



European Museum Academy

How are museums doing in Europe?

The European Museum Academy Reports on The Museum Temperature by the end of 2021.

The European Museum Academy is proud to present for the third 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

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How were museums in Europe doing in 2021?

– an analytical summary by Emek Yilmaz & Henrik Zipsane

This is the fourth 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 2021 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 in that particular country is the natural approach to the question. We consider this also to be a symbol of the richness in differences in the museums.

2021 was the second year where museums throughout Europe had to cope with the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic and the restrictions that followed were seen in many different aspects.

First of all, closing museums removed the very essence of why we have museums. The European picture of reduced visitor numbers is relatively homogeneous even though there are exceptions. We see visitor numbers in 2021 ending at approximately 35 – 55 percent of the pre-pandemic level in 2019. But on top of that museums thereby lost income from entrance fees, shops, cafés, restaurants, programmes, etcetera as there were no customers. From the national reports we can see a map of the museums in Europe and how they were affected by the financial constraints as museums had to close. It appears that museums overall have managed much better than could have been expected. There has been a smaller reduction in staff in some countries, for example in Scandinavia and some investments and other initiatives have been moved to the future. But, in an overall perspective the resilience of museums has been surprisingly strong. It is clear that the public want to have access to their museums. It is impressive that in some countries such as Belgium the numbers of individual visitors have not decreased very much and in other countries such as France the demand to visit museums caused major debate in the media. In other countries like the United Kingdom museums have raised questions about the pandemic restrictions in museums compared with milder restrictions, for example in supermarkets.

In some countries the museums were open throughout 2021 even though there were restrictions on the number of visitors in certain spaces, use of masks, green pass, etcetera. That was the case in Flanders but even there this arrangement could not prevent that schools and other traditional group visiting to the museum fell drastically. In most countries it was especially damaging to the museums that they experienced what some describe as a roller-coaster when restrictions were lifted in some periods

just to be re-introduced later. The museums present this as challenging for communication.

The tendency to turbo development in digitalisation continued across Europe in 2021 – partly as a response to the continued restrictions and trouble with reaching the public caused by the pandemic. It appears that never have so many heritage and art collections been digitalized and made accessible as in 2020 and 2021. This naturally reflects the resources allocated to this work which at least in theory make access to collections borderless and all museums global. The huge effort put into this is impressive and it appears that the objectives for access through digitization set up by the European Union and the Council of Europe is being realised during these years. Going on to creating learning opportunities, digital exhibitions, game opportunities and co-creation is still not highlighted in the national reports. It appears reasonable to see that as symptomatic for the level of the current development.

Even in the grey times under the pandemic with closed museums and economic constraint there are several examples in the national reports on engagement and even interesting new initiatives. It may be the subsidies for school class transport to museums in the Czech Republic, the Estonian ‘Accelerator for the Museums’ initiative, the children’s museum being established in North Macedonia, modernisation of the educational programmes in Russia, or the opening of several new museums in Denmark among other countries, and the planning of a grand new archaeological museum in Cyprus.

The regulations for the pandemic management pushed museums towards the increasing use of disposable products everywhere in Europe. In a time when we hear news about climate emergency every day and museums as places of informal public education, Albania draws our attention to the fact, and we also feel the urge to emphasize taking environment friendly measures against pandemic management for future events. Besides, Austria underlines taking safety measures as the climate crisis related floods had affected life and museum activities. Croatia, on the other hand, was hit by a major earthquake. These all give particular attention to review actual preparedness and disaster risk management plans in museums all over Europe.

All the many museum activities would not have been possible if the pandemic had been just a little harder. There have unfortunately also been actions taken by museums caused by circumstances outside the control of the museums themselves. That is not least seen in Ukraine because of the tensions with Russia and in Belgium and other countries because of floods.

Emek Yilmaz & Henrik Zipsane
European Museum Academy

COUNTRY REPORTS

ALBANIA

Due to the situation caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and also the restoration that was undertaken to the façade of the National Historical Museum, the museum reopened to visitors on 18 May, International Museum Day.

There were three major impacts of the pandemic that directly changed financial policies and strategies for the future:

1. Consequences of revenue losses (and other).
2. Increasing the importance of digital museum offerings
3. Customized operations and long-term and crisis preparedness

By 2021, although the pandemic situation continued to be difficult and limited, the financial situation was as follows:

- 11 May - 31 December 2021: 16,757 visitors in total
- 11 May - 31 December 2021: 3,086 local visitors
- 11 May - 31 December 2021: 9,566 foreign visitors

Some of additional rules according to MSHMS Protocol were:

- Wearing a protective mask inside the premises of the National History Museum and in the Museum is mandatory.
- The visitor's temperature is tested.
- The visitor disinfects the hands and uses the disposable gloves provided at the Museum.
- The visitor respects the distance according to the markers placed on the floor of the Museum premises.

Throughout the pandemic, many people in the fields of art and culture have experienced a lack of income, work delays and the need to move their businesses to adapt to a new normality. The proliferation of Covid-19 has forced the closure of galleries, museums, and all art activities have been cancelled. Due to travelling restrictions, organizations working with international artists were not able to continue their activities, including residencies and exhibitions. However, many artists increased

their online presence by creating and sharing videos with performances, painting, reading, discussions, playing music, etc.

However, in the first 5 months of the year, activities were not lacking.

March was declared by the Ministry of Culture as the Month of Remembrance. October of this year marked the 40th anniversary of the opening of the National Historical Museum. And the month of November was celebrated as 'November of Freedom' due to the Independence Day and the Liberation Day which have been declared in this month.

Dorian Koçi

AUSTRIA

Another challenging year for museums passed. We had lockdowns and reopening's. We had to deal with constantly changing security concepts: FFP2-masks, distance, reduction of the group sizes, ...

Within a very short time, the Covid19 guidelines changed several times. Museums were forced to communicate these guidelines quickly and especially in the area of workshops, theatre performances and programmes, safety concepts had to be created and continuously adapted. Moreover, many events had to be registered with the authority and represented a major administrative burden for museums. Despite all this, museums all over the country have made an effort to offer varied programmes for visitors. And directors as well as concept teams and exhibition staff always did their best to ensure a safe visit. That safety was the top priority was also evident from the fact that there was not a single cluster in a museum.

In Austria schools weren't allowed to visit museums and programmes for several longer periods. This presented museums with challenges not only in terms of organisation but also in terms of personnel. Especially for freelancers, this situation was uncertain.

Museums tried to keep in touch with their visitors with creative concepts. For example, online workshops or museums went into the classrooms and to public outdoor places. MUMOK – Museum of Modern Art offered a hybrid workshop – online and analogue. Children and young people learned programming in a playful way, discovered the new technologies casually as an artistic tool, created their own digital works of art and developed important media skills. The special feature was that all participants were provided with a laptop free of charge for the duration of the workshop. This made individual and participatory work in the museum and at home possible.

So during the summer the children's museum FRida & freD visited parks and public pools where young people and their accompanying persons could conduct experiments and take advantage of creative offerings.

The Natural History Museum in Graz for instance developed a research case on the topic of Earth history. The kit offers educators a comprehensive and versatile teaching programme. In addition to the worksheets, which form the basis for about two to four lessons, it is above all the numerous fossils in the action kit that enable pupils to experience and understand the history of the Earth in a special way.

As soon as museum visitors were possible again, it could be seen that both schools and individual visitors were happy to make use of this offer. In October 2021, the traditional 'Lange Nacht der Museen' (Long Night of Museums) could also take place.

The team of the Universalmuseum Joanneum, the Museumsbund Österreich and ICOM Austria invited colleagues to the 32nd Austrian Museum Day from 6-8 October 2021. The motto was 'Museum: Sustainable!'

From 9-12 November the Hands On! conference took place online and was hosted by two Austrian organisations in cooperation with local partners: ZOOM children's museum Vienna and FRida & freD – children's museum Graz. This year's conference was dedicated solely to the topic of the future. What is the role of the children in museums sector in the future? Which methods and topics will be tackled? Find out more: <https://2021.hands-on-international.net/page-1181>

Major revision of the Austrian Museums quality seal. In the course of the past **two** years the criteria catalogue of the Austrian quality seals for museums has undergone a major revision in order to better reflect recent developments in the sector.

Along with this process a new office to coordinate the judging process has been established at ICOM Austria and a modernised website was launched.

New certifications 2021: 18

Recertifications 2021: 30

By 1 January 2022 the position of the director for Austria's biggest art and culture areal becomes vacant, after 10 years. Hearings with potential candidates for the job are currently held.

The MuseumsQuartier, MQ for short, is an area in Vienna's 7th district close to the city centre. It currently houses over 60 organisations and initiatives ranging from visual and performing arts, architecture, music, fashion, theatre, dance, literature and children's culture to new media. Prominent organisations are the Mumok, the Leopold Museum Kunsthalle Wien and Zoom children's theatre. It is one of the biggest cultural quarters in the world.

Since November 2 there have again been tightening measures in all areas, so that museums are once again looking into an uncertain future.

Nikola Köhler-Kroath

BELGIUM

In 2021 a museum visit functioned as an outlet of the responsible type. Museums were perceived as an attractive and safe destination.

Museum visitor numbers moreover seem to have been higher in Belgium than in neighbouring countries. The number of individual visitors seems to be constant, but group visits (15 or more) plummeted due to Covid-19-measures and to the reluctance of the audience to gather in larger groups indoors. This also affected the organisation of museum events.

In 2021 museums in Belgium were lucky to not face a lockdown, although restrictions, mandates and regulations were in place (reservation policy, face masks, ventilation, ...). The way in which museums could safely open in 2021 was regulated and guided by the Culture Protocol by the Flemish Government, based upon the most recent national Covid-19 guidelines. As for the staff and employees, a rise in absenteeism is noticed. This is partially due to Covid-19-restrictions (the obligation of full- or parttime working from home). But also, demotivation is on the rise within the museum teams. The impact of Covid-19 on a medium and longer term is yet to be identified.

The ongoing restrictions for travelling in Europe and abroad has diminished the opportunities to create and uphold international networks. With the cancellations of colloquia and congresses, or the shift to digital gatherings, some essential part of the networking seems to be lost. This will have repercussions on scientific research and loan negotiations.

Also, all the efforts of co-creative and participation projects are endangered. The past years, a lot of effort was made by museums to enhance the participation-level of specific, hard-to-reach, parts of the population. Due to lockdown-measures, these projects are halted, and the positive results of these efforts might be totally cancelled or even changed towards a negative tendency.

At this point, it is not yet clear what the economic impact on the non-public funded museum sector will be.

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.

The Flemish Museum Network was established 10 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 60 museums participate in the bimonthly meetings. There is a very broad representation of the Flemish museum sector (more than 85%). 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.

Due to Covid-19 in 2021 all meetings were online. The following topics were regularly discussed.

The Flemish museums remained open throughout 2021 (sometimes in stark contrast to neighbouring countries). There were, however, always specific conditions (reservations, ...) and restrictions (for example, group visits, guided tours) in place. These were discussed in the Museum Network, guided by contacts with experts and the Ministry of Culture.

The Flemish Museum Network plays an active role in museum and heritage policy. There were contacts with the Ministry of Culture and with the Culture Committee of the Flemish Parliament. Subjects were Covid-19, as well as the cultural heritage decree.

The initiative of the government of Flanders regarding a digital Flemish Museum was presented to the Museum Network and is being followed up. The digital museum should be a fact at the end of 2023/beginning of 2024. Meanwhile, the Flemish government is investing 3.000.000 euro in this initiative.

The Museum Network maintains 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).

Based on a point of view of the Support Center for the Arts (Kunstenpunt), the theme of correct remuneration of artists and guest curators was discussed in detail.

There was a very active exchange of views on polyphony and museums. How to align current museum practices with a diverse society with many fundamental points of discussion and contention?

The consultation for a new ICOM definition of museums was closely monitored in 2021. The theme of digital collection registration has been extensively presented. Including the possibilities and pitfalls as well as good practices from museums abroad.

The relatively recent initiative of the Belgian Museumpassmusées is presented to the group.

There is also a regular consultation with the Flemish broadcast VRT about the presence of museums and museum themes on VRT, both radio, television and online.

There was consultation both internally and with Facebook on the theme of Museums and Facebook (the reason was a case of censorship due to artistic nudity).

Océ, 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 will take place in the period 2022-23. At the same time, Océ was primarily focussed on the rewriting of the legislation concerning cultural heritage in Flanders.

The Belgian Museumpassmusées allows people to visit 211 museums all over Belgium during 1 year for the price of 59 euro. In 2021 Museumpass generated 495.714 museum visits and 2,5 million euro. At the end of 2021 the number of active pass holders was 91.341.

This cooperative initiative started in September 2018 with 120 museums. The main purpose is to attract audience to the museums (including people of disadvantaged groups at a social rate). Next to bring more visitors to the museums by collective marketing campaigns. The Museumpassmusées collects rich data and helps museums with business insights to improve their relationship with their visitors.

Despite the above-mentioned growth, the COVID crisis is still stopping a large number of people from visiting museums. On 1 November 2020, on the occasion of the second Covid lockdown in Belgium, a collective 'pause button' was installed by MuseumPASS. When museums reopened, the holders could re-use their pass and by doing so reactivated their museum pass. On ending the 'pause' in May 2021, half of the members had reactivated their card. This solution prolonged memberships for seven months, but a large group didn't return to museums. The following reasons were given in a survey: fear to go back or take public transport, required booking in advance, mandatory wearing of face masks, use of disinfecting hand gel, following strict routes, restricted company, impossibility to go out with company afterwards due to (semi-)closed cities (until 1 May 2021), obligatory Covid Safe Ticket (from the 15th of Oct in some regions), etc.

In 2021 the Government of Flanders initiated the state indemnity system for temporary loans to Flemish museums. The current aim is to facilitate expensive and prestigious loans to exhibitions in Flanders.

