability".

In 2022, a very big step has been taken in our country in terms of accessibility. In Ankara the Anatolian Civilizations Museum, one of the largest museums in Turkey, a 300 m² area was reserved for the visually impaired and physically handicapped, with 22 iconic works, six educational areas, three exhibition areas, and an art library. A multi-sensory museum experience area has been created, where everyone can connect with their own history without being hindered, and where everyone can benefit equally at the same time. In the continuation of the project supported by the Ministry of Culture, a dictionary of art terms for the hearing impaired was prepared. In addition, five civil initiatives came together to prepare the accessibility report of museums in Turkey. This work still continues. The Ministry of Culture declared that it is preparing projects to make three museums more accessible in 2023. Therefore, it can be said that they are very willing to take a step towards accessibility for museums in Turkey.

There were discussions in various fields related to sustainability issues in museums in Turkey. The majority of these include the measures to be taken by museums for the global climate crisis and awareness projects on this issue. New museum buildings and cultural centres have been started to be designed in harmony with the environment, giving importance to ecological architecture. Established at the end of 2021, Museums For Future (MFF) Turkey's coordinatorship started to raise awareness in 2022 on the measures that museums can be taken to combat the global climate crisis through social media. In addition, ways have been sought for museums to take leading roles in cultural sustainability, to become areas that encourage production and creativity and interact with society.

In museum exhibition design, database systems, AR and VR applications, hologram etc. Digital technologies have increased in recent years. The sustainability of such technologies has led to discussions on both economic constraints and the rapid updating of new technologies. Despite

everything, digital applications attract a lot of attention, both in the exhibition of their own collections and in the presentations of the museums in their temporary exhibitions. The best example on this subject is the "Ancient Futures" Digital Exhibition opened in Istanbul Archaeology Museum in 2022. It has become quite popular in Turkey. The "Ancient Futures" exhibition is inspired by our past and cultural heritage, "How do we create the mythologies and archaeological remains of tomorrow today?" It proposes 27 works and stories seeking answers to the question as fictional and speculative existences. Within the scope of the exhibition, digital screens and VR experience areas located in the museum can be experienced throughout the exhibition period.

In addition to all these, the global economic crisis and the inequality of income distribution have negatively affected not only people's viewing of cultural and artistic events, but also their access to museums. It has been observed that the museum visits of schools, especially in the neighborhoods where economically disadvantaged families live, have decreased for this reason.

Since the Turkish Statistical Institute has not yet fully disclosed the data for the year 2022, the changes in the number of state museums in Turkey cannot be conveyed in this report. However, the number of private museums, which was 309 in 2021, increased to 364 in 2022. In addition, another important data announced by the Ministry of Culture is that the transactions regarding the return of historical artefacts smuggled abroad to Turkey gained momentum in 2022. 1,121 historical artifacts smuggled abroad in 2022 were returned to our country.

Dilek Yildiz Karakas

UKRAINE

The European Museum Academy has been in contact on and off during 2022 with our dear representative Anastasiia Haidukevych. The energy situation and power shortage caused by the war has however made the continuity in communication hard and since the beginning of February 2023 impossible.

We know that Anastasiia and other colleagues in Ukraine are working hard to preserve the cultural heritage and our thoughts are with them.

We are all Ukrainians this year!

Henrik Zipsane



UNITED KINGDOM

When completing the 2021 report a year ago, I noted that there was ‘some very cautious optimism that 2022 will be a better year, but only time will tell’. It does seem that my optimism was a little misplaced, as the UK museum sector has faced yet another difficult time as it, and the country has navigated its way through political turmoil, a heatwave, an energy and cost of living crisis and the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Most of these issues of course have impacted on European colleagues too, exacerbated in no small way by the terrible events in Ukraine, with whom UK museums have stood in solidarity.

Covid-19: although the Covid-19 virus has not disappeared, its impact has diminished significantly, and almost all restrictions were lifted in 2022 enabling museums to operate much as they had done before the pandemic. It is interesting to note, however, that the use of online booking by visitors, something introduced by many museums in 2020 to manage ticketing, continues to be popular with visitors and will remain so it seems.

