

ENGLISH SUMMARY

8.

8. English summary

The Institute for Museum Research (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz) reports annually on visitor attendance in all museums in the Federal Republic of Germany. This publication documents the 2023 statistical survey for all German museums. It is regarded as most comprehensive in this field and is used by the Government – both Federal and at the level of the 16 Federal State Countries ("Bundesländer") –, as well as the regional and local bodies and cultural organizations in Germany.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 2023 survey was 6,781. This figure remained after combining the data of a few museums that counted their visits together into one figure, and after leaving out a few museums that were closed during 2022. The quota of returned questionnaires for 2023 was 65.5%.

The Institute for Museum Research uses an **operational definition of "museum"** in order to enable precise counts. This definition primarily serves to provide a delimitation with the greatest possible discriminatory power vis-à-vis other institutions. It thus contains by far not all elements of a general museum definition such as for example the specification of functions, tasks and relationships with other cultural organizations (cf. e.g. ICOM-Germany, ICOM-Austria, ICOM-Switzerland (eds.): Ethical Guidelines for Museums 2003). Therefore, the purely operational definition used by the Institute does not at all claim to substitute the recognition as a museum, as the ministries, museum associations and offices in the individual Federal States do it.

Regarding the **classification system for museums**, the Institute for Museum Research stays close to the categories employed by UNESCO (UNESCO/STC/Q/853). Due to the particular museum structure in Germany, local ethnography and regional museums were grouped together in one class. Contrary to UNESCO and ICOM usage, zoological and botanical gardens as well as monuments and sites without inventory were not included in the survey. Furthermore, the classification does not cover purely commercial exhibits of private and state industries. Thus, the Institute for Museum Research currently distinguishes the following **nine museum types**:

1. Local history, local ethnography and regional museums
2. Art museums
3. Castles with inventory
4. Natural history and natural science museums
5. Science and technology museums
6. Archaeology and history museums
7. Complex museums with different kinds of collections
8. Specialised cultural heritage museums
9. Museum complexes with different kinds of museums

The total number of visits counted in museums in Germany 2023 was 100,941,079.

Of the 6,781 museums who were sent a questionnaire, 3,929 (57.9%) reported their data on **visitor attendance 2022**. As compared to 2022, the total number of visits has increased (+24.0%; 2022: 81,372,077). However, 2023 visit counts are still 9.6% lower than prior to the pandemic (2019: 111,633,603).

Table 07 shows that almost three quarters (74.8%) of all answering museums reported up to 15,000 visits in 2023. Due to different methods of counting, the aggregated total numbers include some estimated figures. The data also includes attendance of special exhibitions held in museums or organized by them. Only a few museums were able to count visits to their special exhibits separately from visits to their permanent exhibitions. Therefore, total attendance figures for special exhibitions only are not available.

Table 08 shows variations in attendance as correlated with the different museum types. Most popular were History and Archaeology museums (342) and Art museums (460), each group with roundabout 18.4 million counted visits. In second and third place came Science and technology museums (462) with 16.4 million and Castles (210) with 12.3 million counted visits. Local history, local ethnography and regional museums accounted for the highest number of reporting museums (1,665). However, they added only 9.7 million visits to the total.

Table 15 shows the distribution of museum types in the individual Federal States („Bundesländer“). Local history, local ethnography and regional museums are the most common museum type in all territorial states often encompassing half of the museums. In contrast, the city-states Berlin (26.4%) and Bremen (31.4%) show a high percentage of Art museums whereas Hamburg inhabits a remarkable percentage of Specialised cultural history museums (26.2%). Berlin (23.3%) and Hamburg (24.6%) also have the highest percentage of Archaeology and history museums in Germany whereas Science and technology is very prominent in Bremen (31.4%).

Museum visits in 2023 belonged to the **less expensive cultural activities** for the German consumer; however, there are differences between the former states of West Germany and East Germany. In the western part of the Republic, 44.7% of the museums asked no entrance fee; in the eastern part, only 19.9% of the answering museums were free of charge. **Table 21** summarizes our findings on conditions of museum visits.

In order to achieve compatibility with other statistical data, our findings on museums are also allotted to **categories of administrative jurisdiction** that are used by the Association of German Cities („Deutscher Städtetag“) in order to achieve a clearer picture of private and public patronage of museums. **Table 18** shows the distribution of museums according to this classification. Half of the institutions contacted were under public administration (49.8%), 44.7% were privately operated, and the rest had a mixed, mainly public and private, governing board.

Exhibition activity has decreased in 2023 compared to the previous year (2023: 5,195; 2022: 6,233) As in previous years (2022: 41.1%; 2021: 37.6%), local history, local ethnography and regional museums reported the highest proportion of special exhibitions (43.3%) for 2023. Within this group, but also overall, the number of special exhibits in relation to the number of museums putting exhibits on display decreased (2023: 1.3 special exhibits per museum; 2022: 1.6).

These numbers do not include exhibitions in sales galleries („Verkaufsgalerien“), exhibitions not intended for the public and/or exhibitions in exhibition halls. **Exhibition halls** do not have their own collections, but they organize large museum-type exhibitions. The Institute for Museum Research therefore raises attendance figures of exhibition halls separately from the museum statistics (**Chapter 06**). For 2023, the Institute asked 497 Exhibition halls for their data on visits and received 340 filled out questionnaires. These institutions have organized a total of 1,571 exhibitions in which 5.104.342 visits were counted, a plus of 145.8% compared to the previous year (2022: 4,887,583).