In July, the southern part of the country was hit by an exceptional rainstorm resulting in disastrous floods. 112 villages and 65 heritage sites (museums, churches, archives...) were hit by the water. As for museums specifically, the worst affected institutes are

the Museums of Verviers and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Eupen. For the other museums touched by the floods, the collections were almost undamaged (even for museums like La Boverie in Liège). Relief plans were put in place by several organisations like the Blue Shield and the KIKIRPA. The M Museum started a solidarity action to assist the Verviers museums.

The Flemish Government started with a research project to construct a Flemish canon and a Flemish Museum. Although the canon will be conceived as an educational tool that will mostly be used in the school system, its impact on the heritage and museum sector will be significant. More details about the concept of the Flemish Museum are expected for 2022. As mentioned above, the realization of a Flemish digital museum is to be understood in this context.

Peter Carpreau & Hilde Schoefs

BULGARIA

In 2021, Bulgaria held parliamentary elections three times, as well as various caretaker governments, which severely limited the activities of the Ministry of Culture. However, at the end of the year, a session was opened to provide project support to the activities of museums in connection with the sharp rise in electricity prices.

Many of the planned events in the museums were postponed due to the various waves of the pandemic, and others did not happen in the expected parameters. So, some museums focus on research programmes, as well as working with museum funds.

However, 2021 was relatively better than 2020, as it reported slightly more visitors and revenue. Unfortunately, only about 30% of the population have been vaccinated in Bulgaria and the entrance to museums is by a 'green certificate', which severely restricts access to cultural heritage. These restrictions do not apply to children and students. Probably because of this, many museums have issued new museum teaching books for working with adolescents. During the pandemic, the museums in our country reacted differently. Some are tired of the restrictions and are too passive. Others focus on digital communication through social networks, where they build thematic cycles and share artefacts with stories for their audiences. From early spring to late autumn there are many outdoor events that allow visitors without a 'green certificate' to take part in museum initiatives.

Fewer new mobile exhibitions were created during the year as a result of both the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the museums themselves. Museums from cross-border regions are working more actively to create digital resources - 3D reconstructions, digital archives, exhibitions, 3D mapping, as projects are focused on common ideas about heritage between different countries. But in general, there are few attempts among museums to create digital products. The Next Generation EU Recovery and Sustainability Plan, supported by the European Commission, sets digitalisations for all museums - for 800,000 exhibits. Work on it will begin in 2022. Some municipal authorities are working on new entertainment complexes and tourist attractions related to cultural heritage but are not investing in museums. However, renovated parts of the exhibitions were opened - in the National History Museum in Sofia, in the Rousse Regional Museum, in the Ethnographic Museum in Plovdiv, which are the result of the initiative of the museums and project funding from 2020. In 2021 there are no new museums in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Museums Association organizes awards for the best museum in the country, for educational initiatives and public activities. The awards stimulate the work of museums in these hard times.

Nikolay Nenov

CROATIA

It is not only the Covid-19 pandemic that determined the circumstances in which Croatian museums were surviving the year 2021, but also the devastating earthquake that hit Zagreb in March 2020 and then the one in the Banija region in December 2020.

The earthquake in Zagreb damaged severely many museum buildings, most of which are situated in historical buildings lacking earthquake-proof modern construction. Some of them that were very damaged closed down immediately and some in 2021, after they collected all the necessary documentation to start the reparation and restoration works.

The second earthquake in Banija was disastrous for the architecture and there again the most severely hit were historical buildings. The Republic of Croatia therefore has had to invest a lot in the basic damage control of churches, palaces, traditional architecture and museums. This means that less funds have been left for museum activities and projects in Croatia in general.

Most museums in Croatia were opened occasionally – depending on the overall situation of the pandemic. In most of the cases extra measures were introduced, such as limitation of the number of visitors, mandatory wearing of masks, hygienic measures, and so on. However, the drop of the number of visitors have been noticeable even if in somewhat less percentage than in 2020.

Coastal towns and the towns of tourist relevance were well visited throughout the summer months and so were museums in Pula, Dubrovnik, Zagreb and other popular towns.

Museums continued to use social media on the web (including exhibitions, workshops, lectures, conferences, virtual guides) even though a certain fatigue of using them by the audience was noticeable.

Since the international collaboration was not very easy, in 2021 there were not many museum projects that involved that kind of collaboration, including the one within Croatia. It seems that many museums have been using material that has already existed within institutions, which resulted with projects based on the own capacities. Exhibitions of donations, posters, photographs were quite frequent. Art museums have several retrospective exhibitions of known artists.

Some museums had projects related to everyday life with Covid-19, such as the exhibition in the City Museum of Bjelovar.

Not many new museums and permanent exhibitions were opened. One of them was the *Museum of Intangible Heritage* in Čakovec, together with *Treasures of Međimurje* museum in the same town, both targeting traditional culture of Međimurje, a northern Croatian region.

The Museum Documentation Centre realised huge research on museum depots in Croatia aiming to analyse the condition of the preservation of objects.

An international Conference, *Solidarity in culture: Heritage protection under conditions of crisis*, was held in Zagreb in March with 70 participants.

The *Best in Heritage* conference that was usually held in Dubrovnik in September, this year, as in 2020, was held virtually.

Several museums in Croatia had exhibitions about a certain role of women, as for the example, the exhibition in the Technical museum 'Nikola Tesla' – *Women and Technology*, <https://tmnt.hr/izlozba?id=8212>

Generally, especially in the tourist areas, many centres for visitors have been established and it seems that this has become a more popular and less obligatory version of communicating culture of an area with visitors.

Lidija Nikočević

CYPRUS

Cyprus, a small island in the Mediterranean with a long history and rich culture that spans more than 10,000 years, is full of fascinating cultural attractions, monuments, museums, and galleries. The last two years have certainly proven to be thought-provoking, tough and challenging, but at the same time facilitated progress and creativity to flourish in innovative directions. In 2021 Cypriot museums, galleries and cultural foundations implemented the plans and policies they had set the previous year, when they saw their doors closing and their staff working from home.

Private museums, such as the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia and the A. G. Leventis Gallery, drafted new social media policies and continued their digital presence with specially designed online proposals for exceptional museum experiences. The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, the civic history museum in the heart of the capital, managed to inaugurate two major temporary exhibitions. *The Ledra Palace: Dancing on the Line* exhibition, a collaboration between the Leventis Museum and the CYENS Centre of Excellence, explored the emblematic Ledra Palace Hotel in Nicosia as a place of memory, history, culture and politics. Emerging technologies and innovative applications played an important role in this exhibition. The second exhibition, *Raiment of the Soul*, on show until 4 April 2022, is the culmination of a glorious project by contemporary artists Vangelis Kyris and Anatoli Georgiev, celebrating the bicentennial of the Greek Revolution of 1821. For the same occasion, the A. G. Leventis Gallery, in addition to other events and small temporary shows, organised an impressive exhibition dedicated to Greece as seen through the eyes of the painter Theodore Ralli. The exhibition focussed on 19th-century Greek life and traditions as depicted by him and it was enriched with original costumes and objects of the time as shown in his paintings.

The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation interacted with the public through a series of podcasts entitled 'Let's Talk History'. The project is a scientifically documented and user-friendly lecture series, featuring prestigious academics who focus on various Cyprological subjects relating to museums, collections, exhibitions and actions of the Cultural Foundation, but also more broadly on all periods of Cypriot history, archaeology, art history and literature.

The State Gallery of Contemporary Art – SPEL hosted the exhibition *Past-forward: Stavros Economou Unarchived*, a retrospective exhibition of Stavros Economou, one of the most important representatives of modern architecture in Cyprus. The public was invited to join a series of events featuring guided tours, presentations and talks, exploring a number of themes which arose from the exhibited material.

Last but not least, in December 2021 the Cypriot public welcomed the announcement of the country's biggest cultural project: the new archaeological museum, with an estimated construction cost of €121.3m, is expected to open to the public by 2028 – a museum that will no doubt contribute to cultural tourism and to protecting and highlighting the archaeological and historical heritage of the island. The new 40,000 m² museum will replace the existing one built in 1908 by the British colonial government and will present 6500 antiquities in permanent exhibition galleries, while it will also have spaces for temporary exhibitions, educational programmes, conservation studios, a library and an amphitheatre.

All of the aforementioned projects, exhibitions and events are a sample of the culture scene in Cyprus. As time goes by and with the hope that we will leave the 'Covid period' behind us, one thing is certain: museums and cultural institutions have moved into a new era and they are now ready, more than ever, to work in unforeseen situations.

Demetra Theodotou Anagnostopoulou

CZECH REPUBLIC

Museums in the Czech Republic faced the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. During the first third of the year, they were closed. Fortunately, museums reopened at the beginning of May and remained open until the end of 2021, when the pandemic was gaining momentum again. The negative impact was mainly reflected in the radical decrease in the attendance of children and young people. This is a major blow for Czech museums, especially in view of the fact that in the past, special attention has been paid to the development of cooperation between schools and museums. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, implemented a unique cooperation project that demonstrated clear positive impacts on the supplementation of formal education in schools with non-formal education in museums. In 2020, schools were even given an increase in budgets to carry out visits to museums (to pay for bus rentals, etc.). Building on good cooperation before 2020 is proceeding very slowly.

Despite these impacts, Czech museums have not stopped preparing new projects. The National Museum deserves special attention, having opened five permanent exhibitions in 2021. Among them, 'Windows into Prehistory', 'Miracles of Evolution' and a very special project for children called 'Mouseum' deserve attention. The National Museum also prepared dozens of virtual exhibitions.

<https://www.nm.cz/en/program/long-term-exhibitions?page=0&>

<https://www.nm.cz/virtualne-do-muzea/online-vystavy>.

New permanent exhibitions were **also** opened by other museums. The expositions of one of the buildings of the Moravian Gallery in Brno underwent a complete transformation, presenting its collections of artistic craft and design in a completely new, modern, and progressive arrangement.

<http://www.moravska-galerie.cz/moravska-galerie/stale-expozice/art-design-fashion.aspx?lang=cs>

The National Museum of Agriculture – which is a museum that belongs among those looking for new ways to present traditional topics in the context of the development of 21st century society - opened a new building and a permanent exhibition called the Museum of Food and Agricultural Machinery in Ostrava in September 2020. After few weeks of use, the building was closed and was in fact fully accessible to visitors from May 2021.

<https://www.nzm.cz/en/news/ostrava-the-museum-of-food-and-agricultural-machinery>

Among the Czech museums appeared one new and unique institution called The Zámeček Memorial. It commemorates the tragic events of 1942, when 194 people were executed in retaliation for aiding the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. Not far from the site of the former execution site, a remarkable modern building was built according to the design of leading Czech architects.

<https://www.zamecek-memorial.cz/>.

A new permanent exhibition called Mundus Comenii in **the** Comenius Museum in Naarden in The Netherlands deserves international attention. This exhibition presents **the** life and work of the 'Teacher of Nations' Johannes Comenius. This museum is a branch of the Johannes Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod in the Czech Republic and is part of a building next to the church where Johannes Comenius was buried in 1670. The church was reconstructed by Czechoslovakia in 1933-1937.

[https://www.mjakub.cz/mundus-comenii-\(netherlands-naarden\)?idm=179](https://www.mjakub.cz/mundus-comenii-(netherlands-naarden)?idm=179)

In addition to permanent exhibitions, Czech museums have opened several hundred short-term exhibitions for visitors.

Many of the Czech Museums participated on the preparation of the 26. ICOM General Conference Prague 2022. ICOM Czech Republic organized a prequel for the conference – ICOM International Symposium Prague 2021, where the main topic 'The Power of Museums' was introduced. About 230 delegates came to the Symposium in person and 55 of them arrived from abroad, mainly from European countries, but also from the United States of America and Israel. About 850 people from 90 countries participated online.

<https://icomprague2021.gcon.me/page/home>

Martina Lehmannová

DENMARK

2021 began with closed museums. Also this year museums and other cultural institutions in Denmark have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions and economic situation caused by the pandemic.

On 17 December 2020, all Danish indoor museums had to close and remained closed until 21 April 2021. Until 14 June visitors had to wear a face mask in museums and until 1 August a valid Corona passport was demanded, as proof of vaccination, that you had previously had been infected or recently had tested negative for Covid-19.

Due to Corona restrictions museums, theatres, zoos and other cultural institutions and attractions had to close again on 19 December 2021 and stayed closed during the holiday and until 16 January 2022.

The economic consequences for the museum and the impact on the activity at the museum depended on how many visitors the museum had and the income the museum lost. It also depended on how it is organized. The government's financial aid packages for trade and the private sectors have helped museums. In some periods of 2021, it was possible for museums organized as independent organizations to cover 75 % of the staff labour costs if they chose to send the staff home. Museums owned by the state and municipalities were supported by the state and did not need to exempt their employees from working.

The total number of visitors to Danish museums in 2021 will be published in May 2022 but a study from the Association of Danish Museums indicates that the number of visitors will be approximately the same in 2021 as in 2020, which is a decrease of almost 40% compared to the visitor numbers for 2019. The study also shows that every second museum expects some or much lower turnover in 2021 compared to 2019. https://www.dkmuseer.dk/sites/default/files/dokumenter/Nyheder/Survey%20resultater_museernes%20bes%C3%B8gstal%202021.pdf

Despite the pandemic and the lockdowns a number of new museums or additions to existing museums opened in 2021:

Museum Kolding (<https://www.museumkolding.dk/>), H.C. Andersen House in Odense, (<https://hcandersenshus.dk/en/frontpage/>) Øhavsmuseet in Faaborg (<https://www.ohavsmuseet.dk/en/ohavsmuseet/>) and Ordrupgaard in Charlottenlund (<https://ordrupgaard.dk/en/news/ordrupgaards-new-extension-provides-a-fine-setting-for-world-art/>). A major new permanent exhibition was established at The Green Museum in Auning and Museum Silkeborg.