The Economic Crisis: the lifting of Covid restrictions had been seen as a possible cause for optimism for museum finance directors as they planned 2022 budgets, but in the event world and domestic politics instead had a more serious impact of visitor numbers and income more generally for museums. The war in Ukraine, and the resultant surge in energy costs and record UK inflation figures provided a perfect storm with the public facing the prospect of lower incomes, higher energy bills and increased travel costs; what the British press have dubbed the ‘Cost of Living Crisis’ has resulted in low levels of consumer confidence, which in turn has had an impact on visitor numbers to museums across the UK. A recent survey by the Association of Independent Museums revealed that for many museums visitor numbers and income were down by up to 30% on what had been modest targets to start with.ⁱ

ALVA (Association of Large Visitor Attractions) also reported in November 2022 that on average, UK visitor attractions were still hosting 25% fewer visitors than they received in 2019, although some were in excess of, at, or close to their 2019 visitor levels, and others are down as much as 50%.ⁱⁱ These patchy results reflect a mixed picture, with museums in the capital seeing better figures as inbound tourism improved, and museums with outdoor facilities remaining popular with people still nervous about Covid-19 and confined spaces.

While depressed visitor numbers are concerning, the effect of staggering rises in energy costs for museums are by far the biggest challenge they face, the Director of the Museums Association describing the energy crisis as worse than the pandemic. Like museums across Europe, many collections are housed in old buildings that are difficult to heat and insulate, and underinvestment in energy conservation over many years has also not helped.

Museums have been looking at creative ways to balance their budgets by developing new income streams and products, but inevitably they have been forced to reduce opening hours, close sections of museums to cut costs, negotiate new contracts with suppliers, raise ticket prices and restructure staffing resulting in job losses, and a number of high profile local authority-funded museum services are currently facing significant cuts to services and staff. 2023 may yet prove to be another challenging year.

Other Developments – in brief:

- **Decolonisation/Engagement:** Very positive initiatives continue to be developed by UK museums to address racism, inclusion and diversity and as well as being involved in

broader debates at a sector level, museums are working more locally to tackle inequality and build meaningful relationships with local communities to make their collections more accessible and to co-create content with local people. There are many examples of great projects being developed across the UK that include oral history projects, exhibitions, digital output and research.ⁱⁱⁱ

- **Repatriation:** a number of high-profile agreements have been established, enabling the repatriation of cultural artefacts from British museum collections. While there are still ongoing discussions between the British Museum and the Acropolis Museum over the Elgin Marbles, others such as the Horniman Museum in London^{iv}, and Glasgow Life Museum in Scotland^v, have already taken significant steps in tackling this issue.
- **Climate Change & Climate Justice:** UK museums have not been slow to address the issue of climate change, and the topic was one of the major areas of discussion at the UK Museums Association conference this year, where museum practitioners discussed the work they have been doing to reduce carbon through energy conservation and sustainable practice and also talked about climate inequalities. Museums also continue to be in the front line for climate activists and there were a number of high profile demonstrations in Glasgow, London and Manchester where activists either glued themselves to the frames of artworks, or in one case soup was thrown over a painting.^{vi} These incidents were described as regrettable by ICOM who argued that museums were the allies of climate protesters, although historic sponsorship links with energy companies have made some museums more obvious targets for protesters.

Tim Bryan

ⁱ https://aim-museums.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Seeking-Certainty-AIM-snap-survey-Sept-2022_opt.pdf

ⁱⁱ See also: <https://www.alva.org.uk/index.cfm>

ⁱⁱⁱ As an example, here is a great project my museum has been involved in:

<https://www.ssgreatbritain.org/new-researchers-make-great-discoveries/>

^{iv} <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2022/11/tipping-point-for-restitution-horniman-hands-back-first-benin-bronzes/>

^v <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2023/01/glasgow-life-becomes-first-uk-museum-to-repatriate-objects-to-india/>

^{vi} <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2022/10/climate-activists-throw-soup-on-van-goghs-sunflowers-at-national-gallery/>

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