Another initiative that was launched in 2021 was a national cultural analysis institute (Kulturens Analyseinstitut). The institute will be financed through public subsidies and has as a goal 'to support more knowledge about the conditions of the cultural industry and the importance of culture for the well-being of citizens'. Among the initiators of the establishment of the institute was the Danish Chamber of Commerce and the Danish Cultural Boards (Danske Kulturbestyrelser), both of which have representation from 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.

The pandemic affected cultural life in Estonia also in 2021, as among the other cultural institutions the museums were closed from 3 March till 3 May 2021. Starting from August all persons 18 years of age and older had to present a Covid certificate proving vaccination or recovery or a certificate proving a negative result of a PCR test in order to participate in activities taking place in checked public spaces. Starting from October negative tests certificates were not accepted from the over-18s. Starting from November young people from the age of 12 years and three months up to 17 years (included) had to present a certificate in order to participate in the activities. All these and other more specific restrictions decreased the number of visitors in the museums of Estonia. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2019, Estonian museums were visited slightly more than 3.5 million times. The number of museum visits was a little over 1.7 million in 2020, which is more than two times lower than in 2019. Probably and unfortunately the number of museum visits in 2021 is not any higher than in 2020.

This year the Cultural Ministry of Estonia offered financial support for the cultural institutions, including museums:

- 1) 106 private and local government cultural organizers received crisis support for the total amount of 4.9 million euros for the restructuring of a service, product, business process or business model;
- 2) 670 cultural operators organized by private law and local government got the crisis support for the total amount of 8.9 million euros;
- 3) the public legal entities in the field of culture and sport, state-founded foundations and public authorities got the crisis support for the total amount of 4.1 million euros.

Museum information system MuIS, which is a web-based work environment for managing museum collections and keeping records on state assets, is under renovation and will be more user-friendly in the coming years. The digitalisation projects in the areas of museum education and public services are also developing rapidly.

Some museums opened their new permanent exhibitions, for example, KUMU Art Museum's permanent exhibition *Landscapes of Identity: Estonian Art 1700–1945* and the Estonian Open Air Museum's permanent exhibition *Kolhoz apartment building*, which provides a picture of the everyday life of rural people in the 1960s, 1970s, 1990s and

2010s in an original life-size brick apartment house. The house was transported 200 km from Southern Estonia to Tallinn in 2019.

The Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage Board continued 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 commissions of the Museum Council selected the nominees for the annual awards of Estonian museums in nine categories. The competition received 93 applications this year, the number of applications has remained stable over the years.

The representatives of several museums are preparing a common Museum Card for museum visitors in Estonia.

Currently the members of the Estonian Museum Association are the museum employees, but an initiative group is making preparation to establish an association, which members are the museums as institutions.

Triin Vaaro

FRANCE

2021: between optimism and lucidity

As in several countries, the health crisis in France has had a significant impact on the various cultural sectors and in particular on that of museums. Between March 2020 and September 2021, the population experienced three successive confinements and several periods of closure of places open to the public. Also, when the museums reopened, health protocols and gauges were put in place, directly influencing their attendance.

Studies - in particular the study carried out by the Harris Interactive Institute in September 2021 at the request of the Ministry of Culture or the 'Cyclical analysis of cultural turnover in the 3rd quarter of 2021' published by the Ministry of Culture – make it possible to follow the attendance of establishments in this context of health crisis. As the daily *Le Monde* writes, "In museums, visitors returned timidly in 2021. Deprived of the international public due to the pandemic and remained closed for more than four months, establishments know that the return to normal will be long".

Despite the constraints imposed (gauges, compulsory reservation, wearing a mask) the attendance figures show that the public in museums has not been discouraged. Reopened since 19 May 2021 after more than four months of closure, museums have recorded an increase in their attendance compared to 2020, a year during which the doors to them remained closed for more than five months.

However, these attendance figures remain much lower than those of 2019, those of the 'before' period. Deprived of the usual foreign public, the major Parisian establishments are indeed recording a sharp decline in their attendance: for Le Louvre (2.8 million in 2021, against 9.6 million in 2019); for the Musée d'Orsay (1.4 million visitors in 2021, compared to 3.6 million in 2019). For the Centre Pompidou (1.5 million visitors, compared to 3.3 million in 2019). While exhibitions such as the one devoted to the American Georgia O'Keeffe at the Center Pompidou or the Russian Ilya Répine at the Petit Palais have met with great success, the number of visitors remains on average 30% to 50% lower than before the crisis.

In the regions, despite good attendance, the trend remains the same. For example, in Strasbourg, although attendance figures are good for the city's museums (370,000 in 2021, i.e. a 50% increase compared to 2020), they remain half those of 2019. City museums is also linked to an incentive factor: the introduction of free admission to Strasbourg museums between May and August 2021. Among the flagship exhibitions

in the region is also the one devoted to the American Jeff Koons (seen by 183,000 visitors) at the Museum in Marseille.

If the heads of museum structures are optimistic, they remain lucid about the work to be done to find a situation before the health crisis. Thus, during the months of closure and pending their reopening, the museum teams worked to retain their visitors remotely (using social networks and Instagram in particular). Important actions have been implemented, such as virtual tours, online conferences, or new experiences intended to make people better acquainted behind the scenes of museums.

An important trend in 2021 is the reflection launched by several museums on exhibition models that preserve the environment. By focusing on a local public, bringing works from closer and longer, using materials that respect the environment, museums are trying to imagine 'eco-responsible' exhibitions. Among the museums committed to this path, there is in particular the Palais des Beaux Arts in Lille, the metropolitan museums Rouen Normandy or the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in Paris. *The Goya Experience* exhibition at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille is an example of an 'eco-designed' tour that in 2021 marked professionals in the museum sphere.

At The Musée des Confluences, in Lyon, an exhibition *The Earth and Heritage* reflected on the impact of human beings on the Earth and offered to observe the major contemporary environmental challenges in the light of a pivotal period of our history, the Neolithic era.

2021 also saw the development of immersive exhibitions. The *Sensory Odyssey* exhibition at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris (MNHN) remains perhaps – due to its quality – the most emblematic of this trend.

2021 was marked by the reopening of the Carnavalet Museum in Paris (in May 2021) and by appointments at the head of emblematic establishments. Thus, Laurence des Cars was appointed President and Director of the Louvre Museum, Christophe Leribault as President of the Musée d'Orsay, Claire Bernardi, Director of the Picasso Museum and Laurent Le Bon, President of the Centre Pompidou

Samuel Cordier

GEORGIA

There are more than 300 museums of different profiles (historical, art, memorial, ethnographic, etc.) and legal status (under the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia, local government, municipality, private etc.) in Georgia (the Country with 3.7 million population), more than 90 museums are in the capital (Tbilisi). As the pandemic period became a challenge for all spheres, the global crisis also impacted museums and cultural institutions in the country. In a result, they have experienced increased social and economic consequences due to the Corona virus. Since the first signs of pandemic in the country the Georgian museums were closed on 16 March 2020 due to pandemic restrictions and approximately 79% of them step by step were reopened since 20 June 2020. After that during the second lockdown all museums were again closed on 28 November 2020 and reopened after four months, on 1 March 2021.

Many museums (mostly in Tbilisi) being in lockdown have moved their activities to online channels (websites and social networks) by creating and exploiting digital resources of a variety of content to their audiences, which included: online exhibitions, online educational programmes, virtual and 'live' tours of the museums, programmes 'Curator from home' and 'Conservator from home', blogs and stories on Instagram and Facebook, short video-lectures on YouTube, hashtag stories and one object-based stories for online audiences within the social network, as well as in some cases entertaining and learning programs, quizzes and competitions prepared by museum specialists through the Zoom platform in support of school lessons (e.g. [Georgian National Museum](#) and Adjara Museum). But most of the country's museums (mostly on the periphery) have been found passive or sometimes absolutely inactive in similar activities. However, observations and surveys have shown that during isolation, the digital activities of museums increased in the country, but mainly it was based on social networks, in particular Facebook, which is the most popular social network in Georgia. Besides some museums have previously actively used social media and shared their collections before isolation, digital communication has grown in approximately 33% of museums in Georgia.

In the severe pandemic situation in the country, **three** museums were opened in Georgia after their reconstructions: [Bolnisi museum](#), which is currently a [nominee of EMYA 2022](#), [Vani Archaeological Museum](#) (these first two museums are unified under the umbrella of Georgian National Museum), and [Ilia Chavchavadze Literary-Memorial Museum](#) (Union of Tbilisi municipal museums). Certainly, after the lockdown like all museums, these museums also experienced hard efforts to get

visitors back to museums. All museums have tried to offer diverse exhibitions and programs to visitors together with promoting that their spaces are secured and protected. Few museums based on their partnership level could mobilize large resources to organize famous travelling exhibitions such as [Life and Death - Glory of Pompeii](#) (newly opened Vani Archaeological Museum; Janashia History Museum) to offer great educational resources and comfort environment to the visitors away from the stressed atmosphere due to covid restrictions and hard social background.

As the crisis usually unveils the disadvantages of institutions, while summarizing the crisis traces on Georgian museums, observations showed what readiness the museums faced in working through the digital world while their doors were closed. Museums in lockdown have increasingly realized what the biggest importance the audience has for them and why the digital heritage is significant for the museums. The crisis has once again exposed the condition of online side of Georgian museums: the museum documentation problem and non-existence of so-called digital collections highlighted the 'failures' of museums and as with other cultural institutions, museums gained lessons on what the major problem is in general and why the digital cultural heritage is mandatory to cover. The mentioned problem is summarized in the following: the problem of documentation and digital database; shortage and lack of new technological equipment; lack of competent staff in the use of digital technologies; Internet access and follow-ups. It is quite important that this crisis can become a stimulus for museums, a positive moment to fill the important gaps associated with the digitization of collections and the active use of multimedia technologies, which directly affects the social responsibility of the institution, accessibility and closer communication of the museum and the audience.

Certainly, solution of the above-mentioned problems and rectifying the situation is impossible without support, in particular, state aid. It is necessary that the government should take definite responsibility and respond to ensure the future of museums and the protection of their unique cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the issues of supporting the functioning and technological equipment of Georgian museums have not been discussed at governmental level, nor has a national emergency funding scheme or cultural emergency fund been set up, as has been implemented in many European countries and including compensations as well. However, there is a positive point to mention: in terms of the situation of specialists employed in the museum, in the pandemic times no changes have been made in terms of reducing the staff of state-subsidized museums. A pleasant precedent was also to equip 16 museums in several

regions of Georgia (Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti) with new technologies, though this fact does not change the overall image.

The situation is different in private museums, which consists of 11% of the museums in Georgia. The country's private museums, whose main source is based on income generation, suffered huge losses during this period (especially in 2020), however, as the current survey shows, fortunately, they could open their doors but are still working hard to get back their previous condition.

Since the beginning of pandemic period up to today the Georgian Museums Association and ICOM Georgia have facilitated several trainings/seminars on the essential topics for Georgian museums, invited colleagues from different countries and organized conferences and discussions to exchange ideas and share experiences (E.g. EU-funded Creative Europe project BE MUSEUMER, led by the Georgian Museums Association together with the NEMO-European Network of Museum Organizations and Dutch Cultural Management Academy, organized the online international forum 'Museums and COVID-19: challenges, re-evaluations, perspectives'; as well as the international online workshop 'Museum Marketing in the Pandemic Period' - for museum staff in South Caucasus countries – Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan). These activities served as useful actions for representatives of Georgian museums to reflect their museums' problems, discuss and think on the future perspectives on what to improve and develop in their museums to better implement their social, educational and economic role in the country.

Lana Karaia

GERMANY

The **Covid-19 pandemic** again hit museums in Germany hard in 2021.

The year 2021 again brought alternating phases of closures and openings for museums in Germany, sometimes with greatly reduced attendance and strict regulations. Depending on the region, museums were completely closed for 15-20 weeks. Laws and regulations put museums on a par with sports and leisure facilities. In December 2021 the German Museums Association, together with other cultural umbrella associations, therefore appealed to the German Bundestag to recognize the relevance and importance of cultural institutions for society and to value the cultural sector as a separate area in further legislation to combat the pandemic.

The German federal government and, above all, the governments of the German states responsible for cultural policy have again launched aid programmes in 2021 to help cultural workers and museums, especially smaller museums and exhibition venues, in their time of need. Help with the cancellation of events and support for digitization projects was the main focus.

Digital museum work

The year 2021 brought further major advances for digitization in museums. The German Museums Association dedicated its 2021 annual conference to the topic of digital collection work. Thanks to the initiatives of museums and supportive funding programs, museums in Germany can continue to catch up in a European comparison. At the national level, a position paper of the government drafted in 2021 with the advice of the cultural associations, bundles the perspectives for cultures in the digital transformation under the keywords of mediation, networking and understanding. A further contribution to the debate is made by the conference proceedings *Museum 4.0*, with discussions and practical examples of digitization, published by ICOM Germany in spring 2021.

Collections from colonial contexts

The cultural policy debate in and about museums in 2021 was significantly shaped by the handling of collection items from colonial contexts. The discussions, which had been going on for some time, received new impetus after the opening of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin. At the centre is the discussion about the return of the so-called Benin bronzes to Namibia. Representatives of the Federal Government and the museums concerned agreed on a common position in April 2021. The returns are also seen by the new federal government as a starting point for future cooperation and for greater

cultural exchange. In order to create more transparency and make objects from colonial contexts more visible, the German Digital Library set up an online portal in November 2021 (ccc.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de), which is to be developed into a central information platform on collection items from colonial contexts in German cultural and knowledge institutions. In April 2021, after intensive dialogue and discussion, the German Museums Association published the third version of the guidelines for dealing with collections from colonial contexts, which is available online in German, English, and French (<https://www.museumbund.de/publikationen/guidelines-on-dealing-with-collections-from-colonial-contexts-2/>).

Sustainability

The discussion about the contribution of museums to sustainability and about sustainable museum work continues in Germany. A working group has been established within the German Museums Association to promote professional exchange and to develop concrete measures and practices for more sustainability and climate protection in museums. Sustainability is one of the focal points for the German Museums Association in 2022. Another topic is the intensification of the Franco-German Museum dialogue. The 2022 annual conference will focus on the discussion of the attractiveness of museums as relevant institutions in society.

Dietmar Osses

GREECE

A common thread ran through the narratives of Greek museum exhibitions in 2021 which, while marked by the ongoing pandemic that curbed the number of visitors, also signified the bicentenary of the country's War of Independence that would lead to the creation of the Modern Greek State. In most cases, following the trend of online activities launched in 2020 as a result of the strict Coronavirus restrictions, exhibitions also included online versions, allowing museums to maintain contact with their potential public.

The commemoration of Greece's bicentenary was, in fact, launched in mid-2020 by the [National Archaeological Museum](#) in Athens with a temporary exhibition on [*These are what we fought for... Antiquities and the Greek War of Independence*](#) centred around twenty-six selected antiquities in a "dialogue" with twenty-six works of the 18th and 19th century (paintings, engravings, illustrated editions) aimed at highlighting the role of antiquities in the Greek collective identity, even at the time of enslavement.

Then, under the title '1821 Before and After', the private [Benaki Museum](#), in collaboration with the archives of the Bank of Greece, the National Bank of Greece and Alpha Bank, presented a major exhibition featuring over 1,200 objects covering the 1770-1870 period. Held at its premises on Pireos Street, the exhibition's three modules covered the events leading up to what Greeks call the Revolution (1770-1821), the years of the uprising itself and the proclamation of an independent State (1821-1831) and the creation and consolidation (1831-1870) of what would become the country we know today as the Hellenic Republic. The lockdown measures prevailing in March 2021 resulted in a live presentation of the exhibition's inauguration, now available [online](#) (in Greek, with English subtitles), with visitors allowed to physically meander along the proposed itinerary as of May 14, when restrictions were lifted, through to its closing date of November 7, 2021. This major exhibition was flanked by two smaller ones, held in the Benaki Mansion: [1821: The Collectors' Choice](#) arranged by the Museum's Conservation Department and featuring works from four important private collections, those of Nikítas and Evangelía Stavrinákis, Pétros Vérgos, Apóstolos Argyriádis and Stéphan Adler, relating to 1821 and the Philhellenism movement in Europe and the United States; and, [Treasures of Philhellenic Painting from the Anthony E. Comninos Foundation](#), a unique collection exhibited for the first time and comprising paintings by renowned 19th century European artists.

For its part, the (also private) [National Historical Museum](#) belonging to the Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece curated an exhibition called ΕΠΙΛΑΒΕΣ '21, a pun on the words for revolution and constitution that was translated into English as [Revolution '21 Reframed](#). Thanks to funding provided mainly by the John S. Latsis

Public Benefit Foundation and with the support of other private Greek foundations, this comprised a main exhibition displayed in the building of the Old Parliament where the Museum is housed and exhibitions in ten cities in the Greek provinces, from Alexandroupolis in Thrace to the north to the Maritime Museum of Crete in Chania to the south. A floating exhibition had also been scheduled to take place on board a ship visiting twenty-three historical ports and islands in the Aegean. As with other museums, a parallel [digital exhibition](#) was organised around 80 artefacts chosen to highlight lesser-known aspects of the 1821 War of Independence and make them accessible to the broader public.

It is worth noting that the [Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation](#) (PIOP), in collaboration with the National Historical Museum, was able to share some of these exhibitions within its network of museums in the provinces, thus allowing the 'Revolution '21 Reframed' to be hosted at the Silversmithing Museum in Ioannina (Epirus), at the Open-Air Water Power Museum in Dimititsána (Peloponnese) and at the Chios Mastic Museum on the Aegean island of Chios, while '21 differently: The Greek War of Independence through *Playmobil* figures and dioramas' toured the Museum of the Olive and Greek Olive Oil in Sparta (Peloponnese), the Museum of Industrial Olive-Oil Production of Lesvos and Rooftile and Brickworks Museum N. & S. Tsalapatas, in Vólos (Thessaly). Using around 1,300 *Playmobil* figures lent by collectors, the latter used the small colourful figures to create dioramas and 'compose' battlefields, 'recreate' historical events, describe scenes of everyday life and depict significant people of the 1821 Revolution, an approach that constituted a first in Greece.

Another initiative is that of the [Lyceum Club of Greek Women's](#) Museum of the History of the Greek Costume, which organised an exhibition titled '[A thousand stories stitched on a piece of cloth. 1821-2021](#)'. With clothing as its point of reference, it includes small stories within a larger one as it explores garments and their transformations, their symbolic dimension, as well as their political and other uses from the 1821 era to today. Thus, through indicative but interconnected examples from different time periods, the exhibition blends yesterday and today, local and universal and 'tradition' with 'fashion', from the freedom fighters' fustanella and the versions worn by King Otto and today's Evzones through to the Hermès commemorative scarf for the Greek bicentenary. Unveiled through twelve individual episodes, each with a different script and different protagonists and contributors, the exhibition was enriched every Friday at 18:21 hours, inviting the public to follow the exhibition on social media and track its continuity. At the same time, a 'phygital' (physical and digital) model of the exhibition's evolution was presented around selected thematic modules at the association's headquarters.

Lastly, among the museums in the Greek provinces, one should mention the exhibitions organised by the [Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation](#), which included: 'Filelliniká' (Philhellenic artefacts) featuring works from the Eléni Martínou Collection and [A Journey to the Revolutionary Nafplion](#), an educational programme created with the support of the Bodossakis Foundation, which retraces important events of the 1821 Revolution and the post-revolutionary years through to King Otto's departure from Greece in 1862. The commemoration of Greece's bicentenary also allowed the Foundation to enlarge its permanent collection thanks to the donation by Greek stage designer Dionýssis Fotópoulos of three portraits of personalities of the period, as well as an important donation comprising rare publications, paintings and engravings made by the painter and architect Antónis Kepetzís.

Nadia Macha

HUNGARY

It was the pandemic that determined the functioning of museums in 2021 for the second consecutive year. As a consequence museums were bound to remain closed at the beginning of 2021, and they were able to reopen only at the end of May 2021.

Still back in the spring of 2020 the Museum Education and Methodology Centre carried out a nationwide survey exploring the impact of the pandemic on museums. Thanks to this survey we could provide an exact view of the challenges, the dimension of the problems concerning the museums and of the possible chances for the way out along with potential solutions. In 2021 we considered it extremely important to wholly assess the experiences of the domestic museums in the challenging 2020 year. Therefore, in the period between 21 January and 8 February 2021 a wide-ranging questionnaire was sent out to the heads of museum institutions, of whom 203 participated in the survey and filled in the questionnaire. The survey inquired into a broad range of areas, including the financial position and economic management, the contacts with the public and communities concerned, institutional communication, possibilities of home office, digital content development and support of digital education, collection of objects related to the Covid-19 pandemic, participation in stimulating domestic tourism and evaluating a general review of the problems and their solutions.

The domestic museum institutions suffered an unprecedented loss both in respect of the number of visitors (a 57% drop) and the participation of different educational courses (a decrease of 63%). These events had a serious negative impact on their revenues. (a loss of 47%) The institutions taking part in the survey tried to save on the ongoing operational expenses, like acquisitions and energy consumption, but there were precedents of measures concerning personal expenses as well. The three negative aspects mentioned most often by the directors of the museums were the loss of revenues, the decrease of the number of visitors and the general insecurity.

However, we can positively note, that the museums were able to reach a wider audience by the development of online communication and through the improvement of the digital content they could successfully address the target groups of the public education. The Hungarian museums, according to their capacities, strove to involve some special communities such as volunteers, and high school students obliged to accomplish mandatory public service. It is worth emphasizing that the directors of the museums had positive experiences with the practice of the home office, only 18% were of the opinion that the work of their colleagues had been less effective than earlier. The directors also considered a positive asset that during the pandemic they could develop

their online presence and their institutions were able to make up for the tasks with which they had been fallen behind.

Several museum development programmes developed further or came to an end. Some castle-museums were reopened and it was the period of starting the relocation of more than 300 000 works of art belonging to the Ethnographic Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Hungarian National Gallery to the National Museum Conservation and Storage Centre.

In the period of the pandemic the digitising programme of the museums gained strength. Its central element is the so-called Digital Success Programme, the digital platform of which opened for the public in 2021. At the moment it contains more than five million digital items, including several virtual exhibitions, educational programmes, and the digital archives of 62 museums with the data of more than 380 000 works of art. <https://www.museumap.hu/actual>

The National Cultural Fund established a temporary board with an eight million euros budget for supporting the presentation of the cultural treasures in countryside museums and the strengthening of the cultural identity of the Hungarian nation.

The subsidy of the top priority institutions of cultural strategy increased significantly and they gave an approximately 40% salary increase to their employees.

In 2021 the permanent exhibition titled *Vizeum* of Duna Museum won the special prize of the European Museum of the Year Award awarded by the European Museum Forum.

Zsolt Sári

ICELAND

In Iceland, a country of 366,000 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. One museum has been added to the list of accredited Museums during the last year, The Einar Jónsson Art Museum. 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 continued to suffer due to the Covid-19 pandemic during the year of 2021 – but at the same time, museums in Iceland are doing better in 2021 than 2020, and many experienced a sense of life ‘pre-Covid’ with growing visitor numbers during the summer and autumn, as social restrictions were minimized during that part of the year.

During the first months of the year, social restrictions were limited to gatherings of no more than 10 people. Museums were allowed to keep their doors open, but these restrictions led to many being temporarily closed, and others offering limited services. As time drew closer to summer, restrictions were lifted, and life got closer to normal. Borders opened around the world and Iceland received a little over 300.000 tourists in 2021 (three times more than in 2020). In Iceland, there is not a demand to show proof of vaccination or negative test results to visit museums, so many of these tourists’ visited museums around the country. For instance, The Herring Era Museum in Siglufjörður increased its visitor numbers by 74% compared to 2020. However, the 2021 visitor numbers are 25% lower than in 2019.

In October the Icelandic Museums Association (FISOS) held their annual conference for museum workers. Last year it was digitized due to Covid but in 2021 it was held in Stykkishólmur, Iceland. Over 130 participants from museums all around the country enjoyed lectures, workshops and learning opportunities during the three-day conference.

As the Omicron variety started spreading in November, restrictions were tightened again to gatherings of no more than 10 people, but museums allowed to welcome up to 50 visitors at once. Despite Covid, gathering restrictions, reduction of tourists and travellers, Icelandic museums have carried on offering educational activities, lectures, and other events.

It is clear that Covid-19 still keeps affecting Icelandic Museums in many different ways, even though there is a reason to be optimistic, as it seems that we are slowly learning how to live alongside the threat of this pandemic. To look on the positive side, the pandemic has taught museum workers new ways of reaching visitors, through social media, virtual reality, and other web-based solutions. Also, many have managed to spend more time and effort on research, accessioning and collection management. For now – we all look forward to things getting a bit better.

Anita Elefsen

IRELAND

Summary Highlights:

- The Butler Gallery moved to a permanent home in Kilkenny, 2020.
- Ballinglen Art Museum (part of the Ballinglen Arts Foundation) opened in Co Mayo 2020.
- 2021 The Silver and The Time Museums opened as part of Waterford Museum of Treasures.
- Cavan Museum opened a multi-purpose shared space for exhibitions and events.
- Carlow Museum launched a website coinciding with the museum's 48th anniversary.
- Johnstown Castle and Irish Agricultural Museum opened in Co Wexford 2021.
- The Irish Workhouse Museum in Portumna, Co Galway, won the Heritage Hero Award.
- The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Heritage Centre created a popular 'Cartoons in the Time of Covid' exhibition online 2021.
- Clare Museum, Ennis, reopened after a refurbishment in 2021 with some new acquisitions.
- Major projects: Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum in Co Limerick is undergoing a major redevelopment; The Crawford Art Gallery, Co Cork undergoing a €29m redevelopment; Galway City Museum and Spanish Arch area a €10 million redevelopment; Strokestown Park House & Gardens' Famine Museum Co Roscommon a €5 million redevelopment.
- The Heritage Council Accreditation Programme (MSPI) continued in 2020 and 2021, based on virtual visits and assessments, and it now includes 59 Museums at 65 sites.
- Nano Nagle Place Museum in Cork won the EMF Council of Europe Museum Prize 2022.
- 14 Henrietta Street, Dublin won the Silletto Prize at European Museum Forum's EMYA 2021.
- EPIC Irish Emigration Museum won Sandford Award - excellence in heritage education 2020.
- The Glucksman Museum won Best Arts and Cultural Centre at Irish Enterprise Awards 2021. Its 'Creativity at Home', won Kid's in Museums Best International Digital Activity 2020.
- Fáilte Ireland launched a Digital that Delivers programme to support and promote the development of a resilient and competitive visitor experiences sector.

Discussion points: social inequalities and injustice, the climate crisis, colonial legacy in collections, diversity, Brexit and professional ethics and standards; pan-European collaborations and exchanges; the uncertainty of planning but a greater sense of hope looking towards 2022.

The pattern across Europe of museums, cultural and heritage venues struggling with lockdown, restrictions, online programming and planning re-opening was replicated in Ireland, which had the longest winter lockdown, with museums opening in May 2021. Ireland fared well, Irish people were compliant with 80-90% of the population vaccinated, and 48% of those in hospital-ICUs were the unvaccinated. No infection was traced to museums, yet visitor numbers were only about 25-30%.

The Irish Government continued supporting the Arts-Culture-Heritage sector, and the national cultural institutions, while providing record funding for the Arts Council and Heritage Council. The Irish Museums Association remained a focus for those working in the cultural heritage sector, providing courses, support, and a platform for sharing information. This was augmented with reports and bulletins from NEMO, ICOM, EMA, and relevant websites.

The pandemic with its associated fallout and impact brought losses to museums both in terms of revenue, of jobs and of the personal engagement with the public that is such an essential part of the world of museums. The sector responded by re-examining their practices, embedding their research, finding new ways of collaborating with communities, and reinvigorating their partnerships. Irish museums upskilled and delivered digitally at a higher level that is likely to continue.

Ireland's Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 moved online to commemorate events that encompass the different traditions on the island of Ireland and to ensure they are remembered appropriately.

Marie Bourke

ITALY

Museum activities in 2021 were unfortunately still marked by the pandemic caused by Covid-19. Although the Italian museums have reopened - with the restrictions dictated by the various regulations that have occurred during the year - the access data have found a significant reduction in the public.

The drastic decrease in the presence of schools and the reduction in the international tourist flow led to a drastic drop in visitor numbers (2020 data follows).

The initial push that had shifted many of the museums offers in the social and digital environment has clearly stopped. The general interest in this type of product has decreased. At the same time, cultural institutions need to organize themselves better with respect to the production of digital experiences and above all to include them in a broader strategy of the museum institution.

To meet the need to identify strategic lines in the digital field, the new direction of the Minister of Cultural Heritage, 'Institute for the digitization of cultural heritage - Digital Library' has published the National Plan for the digitization of cultural heritage (PND) as a tool to guide the process of change towards the digital transformation of cultural institutions in the digitization of cultural heritage and in the creation of new services.

At the same time was founded a Special Superintendency, dedicated to the management of PNRR funds. The PNRR – as per National Recovery and Resilience Plan – is the plan prepared by Italy to relaunch its economy after the Covid-19 pandemic. Is part of the European Union programme known as Next Generation EU, a 750-billion-euro fund for European recovery. For the cultural sector, the share of funds assigned amounts to approximately € 6.6 billion, of which € 1.1 billion is dedicated specifically to cultural heritage and distributed over 3 main assets

- Digital platforms and strategies for access to cultural heritage
- Improvement of energy efficiency
- Removal of architectural barriers and improvement of accessibility

The modalities with which the funds will be allocated are not yet made public. The integrated data of all Italian museums are not yet available. For state museums alone, there was a decrease from approximately 54,800,000 visitors in 2019 to 13,300,000 in 2020, with a 75% reduction reflecting the impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector.

Giovanni Cella

LITHUANIA

In 2021 the Covid-19 pandemic continued, and the year was also marked by additional geopolitical challenges.

From November 2020 until July 2021 the quarantine regime was in a force throughout Lithuania.

Throughout 2021 museums, like many other institutions, were subject to existing restrictions: from full closure to restricted and additional security requirements.

After the elections on 11 December 2020, the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania started its work. The Government's mission in the field of culture is defined as - CULTURE THAT CHANGES THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIETY. The programme focuses on increasing access to culture and promoting cultural inclusion, with priority given to synergies between the fields of culture and education.

A feasibility study was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture to plan funds from the new European Union funding period, to provide resources for cultural facilities. In December 2021 the feasibility study ‚Analysis of the Requirements and Alternatives of the National Repository of Museum Values‘ was presented to the museum community. The proper storage of exhibits is a sensitive issue for many museums.

In 2021 the government implemented measures to stimulate the economy and reduce the consequences of the spread of Covid-19.

Despite the difficult time, museums organized exhibitions, renovated expositions, and implemented other activities.

In 2021, museums effectively developed activities in the virtual space by creating and offering various educational virtual games, tours, exhibitions, online lectures, concerts, digital publications, translations, and more. Numerous projects with new virtual products or services for museum visitors have been implemented such as the project ‚Development of an Interactive Cognitive Platform‘ of the Lithuanian Open-Air Museum. On the museum's website professionally prepared video seminars and related additional information, training materials can be viewed.

New museum, spaces and exhibitions opened up:

In the Spring of 2021 Vilnius Museum opened its doors for the first time and offered two exhibitions.

In March 2021 the National Museum of Lithuania opened the most modern branch – The House of Histories. Located in a historical building, the new location of the exhibition invites visitors to explore history and create different ways of understanding the past.

With the opening of the House of Histories the National Museum of Lithuania renewed its logo and started a new advertising campaign with young Lithuanian designers and influencers.

Right now, two exhibitions are taking place at the House of Histories: 'Inside the Sarcophagus: Studying the Mummies of Ancient Egypt' and the international exhibition 'Goddesses and Warriors: 100 Years to Marija Gimbutas'. Both exhibitions include live and virtual educational activities which are designed for visitors of all ages.

The exhibition 'Goddesses and Warriors' presents Marija Gimbutas (1921–1994), the most famous Lithuanian archaeologist in the world, as well as her scientific insights.

Exhibition visitors learn about the two fundamental the scholar's hypotheses on the development and identity of European culture, which earned her global recognition and gave rise to new academic as well as social movements. In the exhibition, Marija Gimbutas's hypotheses defining European cultural transformation are illustrated with those archaeological findings that the scholar relied on and placed the greatest emphasis on. Those unique exhibits arrived in Lithuania – to the House of Histories – from 18 different European museums and institutions.

The third part of the exhibition is equally important. It focuses on Marija Gimbutas's personality and her life; on the woman who retreated from Lithuania to escape the Soviet occupation, who endured the hardships of migration yet never neglected her dreams and became a world-famous scholar. Her life constitutes an absolutely extraordinary story.

In October 2021 the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania opened an international exhibition 'TO KEEP THE HOMELAND ALIVE Lithuania and Poland in the Epoch of the 1791 Constitution'.

The title of the exhibition echoes the narrative that was entrenched in the second half of the 18th century in writing coming from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth about the homeland's welfare, seeking its prosperity and securing its sovereignty.

This international exhibition is dedicated to mark the 230th anniversary of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth Constitution of 3 May 1791 and the Mutual Assurance of the Two Nations.

The exhibition presents the processes of modernisation of the Lithuanian and Polish state – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th Century. The artefacts of the exhibition belong to 42 institutions and private individuals from Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Belarus.

In November 2021 a new exposition in memory of the Great Action has been opened at the Kaunas IX Fort Museum.

The 'Great Action' is one of the largest massacres in Lithuania during the Nazi occupation, when in one day in 1941 more than 9,000 Jews from the Kaunas ghetto were killed.

An installation of 9,200 buttons was chosen as the main symbol of the exposition: three of which are unique exhibits of the museum and were found in the field of mass murder near Fort IX. In the context of the exposition of the buttons of different shapes and colours, it becomes a metaphor for authentic personalities whose lives have been cut off near Fort IX. The buttons are covered with an imitation of quicklime, which was used to cover the bodies of people killed in trenches to break them down faster.

In 2021 Museum Route activities developed by the programme 'In Search of the Fatherland' (2019–2021)– devoted to 30th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Republic of Lithuania in 2020 have ended. The programme focuses on cultural landscapes of Lithuania and is coordinated by the Lithuanian Museum Association. This year's theme - 'Cultural Landscapes: The Art of Parks and Gardens' - sought to revive the cultural memory of historic parks and gardens. This year's programme involved 70 organizations, with regional museums being particularly active. The Museum Route, which started in the west of the country in July and ended in September in the east of the country has offered over 140 events and initiatives.

Gita Sapranauskaite

LUXEMBOURG

Thanks to the financial support of the Ministry of Culture, the Luxembourg National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM Luxembourg) has been supervising since 2021 the network of the museums in Luxembourg City, as well as the network of local Luxembourg museums including more than 60 museums from entirely different areas, many of which are ICOM members. Until 2020, the latter network had been managed by the Ministry of Culture.

ICOM Luxembourg was created in July 2017 and is currently representing 34 museums and 150 museum professionals. The committee fulfils an impetus, coordination and professionalisation function for the Luxembourg museums, and promotes the aims and projects of ICOM in the Grand Duchy. Moreover, training activities and regular knowledge exchanges within its national museum community were organised in 2021, for example on the topics of 'social media for museums', 'restoration of works with woodworm infestation', and 'preventive conservation: handling prints and engravings.' Despite the health crisis related to the Covid-19 pandemic, museums in the Grand Duchy were open throughout the year, with only a short lockdown from 1 to 10 January 2021, and more visitors have been recorded in the Luxembourg museums compared to 2020.

Furthermore, two traditional joint museum events took place in 2021, in compliance with the health measures in force. For the 24th consecutive year, 45 museums throughout the Grand Duchy devoted the weekend of 15 and 16 May to the Luxembourg Museum Days, the open doors weekend, during which 14,619 visitors explored the country's museums for free. The Museum Days were a privileged moment of encounter between the museums and their visitors, marked by activities, guided tours, exchanges, and activities for the whole family. Thanks to the 'CovidCheck' system, introduced by the Luxembourg Government in the summer of 2021, the 20th edition of the Museum Night, organised by the seven museums in Luxembourg City since 2001, was celebrated on Saturday, 9 October until 1 a.m. in a festive atmosphere. The event was a great success with 16,699 visits recorded. In addition, ICOM Luxembourg highlighted the joint museum projects and events with the development of two brand-new websites (luxembourgmuseumdays.lu and museumsmile.lu) as well as with a special social media campaign entitled 'Museums in Luxembourg'.

Laura Zaccaria

MALTA

The 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, mostly also managed on a voluntary basis with the exception of the Cathedral Museum at the Old City of Mdina. The private museum sector, including Foundations and Non-Governmental Organisations includes two main non-governmental organisations and a number of house museums.

In 2021, the Maltese museum landscape began a slow but consistent recovery from the setbacks experienced in 2020. Most museums were closed between March and May 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. As museums reopened around May, outreach and programming began to gradually pick up the pace particularly with regards to exhibitions and general outreach events. This was, however, more the case with public and national museums rather than private museums and those run by non-governmental organisations.

With the tourism sector showing slow but concrete recovery during second and third quarter, museums managed to recover some of their pre-Covid-19 publics. Statistics refer to a 7.4% increase over the abnormally low figures registered in 2020. The national network moved forward to experiment with revised opening times and special events. Open days held by the national museum network also brought back local museum publics to visit museums.

The major exhibition of the year was the one held by the national network of museums featuring masterpieces from a Russian private collection. The exhibition featuring a random selection of works attributed to, in the style of or by followers of Renaissance and baroque masters was highly publicised. However, the project was also the target of controversy as the national agency did not disclose the owner of this collection who was later identified by the press as being a Russian magnate involved in perceived dubious financial activity. Without going into the merits and reasons as to why the national agency decided to go for this specific collector, it is certainly the case that standards and the high level of ethical conduct expected by national institutions when conducting such projects was not met. This deficiency has a broader context in the fact that museums are still not regulated through an accreditation scheme that would also include a code of ethics covering operational management procedures concerning curatorial and administrative aspects.

A positive development registered during **the** period under review concerns free access to all University of Malta and Junior College students to all sites managed by the national network (Heritage Malta). This would complement the passport scheme launched last year providing free access to secondary school students and senior citizens which has brought in new museum publics. Data as to the success or otherwise of both schemes is however still not available. In general terms, the student passport scheme attracted roughly 15% of Malta's secondary student population.

Other positive measures include the introduction of autism-friendly measures in two national museums, previously introduced for the first time in Malta at the Cathedral Museum at Mdina. This development will ensure wider access to museums and heritage sites on the island.

The highlight of the year has been the international conference on museum futures held by the University of Malta and spearheaded by the Department of Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education which is also a NEMO member. The conference brought together close to 50 speakers from all over Europe and beyond to debate museum futures. A selection of papers presented during the conference will be published in a special edition of the Malta Resource for Education Research Journal.

Work has continued in earnest on two museum projects currently in the works and earmarked to open during 2022. The historic notarial archives will also have a museum experience to present the history and content of the archives. Gozo Museum, which is also the first local regional museum in the country, will also open its doors in 2022.

Sandro Debono

MOLDOVA

2021 was a difficult year, the museum institutions in the republic worked in pandemic conditions, in which it is extremely difficult to achieve the planned objectives.

In 2021, the process of accrediting museum institutions began. According to the current legislation, all museum institutions officially registered in the Register of Museums of the Republic of Moldova are required to undergo accreditation every five years.

In 2021, educational services of museums were offered in digital format, museums adapted to communication in a digital space, but without financial resources.

The process of classification and digitization of museum cultural values continued. The implementation of the republican project 'Mobile cultural heritage – a step towards a new communication platform', II stage, continued.

Several temporary exhibitions on various topics, including the 30th anniversary of the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Moldova, were offered to the visitors of the museum online. For the 5th time, Chisinau hosted the international exhibition 'World Press Photo'.

After the restoration of the building, which is a historical monument, the National Art Museum of Moldova was reopened.

Elena Plosnita

MONTENEGRO

In Montenegro, as in the rest of the world, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the work of all institutions was affected, and museums had to adapt a new methodology of work. All museums in Montenegro, acting according to the protective measures of the Ministry of Health and other state institutions dealing with the protection of the population from this disease, the number of visitors was reduced to a minimum, and a small number of exhibitions were organized, mostly online through various platforms.

Additionally, in Montenegro at the end of 2020 there was a change of government, which during the whole 2021 did not prioritise museum activities and culture in general. This was due to the fact that the Government of Montenegro created a new configuration of ministries, merging four previous ministries into one (Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports). This merging implied a new systematization of jobs, but also delayed the adoption of the budget, which resulted in the limiting and minimizing of the work of institutions.

Also, a large number of directors from the office in different fields were removed from the new merged ministry - directors of all primary, secondary and professional schools, the governing board of the University of Montenegro, directors of museums that are under the state administration, including the director of the National Museum of Montenegro. The highest museum institution in Montenegro works in difficult conditions, as previously stated without a responsible person, because among other duties the acting director of the Museum is the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. Also, because the adoption of the budget at the state level was delayed, the institutions financed from the budget (including the highest museum institution in the country) did not have sufficient funds to implement planned activities. It should also be added that the current Government favours the Serbian Orthodox Church and that the Church of Serbia in Montenegro, out of 23 approved projects through the programme for the protection of cultural property in Montenegro, through which the restoration and conservation of cultural and historical treasures (objects and buildings), presentation, professional and scientific training, received 13 and the National Museum of Montenegro, unfortunately, none. In conclusion, from all this above we can say that the 2021 was such a difficult year for all museums in Montenegro, as we look ahead to 2022, in the very best circumstances that are possible.

Isidora Kovacevic

THE NETHERLANDS

Digitization

“Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future” (Niels Bohr)

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic society is undergoing extensive changes. In 2021, as in 2020, museums had to adapt their activities to the constantly changing conditions in which they had to operate. Museums had to rapidly become part of the digital society we live in nowadays. It can be considered as the most striking development in the museum scene. And particularly in the Dutch museums. They presented more candidates than any other country in Europe in the Heritage in Motion competition (www.heritageinmotion.eu).

These museums realized that it is more vital than ever to continue to engage with society, highlighting the importance of cultural heritage by providing digital access to the wealth of the content on history and culture. To this end Digital and Audio-visual Building Training courses were organized for small and middle-sized museums, partly supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the EU.

The change from physical to digital activities can be seen as a logical result of the restrictions imposed by the government on cultural institutions like museums. In 2021 the museums were closed for 24 weeks. In the remaining weeks there were many mandatory rules and restrictions for admitting visitors.

The Van Gogh museum, for instance, welcomed only 366.000 whereas there were 2.100.000 in 2019. In total about 10.000.000 people visited museums instead of 32.000.000 in 2019, the year before Covid-19.

Slavery

During recent years there have been many examples of cultural institutions, in particular museums, that look at the Dutch colonial past from a contemporary perspective and how this continues to affect the present. Museums devote exhibitions to related themes such as Slavery in the Rijksmuseum, on the Surinamese canals in Museum van Loon (*the huge houses along the Amsterdam canals were built with the money earned at plantations in colonial Suriname.*) and De Gouden Koets in the Amsterdam Museum (*This so-called ‘Golden Coach’, donated to Queen Wilhelmina in 1898, has been used annually at the ceremonial opening of the Parliamentary year. On One side panel there is a painted image of subordinate slaves.*)

In 2020 the advisory report ‘Colonial Collections and Recognition of Injustice’ was published on behalf of the government, in which the advisory committee stated that the government must show willingness to undergo restitution of stolen colonial

heritage. Research projects such as the pilot project Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era (PPROCE) and Pressing Matters: Ownership, Value and the Question of Colonial Heritage in Museums focus on the methodology and implementation of provenance research, in order to enable concrete steps towards restitution and restoration. From archives to artistic practices and in the public space, the colonial past of The Netherlands is approached in various areas. Not only heritage objects, but the knowledge, symbols and language are put through a re-evaluation.

For instance, the Rijksmuseum added 77 museum labels to paintings and objects in the permanent collection. All of them focus on the colonial power of the Netherlands, which from the 17th century onwards was inextricably bound up with a system that included slavery. Some of the labels tell the stories of people who, under Dutch rule, were enslaved and put to work, and had their status reduced to that of objects, while others highlight people who profited from slavery, or spoke against it. Wherever possible, the new information will be integrated into the museum, in order to do greater justice to The Netherlands' complicated history. The Amsterdam Museum outlawed the term 'Golden Century' because the Gold was for the greater part directly or indirectly obtained by slave trade and slavery.

Awards

Notwithstanding Covid-19, Dutch museums took part in different kinds of competitions.

The best 'Kids Proof' museum is the Discovery Museum, Kerkrade. Thousands of so-called 'museum inspectors' (children up to and including 12 years) select the candidates for the award. The Anne Frank video diary, submitted by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, obtained the Heritage in Motion Award 2021 in the category 'Film and Video'. The jury said: "The visitor blog format in a 1940's setting creates a strange, immersive experience, touching and emotional. A well-conceived impactful project".

The Dutch Open Air Museum was the winner of the Children in Museums Award 2021. The judges said: "The Dutch Open Air Museum's Restart programme was devised in wide consultation with immigrants and teachers and offers authentic learning material illustrating migrants' lives in our society. They praised the very imaginative use of the museum's open-air space and buildings by treating it as an entire country. Children are encouraged to think for themselves, facilitators challenging responses and encouraging them to develop empathy with the situation of migrants".

Wim van der Weiden

NORTH MACEDONIA

The Museums in the R.N. Macedonia during the 2021 fully fulfilled its primary activity, by simultaneously working on the current activities arising from the legal norms prescribed in the Law on Culture, the Law on Museums and the Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage and in the implementation of Projects with which the basic museum institutional activities are strengthened.

Within the realization of the projects, this year the Museums realized several projects that were part of the Annual Program of National Interest in Culture of the Ministry of Culture, but they also realized extracurricular activities in order to promote culture and cultural heritage of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Globally 2021 was a year in which all processes changed and slowed down daily as the world faced a pandemic of Covid-19. In a period of restrictive and preventive measures introduced by the state, all activities operate in different and really difficult circumstances that complicate the implementation of programmes and extracurricular activities.

In 2021, due to the evidently reduced visits, the museums worked dedicatedly on museum documentation, but also in order to effectively implement the protection of the cultural heritage of Northern Macedonia, the museums worked continuously to take proper care of the storage and maintenance of the museum fund in the exhibition halls and depots. Museums also worked on the conservation of museum funds. The results of museum research and studies based on the foundations and main features of a nation-language, tradition, education, and culture were currently published.

During the summer, autumn and early winter, numerous projects in the field of archaeology, ethnology, history, and history of art were realized in compliance with the measures for protection from the Covid-19. The exhibition activities were renewed, and the international cooperation was partially renewed through the realization of exhibitions from abroad.

There were also implemented - realized educational children museum including the projects that have a basic goal of active inclusion, raising public awareness, acceptance, and inclusion of children with disabilities in all spheres of social life. The museums also cooperated with the embassies and diplomatic missions in Northern Macedonia, in the part of the international cooperation dedicated to the promotion of culture and

cultural values and nurturing the cooperation with the museums and galleries in the Western Balkans Region.

Regarding communication with the public, museums also made regular updates of the official websites, where they published all relevant activities and events. The information on the websites is published mainly in Macedonian, Albanian and English. In parallel with the websites, the museums in 2021 continued to actively update their social media profiles.

In complex operating conditions, however, it is a positive experience that many international organizations in North Macedonia have provided free access to lectures and discussions by eminent world museologists on free digital platforms.

What is the hallmark of 2021 in the field of museology in Northern Macedonia is that, although seemingly slowly, a kind of normal working began to return in the second half of the year, but still under special conditions?

Gordan Nikolov

NORWAY

The Norwegian museums have also this year been affected by the pandemic situation. Museums have been closed for periods and there has also this year been a reduction in visitor numbers for many museums, especially those dependent on foreign tourists. Most museums have had reductions, which mean loss of income from entrance fees, but also from shops, cafés, and several other income sources. The Government has contributed with various compensation schemes for museums as well as other parts of the culture sector, which have given various degrees of economic compensation. The Norwegian Museums Association has examined the museums' experiences with the pandemic and compensation schemes in 2021 as in 2020.

This spring, the Government launched a white paper on the future of museums towards 2050. *Museums in society – trust, things, and time*. The white paper formulates the important goals for the development of museums, discusses the need for a museum law and an evaluation of the 20-year-old museum reform. 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.

In the autumn, Norway got a new government, which wants to evaluate the museum reform with a special focus on the effects of merged museum units on volunteering. The new government has now removed the gift reinforcement system, where museums, which got private funding, got 25% extra public money.

Museums have really learnt how to work digitally, internally through webinars, streaming and digital meetings. We have as well seen a lot of creativity in working with new digital ways in communicating with audiences. There have been different kinds of guided digital tours, quiz, films and learning programmes through social medias and websites.

Many museums have been focusing on their collections, to register and publish objects on digital platforms as well as interpreting them to their old and new audiences. New storage buildings are under construction and planning. This autumn there was a kick-off for a collaborative project between Sami and German museums. One of the aims is to map Sami collections in German museums and to extend knowledge about these collections. For more information:

https://museumsforbundet.no/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/EN_Projektplan-Tysklandsprosjektet-okt-2021.pdf

This autumn there have been great new openings: The Munch Museum in Oslo, a Children's Museum at Finnsnes (Midt-Troms museum) and a new exhibition building in Stokmarknes. This building covers one of the old coastal steamers from Hurtigruten – M/S Finnmarken. This ship has, together with other ships, shipped persons and goods along the coast of Norway for years. <https://hurtigrutemuseet.no/>.

[The opening of Riuja kvenmuseum in Vadsø, a part of Varanger museum, is an important milestone for the national minority: kvener. The national centre for journalism and poetry, Nynorsk Kultursentrum – Vinjesenteret https://www.vinjesenteret.no/ based on](https://www.vinjesenteret.no/) Aasmund Olavsson Vinje, Aslaug Vaa, Tarjei Vesaas og Halldis Moren Vesaas, is important as journalism is challenged by disorientation and 'fake news'.

ICOM Norway and the Norwegian Museums Association carried out a collaborative project in 2019-20 elaborating the ICOM Code of Ethics adapted to the needs of Norwegian museums. The guidelines were launched in April 2021.

Despite the pandemic situation, there have been a lot of webinars and several physical seminars arranged by museums, museum networks and the Norwegian Museums Association's divisions.

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

Ann Siri Hegseth Garberg

POLAND

In 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic became one of the main determinants in the Polish cultural sector, including museums. In said situation the regulative role of governmental structures (the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) and affiliated cultural institutions (the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections) shall be stressed as crucial. The [Guidelines for museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions operating in the field of cultural heritage policy and heritage protection in connection with the planned reopening of the state in light of the epidemic COVID-19](https://nimos.pl/files//articles/156/COVID19%20%28guidelines%20for%20museums%29.pdf). (<https://nimos.pl/files//articles/156/COVID19%20%28guidelines%20for%20museums%29.pdf>) were originally published in March 2020 and systematically modified throughout 2021, as well as adjusted to the situation, as follows:

- February 2021

Status quo museum reopening:

- museums, art galleries and shopping malls reopened in Poland on February 1st, as the country eased some of its coronavirus restrictions; the decision of the Prime Minister was taken based on the recommendation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage; the museum NGOs (such as the Polish Association of Museum Professionals) also supported the Minister of Culture and National Heritage to reopen museums.
- the decision to reopen museums and art galleries to the public is primarily the responsibility of the directors of the above institutions, decided in cooperation with their founders/organisers; the official governmental statement was: 'The decision to open museums and art galleries was based on analyses proving that these institutions were well prepared to comply with the guidelines that minimize the risk of infection. Reports of international museum organizations were also taken into account, both in terms of the social impact of museums and their preparation to meet sanitary requirements' (<https://www.gov.pl/web/kultura/muzea-i-galerie-sztuki>, sanitary regime incl. masks, disinfectant, social distancing - 1 person per 15 m²).

- March 2021 situation:

It was decided to up the local lockdown; consequently, museums (as well as other cultural institutions, hotels, malls, sport facilities etc.) were closed for the audience in four voivodeships: from 27 February in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, from 13 March in the Pomeranian Voivodeship, from 15 March in the Lubuskie Voivodeship and Masovian Voivodeship (incl. the capital city of Warsaw).

On 18 March it was decided that from 20 March 20 onwards security measures would be extended in the four above voivodeships throughout Poland.

- June 2021 situation:

Museums in Poland were gradually re-open to the public from 4 May and are in place until this moment work with regards to sanitary restrictions (e.g. audience limit of **one** person per 10 m²).

The experience gained from period of the pandemic brings us to a series of prospective conclusions - generally connecting the following points: museum in mass society, autonomy of culture in relation to public administration, its regulative position, legislative initiatives, supportive financial programmes. Such a reflective example is in the annual 'Muzealnictwo' (Museology), vol. 62, 2021

(<https://muzealnictworocznik.com/resources/html/articlesList?issueId=13664>).

The museum landscape in Poland is varied: museums depend on local authorities, non-institutional museums (so-called 'private' museums), including museums organised by universities, NGOs and churches. The aforementioned landscape is systematically created by governmental initiatives (especially by museums co-organised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) and historical politically oriented investments (especially The Polish History Museum in Warsaw,

<https://muzhp.pl/en/>).

Piotr Majewski

PORTUGAL

Visitor statistics

After being closed from 15 January to 4 April in 2021, state museums (as well as palaces monuments - heritage sites) in Portugal had a difficult time regaining their visitors. Nonetheless, and in spite of a longer shutdown than during the previous year (from 13 March to 17 May in 2020), state museums (as well as palaces and monuments) **regained 3,9% more visitors, which represents a gain in income (tickets, museum shops, renting spaces) of more 7,7% when compared to 2020.**

New legislation

In February 2021, considering the damage caused by the pandemic, the Government approved new measures, specifically the opening of a new financial support programme (ProMuseus) to the museums of the Portuguese Network of Museums, created in 2006 and relaunched in 2019, with the purpose of contributing to the qualification of Portuguese museums, as a structuring measure of the national museum policy. **In March**, an amount of 1 (one) million euros was assessed to support that network.

Still in February, to face the lack of human resources in museums (namely due to the ageing of staffs), palaces and monuments, the Government launched a strategic collaborative programme between the ministries of Culture, Science, Technology and Universities to create pluriannual contracts for one hundred PhD students and 30 PhD graduates, that can fit the needs of both cultural heritage sites (again Museums, Palaces and Monuments) and Universities. Such collaborative activities will provide new perspectives to the collections, namely within the scope of laboratory diagnostic methods, conservation, restoration and monitoring of artworks, lighting, environment control and the optimization of packaging and storing materials, among others.

In May, a governmental resolution approved a Programme of Heritage Investments, determining the priority requalification of 46 museums and monuments, and of three national theatres. In the same month, the government created the Network of Contemporary Portuguese Art, aiming the circulation (within the scope of a number of art centres and museums) of artworks in travelling exhibitions.

Patronage laws

In 2021, the Government created new rules to the private financing of museums. For-profit private entities (such as companies that organize festivals or cultural events, galleries, publishing houses, private entities that hold or manage cultural heritage) are now eligible

to receive donations. On the other hand, an exceptional regime was created that increases tax benefits for patrons, in particular those that support heritage conservation and **museum programming, especially, when carried out in inland territories.**

There was also a simplification of the administrative process of access to the Cultural Patronage regime, both from the point of view of the required documentation and in the reduction of the deadlines of the process. Finally, it is now easier for individuals and companies interested in becoming Cultural Patrons to identify artistic and cultural projects eligible to receive Patronage, either on a national scale or in different regions of the country.

What tendencies were followed by museums in Portugal?

Digital transformation became a major issue, and museums have been summoned to transform and reinforce their communication online; and to modernize the access to their collections and archives; however, the ageing of human resources and the scarcity of financial and technical means and expertise, along with a lack of adequate hardware and software material poses considerable obstacles. Nevertheless, museums reinvented themselves during the pandemic, through the available means, especially through social media, creating new tools for mediation, envisioning a broader sense and experience (even if remote) of inclusion, through the use of online resources and real time mediation.

Emília Ferreira

ROMANIA

Romanian museums have begun to recover from the shock of the pandemic that began in 2020. Romanian museum staff have adapted to the new biorhythm, initiated last year, in which the evolution of the waves of increasing the incidence of the number of diseases has become a pattern with two peaks in spring and autumn (wave 3 and wave 4) which are interspersed with periods of calm and relaxation of restrictive measures, which also affected the number of visitors and the quality of the visit. The champions of this new state of affairs are open-air museums and museums that have a cultural offer outside the museum space, including online.

From a legislative point of view, the initiatives of the Ministry of Culture in 2021 led to the establishment of special rules for access to museum activities (Joint order of the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Health), approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Commission for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, approving the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Commission for the Settlement of Archaeological Appeals, approving the Framework Regulation and the composition of the UNESCO organizing committees, amending the rules on the revaluation of movable cultural property owned by public institutions under public law.

The financing of museum institutions in Romania is still ensured, even in the economic and social conditions severely affected by the pandemic, by the Romanian state, through the Ministry of Culture (museums of national interest) and through county and local authorities (other museums). Private museums continue to exist and function, but they are still few and far between. For example, Bran Castle, the most visited historical monument in Romania, which operates exclusively from its own revenues, has reduced its staff by 60%.

The most important national digitization program, E-Culture, a project managed by the Project Management Unit of the Ministry of Culture, and in which more than 20 museums in the country have been partners, has completed its stage of digitization and creation of databases. In the shortest time the

platform for public capitalization of the results of this project will be operational at www.culturalia.ro, which will include over 550,000 digitized cultural assets.

The Romanian museums oscillated between periods of vitality and cultural effervescence and periods of dramatic decrease in the number of visitors, this also against the background of the closure of the educational activities of the schools in the country. Since the students returned to school and no longer resorted to the online school option, the number of museum visitors has also increased significantly. Their number is certainly higher than that of visitors in 2020, but still below the values recorded annually until 2019.

Among the most important events of 2021 we mention the successful organization of the Night of Museums on 12 June (precisely because in May a state of alert was still established with traffic restrictions, including during the night), the inauguration of the House of Museums in Iași on 22 July (Iași was the capital of the historical province of Moldova until 1859) - a museum that brings together four museums, the opening of the museum 'St. Hierarch Gavril' from Capriana Monastery, the opening in April 2021 of the museum dedicated to the painter Ștefan Luchian from Ștefaniești (Botoani), October 2021 - the opening of the Museum of Freemasonry in Oradea, September 2021 - the inauguration of the Museum of Vrancea in Vidra.

The most important Romanian exhibition project for the promotion of the national heritage abroad was the exhibition 'Archaeological treasures from Romania. Dacian and Roman roots', at the National Museum of Archaeology in Madrid. This exhibition was the result of a collaboration between 40 museums in Romania and four in Spain, and was coordinated by the National Museum of Romanian History.

Important steps have been taken towards the integration of the cultural offer in Timișoara and Brașov, by introducing a single access ticket to all the museums in the two cities. Timișoara is the future European Capital of Culture in 2023, and Brașov is the third most visited city in Romania.

The year 2021 meant for the Romanian museum community the international recognition of the quality of the exhibition projects of the National Museum of

Romanian Literature in Bucharest, an institution that was awarded the DASA Award by the European Museum Academy, for the curatorial vision within the permanent exhibition and for reorganization of the memorial house dedicated to the memory of the poet and musician, Anton Pann.

Valer Rus

RUSSIA

In Russia for 2021 - more than 2800 state museums. State - not in the sense of federal and regional, but in the sense of financed under the item 'culture' from different levels of budgets. This value is clear and relatively easy to establish. There is also a large number of departmental, private and public museums. Despite the difficult epidemiological situation, the reduction of real museum visitors, the introduction of a lockdown and the closure of museums for this period, interest in them has not disappeared. New forms have been developed; a rapid flowering of virtual formats has begun. At first, it was rather chaotic: there were not enough budgets, competent personnel and, most importantly, an understanding of the specifics of the genre. Gradually, almost everyone got used to it. Banal video tours of closed exhibitions began to be replaced by well-adjusted lecture programmes, purely online exhibitions, streams on YouTube channels, construction games, flash mobs, and multimedia shows. Museums have seen an increase in the number of followers on their social networks; in some cases, the growth was very significant, comparable to the loss of offline museum visitors. Although simultaneously with virtual achievements came the realization that the replacement is not equivalent. Visiting exhibitions in museums in Russia takes place upon presentation of a QR code or a PCR test. For major exhibitions in Moscow and St. Petersburg on advance electronic tickets.

Main exhibitions of 2021:

- **Alexandre Benois and his 'World of Art'**. The exhibition at the Tretyakov Gallery was dedicated to the art association 'World of Art' (which existed in the 1890s) and was timed to coincide with the anniversary of one of its founders, the artist Alexander Benois. The exhibition is part of the cycle of changing exhibitions of the Tretyakov Gallery 'Artist and Time'. In the halls of the museum, 200 graphic works are exhibited, including those by A. Benois, Lev Bakst, Boris Kustodiev, Evgeny Lansere, Mikhail Vrubel and others.
- **Court costume of the middle of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. from the collection of the State Hermitage.** The exhibition of court costumes opens a series of temporary exhibitions dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the State Historical Museum.
- **Known and unknown Repin** in the Tretyakov Gallery. 30 works by the famous painter: some of them are now kept in the gallery itself, other canvases were provided by the Voronezh Art Museum and the owners of private Moscow collections.
- **'Sunset Luxury: Qajar Iran.** The Oriental Museum presented 250 exhibits from its Iranian collection from the reign of the Iranian Qajar dynasty. Among them are carpets, paintings, pottery, traditional weapons, manuscripts of the 19th-early 20th centuries. Most of the works are shown for the first time.

- **'Small' art of big artists.** The Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center presented an exhibition of 'small' works by famous artists Isaac Levitan, Valentin Serov, Mikhail Vrubel, Ilya Repin.

- **Exhibition of Russian art.** In 1924-1925, the Exhibition of Russian Art was held in the USA, at which more than 1,000 works by famous painters were presented. Now these works are kept in museums and private collections in Russia, Spain, France, Canada and Austria. The Museum of Russian Impressionism has brought together works in one of its largest temporary exhibitions. The guests of the exposition saw works by Viktor Vasnetsov, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Boris Kustodiev, Lev Bakst, Igor Grabar and others.

- **Morozov Brothers. The Great Russian Collectors.** The exhibition of the Pushkin Museum is dedicated to the memory of art critic Irina Antonova, who served as director of the Pushkin Museum from 1961 to 2013. These are the works of Pierre Auguste Renoir, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet. In addition, the exposition included decorative ensembles, which were created by the founders of the Nabis art group, post-impressionists Pierre Bonnard and Maurice Denis.

- **Mikhail Vrubel.** More than 300 works are shown in the New Tretyakov Gallery. The exhibits are presented from 14 Russian and foreign museums. These are paintings, theatrical costumes and scenery based on Vrubel's sketches, his sculptures, decorative panels and ceramics.

In December 2021 the All-Russian Conference of the Model Standard of the Municipal Local History Museum was held. 2022 has been declared the year of the Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of Russia. The National Project 'Culture' included the 'Model Standard' project with funding for the renewal of local history museums in rural areas and small towns.

Anna Permilovskaya

SERBIA

The activities of museums in Serbia, in 2021, as in the whole world, were in the shadow of the Covid-19 virus. Unlike the previous year, museums in 2021 were not closed to the public but had to adapt their activities to epidemiological measures valid at the moment and operate in a climate of constant uncertainty. However, it could be said that museums regularly organized their activities and many of them carried out works on reconstruction, renovation and preparation of their new permanent exhibitions, revision of their funds and digitalization processes, as well. The budget of the Republic of Serbia for culture in 2021 was higher than in the previous year, so museums were able to implement numerous diverse activities and constantly adapt to new circumstances balancing between real and virtual, old and 'new normality'.

It could be said that exhibition, publishing and educational activities in Serbian museums have returned to normal and, at the same time, a significantly increased number of programmes for digitization, virtualization and application of modern technologies, protection and promotion of cultural heritage is clearly evident. International cooperation programmes were far less than usual, but it is justified by the global situation. For the history of museum activity in Serbia, 2021 will forever be written down as the year in which the *Law on Museum Activities* was passed for the first time, regulating the field of museum activities in accordance with European legislation. The law was adopted by the Assembly in April 2021 and has been actively applied since October. In accordance with it, a number of by-laws were passed significantly regulating areas, such as: regulations on keeping documents, taking professional museum exams, keeping museum records, digitalization etc. The improvement of legal regulations laid the foundations for better functioning of museums and showed how important the issue of museums is for the overall development of culture in Serbia. We can only hope that in the future, this law will not only improve the development of the museum on paper, but also in practice.

Finally, due to the pandemic and limited movements, the number of visits of foreign tourists to Serbian museums decreased significantly, while the visits of Serbian tourists increased, so the number of domestic audiences in museums during 2021 was much higher. Also, there is a noticeable increase in public interest for museum programmes - lectures, guided tours, educational programmes - as a result of the reduced number of other cultural and social events. Museums in Serbia have managed to show that, with all respect to prescribed measures, museums are the safest places to consume culture. During 2021, museums of Serbia also showed their inventiveness, creativity and adaptability to the new situation and changes that were unpredictable.

Tijana Palkovljević Bugarski

SLOVENIA

February 8, Prešeren's Day, has been a holiday of Slovenian culture since 1945, a year later it became a national holiday, and in 1991 it was still a public holiday. This is the day when there are long lines in front of museums that have opened their doors and offered selected content.

Unfortunately, we do not have statistics collected in February on visits and, above all, the impact of Covid-19 on museum work.

The Covid-19 pandemic severely hampered cultural activity in 2021. Almost 98% of cultural institutions with stage activity reported about the impact of the pandemic in 2020 and continue in 2021. At the same time also the same situation, around 71% also said that the situation encouraged other forms of activity. It was similar in museums and galleries: almost 94% of them reported that the activity was reduced, while 73% tried other forms of activity.

In museums and galleries, fans of this art had almost 1000 exhibitions available, which is still, about 37% less than in 2019.

Museums and galleries in Slovenia were mostly visited by domestic visitors (80% estimate).

We especially emphasize that in Slovenia we celebrate this happy day of culture on 3 December, when our great poet France Prešeren was born, from 2000 onwards. In 2021, museums and galleries were visited by as many as 269,000 visitors, which is app. 12 % of the total population of Slovenia. However, virtual exhibitions and related % of live educational activities were on the rise again.

In all 93 museums, institutions with museum collections and galleries, which form a network of museums of public service, almost the same number of individuals (1035) and as many external collaborators (approximately 1700) were employed.

In 2021, museums in Slovenia were slowly on the way to achieving the goals they were in 2019 when it comes to visitors. However, in 2021 they dedicated themselves to the revitalization of museum collections and dedicated themselves to cooperating with external collaborators in the use of new technologies to promote museum activities.

Andreja Rihter

SPAIN

At the beginning of 2021, the rollout began of the Covid-19 vaccine, auguring well for Spanish museums to expect better results than those obtained in 2020, a year when the country was locked down for three months followed by long periods of restricted movement.

Initial figures for 2021, indicate that better results have been achieved in museum attendance than in 2020, although they are below those for 2019, the year before the pandemic.

Historically, tourism has been one of the main visitor types to major Spanish museums and it must be said that although 2021 figures have improved compared to 2020, the flow of foreign tourists has been limited by the still notable effects of the pandemic.

Regarding the domestic market, and according to research carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, it would appear that the effects of the pandemic have also had an impact on the population's behaviour regarding museum visits. On the one hand, compared to the pre-pandemic situation, the number of people who state that they regularly visit museums has halved. Among those who no longer visit museums, is a majority of older people who have significantly reduced their attendance to cultural activities as a result of the fear caused by Covid-19. On the other hand, a new category of visitor has emerged. These are people who state that they do not regularly visit museums and exhibitions and only used to do so during journeys abroad for tourism reasons. Covid-19 restrictions and the resulting precautions have led to a change in tourism destinations for many people, who have drastically reduced foreign travel and replaced it with destinations closer to home, in their home country. During these internal tourism trips, this new visitor type has included museum visits as an additional ingredient on their menu of activities.

Apart from the impact on attendance for heritage sites, with regard to the work of museums, it has been noted that the slowdown in regular activities has led to other tasks of a different sort being carried out. On the one hand, many museums have dedicated their efforts and growing resources to digitisation, both the digitisation of collections and the creation of a new range of online activities. On the other hand, there has been a significant increase in the number of museums that are creating or updating their strategic plans.

Similarly, increasingly more attention is being paid by professionals to the impact of museums on society. Beyond the recognised functions of museums (conservation, research, exhibition, education...), a growing interest has been perceived in the external influence that museum activities have in fields like health, social cohesion or community work. In the last quarter of the year, we have had the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars dedicated to the impact of museums on health, the commitment of museums to environmental sustainability in the face of the climate crisis, as well as the development of community projects that have the purpose of providing a service and attending to the communities closest to the museum. Many of these community activities are being established based on co-created projects.

Debate within ICOM as to a new definition of museum that focuses more on social aspects, reflects an increasingly evident change, in this sense, in Spanish museums.

Antoni Laporte

SWEDEN

Many museums started the year without opening their doors to the public, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Those which could remain open to the public had restrictions to the number of visitors and other measures taken to ensure safe visits. This of course had a severe effect on the overall visitor numbers to museums in Sweden in 2021. In total there were 9,4 million visits to museums (the population in Sweden is 10 million people), which is 46% less than before the pandemic. However, it is clear that museums found other ways to reach their audiences, through digital activities, digital guided tours, lectures and other digital content to be accessed by people from their own homes. There were 233 million digital visits to museums during 2021. The digital competences have been in focus for many museums. There have been a large number of online seminars and training events for museum staff on how to use various digital tools. Still, a governmental report published this year, points out that Sweden has a slow pace of digital development and digitisation within the cultural sector, and that need to speed up. The government has proposed extra funding for increasing the work with digitisation during 2022, 2023 and 2024.

As a way of promoting museums and attracting more visitors the national association for museums started up a national museum weekend in November. Many museums participated and it remains to be seen whether it will turn into an annual event, which is the plan. The national annual museum meeting was held digitally, as so many other meetings.

The city museum of Norrköping was awarded the Swedish Museum of the Year Award. They have actively worked with tackling sensitive issues and gained much attention for their exhibition about people who sympathised with the Nazis in the '30s and '40s, and those who opposed them. The exhibition also included newspaper cuttings from present time about people still sympathising with the Nazis. This led to a huge debate about museums as political actors, and the freedom of museums from political influences. The museum law from 2017 clearly stated that museums should be free from political pressures. However, a report made in July 2021 shows that between a quarter and a third of museum directors have experienced attempts from politicians to influence them. Keeping a distance from politics has been an important topic of discussion in the museum sector this year.

Anna Hansen

TURKEY

In 2021, as the pandemic continues and the rate of spread of the virus increases, new measures have come to the fore in museums. In this context, some museums affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism were completely closed, while some of them were regulated by time and day; On the other hand, 'museums and historical sites with a high density of foreign visitors' were open on weekends. In the period between 29 April and 17 May 2021, which was described as 'full closure', a curfew was imposed on citizens of the Republic of Turkey, so only foreign tourists could visit the partially open museums.

During the periods when the museums were open, visitors could enter the museums within the framework of various precautions and rules. The measures taken by the museums within the scope of the pandemic can be summarized as follows: The days and hours that the museums are open have been rearranged and limited. As of 2021, museums can be entered with Hayat Eve Sığar (HES – Life Fits Into Home) code. In museums, both museum staff and visitors are required to wear masks. The temperature of the visitors is taken at the entrance. Depending on the capacity of the museums, a varying number of visitors are accepted inside, and the specified number should not be exceeded.

In this process, where physical access was restricted due to the ongoing pandemic in 2021, digitalization and the use of current technologies in museology were at the centre of the published reports and discussions. Although most of the museums benefited from current technology before the pandemic, it can be said that digital platforms are not used that much and applications that increase interaction with the audience provided limited interaction.

In 2021, the perspective of museums in Turkey consisted mostly of transferring collections to digital media and searching for the most effective methods of meeting the audience on digital platforms. In this process, museums reached the audience by using their websites and social media accounts. For example, in 2020, Pera Museum has achieved a total of 10-year views in one year, only on YouTube. The museum's exhibitions and activities were watched one million times in a year, and the total number of views on YouTube reached two million. Many contemporary art museums, galleries and similar institutions in Turkey have taken part in the Google Arts and Culture project and have delivered their collections to the audience digitally, or their projects continue in this context.

T.R. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has opened the museums and ruins in various cities to visit in virtual environment via the electronic address

'sanalmuze.gov.tr'. As of May 2021, there are 33 museums and ruins in the application, which have been visited by 13 million people.

In this process, local and international events were organized that expressed the problems experienced by museums and sought solutions **with common sense**. The issues discussed in these organizations are also important in terms of understanding the museum agenda in Turkey in 2021:

- 1- The financial problems of museums, the methods of adaptation to the pandemic process, the future of culture and arts institutions and creative industries in the short and long term.
- 2- Social Role of Museums and Sustainability.
- 3- The Impact of Climate Change, Sustainability of Museums.
- 4- Cultural Tourism and Museum Relationship.
- 5- The effects of digitalization on museums.
- 6- Museum staff and insecurity.
- 7- Contribution of museums to democracy and social dialogue.

The crisis experienced caused a decrease in the number of visitors to the museums in both 2020 and 2021, thus reducing museum revenues. Even if they are not closed, the number of visitors to almost all cultural institutions have decreased by 50-70% compared to the pre-pandemic period.

Especially the budget cuts in private museums caused the closure of some private museums. The same restrictions directly affected the museum staff, especially the experts and guides working part-time in the education departments were faced with the problem of employment. However, objective data could not be reached due to the fact that the numerical data were not disclosed by the institutions.

With the notification sent by the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey to all schools in 2021, museum tours of schools were restricted, and this situation directly affected the number of visitors. For example, the number of student visitors of Bursa City Museum, which was 84.746 before the pandemic in 2019, decreased to 23.214 in 2021.

Troy Museum, which is the winner of the 2020/2021 European Museum Academy Special Award, was awarded the Special Mention in the Museums in Short competition in the same year. The awards caused many news agencies to make news in Turkey's reputable television channels and newspapers. The posts about the award

on social media attracted great attention. The fact that the Troy Museum, one of the 198 respected museums affiliated to the Ministry of Culture, received both awards, has further increased the visibility of the European Museum Academy in Turkey.

Dilek Yildiz Karakas

UKRAINE

In 2021, the museum space in Ukraine faced several blocks of challenges.

Regarding legislative and political aspects. In the second half of 2020, a law on the creation of territorial communities came into force in Ukraine as part of administrative reform. The full implementation of this law began in 2021. This law allows local communities to independently control the local budget and determine priorities and support objects. Many small museums have been transferred from regional subordination to the balance of territorial communities. In the long run, caring for local communities with their local museums can help modernize them and turn them into real cultural centres for communities. However, at the initial stage, several difficulties put some museums in danger of closing. Museums in strong territorial communities have launched active activities aimed at involving residents in the life of the museum. At the end of December 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine published an updated list of museum institutions in Ukraine, which are kept by the State Museum Fund. Some of these institutions remained in the territory occupied by the Russian Federation by 2014. Therefore, the analysis of the situation and the updated register taking into account the challenges of the occupation was an extremely important action.

Due to the constant threat of intensification of hostilities and large-scale invasions in the museum environment, training on the algorithm of necessary actions in emergencies is periodically conducted. Relevant thematic materials are distributed.

Regarding the situation with the Covid-19. The continuation of the covid epidemic was reflected in new difficulties in museum life in Ukraine. According to the rules introduced in the summer of 2021, after the appearance of widely available vaccines against Covid-19, cultural institutions could work, provided that 80% of the staff are vaccinated. Due to the problematic information campaign on vaccination and the low level of vaccination in early autumn 2021, many regional museums were forced to close. In 2021, the most powerful museum centres began to create online versions of newly created exhibitions, holding most events in an online or mixed format. Experiments on the creation of virtual exhibition spaces continued.

Regarding financing. In 2018, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation started operating in Ukraine. Its activities are aimed at developing national culture and art in the country, providing favorable conditions for the development of the intellectual and spiritual potential of the individual and society, wide access of citizens to national cultural heritage, support for cultural diversity, and integration of Ukrainian culture into the world cultural space. Since 2019, the number of museums that apply for the Ukrainian

Cultural Foundation grants and receive the appropriate funding is growing every year. In 2021 alone, about 500 applications were submitted for various types of museum projects - from the creation of new exhibitions to the digitization of funds. Of course, a small part was supported. However, there is a clear trend that museums have become actively involved in finding alternative sources of funding for their activities, in addition to the annual guaranteed budget support (usually quite small).

In Ukraine, the process of digitizing the accounting system for exhibits and digitizing funds continues, but not systematically and chaotically. Museum workers are quite cautious about these processes.

Construction of two major museums is underway - the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity, dedicated to the recent history of 2013-2014, and the Holodomor Museum (the second stage of development - the creation of the exhibition. exposure function). The museum of the Russian-Ukrainian war is being developed. In 2021, a branch of the Museum of Military Childhood was opened in Kyiv. An important trend in Ukraine is the active discussions in the museum professional environment and society about the museification and memorialization of complex memory and hot, living history, about the de-communization and decolonization changes needed by Ukrainian museums established during the Soviet Union.

Anastasiia Haidukevych

UNITED KINGDOM

When the 2020 national report was completed in January 2021 the UK was once again in a full lockdown, with museums and heritage attractions closed yet again, with staff furloughed or working from home. There is no doubt that this lockdown period was the toughest yet, both in terms of the financial impact on museums through loss of income but also on staff and volunteers with all the well-being issues that surrounded lockdown and pandemic more generally. Lessons learned in 2020 proved of further use, so digital initiatives such as online collections access, virtual talks, lectures and tours continued.

There was much debate (and no little annoyance) at the decision by the English government to allow shops and other public spaces to reopen on 12 April but delaying the opening of museums and other cultural venues until 17 May, depriving them of valuable income over the Easter period. This decision was frustrating given the huge amount of work museums had already done to provide Covid-safe environments for visitors and staff including online booking, social distancing, and other hygiene measures. It is worth noting that having four devolved governments in the UK did mean that because each administration had different approaches to Covid regulations and timings, life was more complicated for visitors.

After some early hesitancy, visitors began to return in greater numbers. Most museums had a positive summer, with visitor numbers for many being between 60-80% of a 'normal' year. Limitations to retain distancing did limit numbers, although these were relaxed as the year progressed. Reduced appetite for air travel and foreign holidays meant that more families had 'staycation' holidays, which was good news for museums outside London; in the capital, visitor numbers remained lower due to the depressed overseas visitor market, and also a perception that London was still a bigger risk in terms of Covid-19.

By autumn of 2021 there was some cautious optimism, especially as the vaccine rollout in the UK had made good progress; the rise of the Omicron variant in November was a blow and its rapid development severely affected visitor numbers and bookings for Christmas-related events and corporate activities, denting income targets for the year. Many museums reported lower than expected visitor numbers, and in the weeks before Christmas, staff shortages due to Covid infections caused some to restrict opening hours or closed completely.

The impact of severely reduced visitor numbers, corporate giving, and other income generation in 2020 continued to manifest itself in museum operations in 2021. Many museums announced restructuring initiatives, job losses, closures and reduced

opening hours during the year. As an example, the Victoria & Albert Museum announced a 20% cut in both curatorial and front of house staffing in the spring of 2021, although this has been scaled back subsequently. On a more positive note, there were further tranches of government aid for museums and galleries by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Museums & Galleries Scotland and Arts Council England who announced a third Cultural Recovery Fund scheme worth £300 million, from which many museums were able to benefit. The same body also announced a funding scheme MEND, aimed at tackling long term backlogs in building maintenance worth £18.8 million, but this proved woefully inadequate in scope, being completely oversubscribed.

The most obvious difficulty for museums (and organizations and people more generally!) is the longer-term uncertainty that the pandemic has brought. Developing robust budgets and plans has clearly become much more difficult, although most museums have become far nimbler in responding to new developments as they occur. At the time of writing, there is some very cautious optimism that 2022 will be a better year, but only time will tell. We had thought that 2021 would be a year of consolidation after the initial stages of the virus, but it seems that this might be the case in 2022!

Other Developments – some other things of interest in brief:

- **Decolonisation/Contested Heritage:** the issues highlighted in the 2020 report following the promotion of the BLM movement continue to be a high priority for museums in the UK. Initiatives at all levels are being developed to address racism, inclusion and diversity and as well as broader debates at a sector level, museums are working more locally to tackle inequality and build meaningful relationships with local communities. The statue of Edward Colston which became a focus in 2020 is now on display at the M Shed Museum in Bristol while plans for its long-term future are agreed following consultation with local people. The work done by museums and other heritage bodies to create content that provides a more balanced view of Britain's colonial past has become highly politicised with national government also involved.
- **Climate Change:** COP26 event provided another focus for work already being done by museums and other cultural institutions to address climate change. Museums were represented at various sessions during the conference. More generally, many museums have declared 'climate emergencies' and set dates for achieving climate neutral status. (My museum has set a date of 2030 for this). The nationally-funded Science Museum pledged to have zero-carbon status by 2033, but has been embroiled in a long-running saga prompted by sponsorship of a number of exhibitions by energy companies including Shell and Adami.

The museum argues they can influence the debate by working with such companies, but this view is not shared by activists. The issue has led to demonstrations outside the museum, an overnight occupation by protesters and high-profile resignations from the Science Museum board.

- **Museums and Placemaking:** there have been a recognition that museums can make a real contribution to engendering a sense of community pride and reinforcing placemaking in towns and cities in the UK where investment has traditionally been low, but opportunities for development are high. Arts Council England announced a programme targeted at 54 different locations where arts and culture could be used to support regeneration. This is not a new idea, but welcome none the less.
- **World Heritage Status:** two significant heritage developments took place in 2021; in positive news, the Welsh Slate Industry in North Wales was awarded World Heritage Status in July, becoming the fourth location to achieve this accolade in the Principality. Less good was the news that the City of Liverpool had been stripped of its status a month earlier.
- **And finally:** on a less serious note, in times when public confidence in government, politicians and other public administration seems at a low ebb, it was great news to hear that museum curators are seen by the public as one of the top five 'trusted' professions!

See:<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2020/12/museum-curators-among-the-most-trusted-professions-poll-finds/>

Tim Bryan & Lawrence Fitzgerald