

SUMMARY

The Institute for Museum Studies (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz) reports annually on visitor attendance in all museums in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

Government - both Federal and at the level of the 16 "Länder" (Federal Countries) -, regional and local political bodies and cultural organizations in the FRG are regarding these statistics as their most comprehensive instrument in this field.

This publication documents the 1999 survey of attendance figures of museums.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1999 survey was 5.629 (4.434 museums in former West Germany and 1.195 museums in former East Germany). 221 were newly included. The figure of 5.629 museums remains after some museum addresses have been combined (from the point of view of visitor counting feasibility) into one museum each and after leaving out some 100 from the survey which were known to be closed all 1999.

While the Institute for Museum Studies uses an operational definition of "museum" to enable precise counts, it is not decreeing in any way which institutions are museums and which are not. Such decision, where required, pertains to the regional organizations of museums in the Länder of Germany; as a consequence of the political structure of Germany which is federal. The museums taken into account for the annual statistics and registered in our data base, however, will normally reflect those decisions taken locally.

The quota of questionnaires for 1999 which were returned to us is 89,1%.

Museum attendance in 1999:

The total number of visits in museums in Germany (western or 'old' Bundesländer plus eastern or 'new') was

96.190.374.

Of the 5.629 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 4.570 were able to report them (81,2 %). The number of visits given above also includes attendance in special exhibitions held in museums or organized by them. Since different methods of counting are used in different museums, this figure includes also some estimated data. 9.218 special exhibitions were reported by 2.518 museums in 1999. Of course, no complete survey of all visits to special exhibitions is possible, since only a few museums are able to count them as distinct from the visits to their permanent exhibitions. Therefore, in order to avoid misinterpretations, no attendance figures are being given for special exhibitions. As already mentioned, the figure of 9.218 exhibitions does **not** include neither exhibition halls (see below) nor 'Verkaufsgalerien' (sales galleries), and/or exhibitions not intended for a general public.

As compared to the preceding year, more museums were able to report special exhibitions for 1999.

As compared to 1998, the total figure of museum attendance for 1999 shows that visits in museums have increased by about 0,9 mio.

Taken for themselves, the museums in the 'old' Federal Countries – compared with the figures for 1998 – show a slight decrease of 311.883 (0,4 %) to the amount of 71.081.815 visits, whereas the museums in the 'new' Federal Countries showed an increase of 1.159.733 visits (4,8 %). The total sum of visits for all the museums in the 'new'

Federal Countries amounted to the figure of 25.108.559 (1998: 23.948.826 visits).

Table 7 on page 22 shows that 73,6 % of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1999.

Out of 9.218 special exhibitions of 2.518 museums, a number of 8.489 were held in the respective museum itself.

Altogether, 287 museums in the 'new' Federal Countries have replied to questions about **marked increases and/or decreases of attendance figures** in their relative institutions.

For 173 museums, the attendance figures had significantly increased in 1999 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons stated were increased public relations work or educational activities in museums, and important special exhibitions.

114 museums named reasons for a significant decrease of the attendance figures in 1999 as compared to the preceding year. The reasons included less attractive (less important) special exhibitions and organizational issues.

In 1999, the number of museums of West Germany with a marked rise (934) in attendance figures was smaller than those with a marked decline (1.106) in these figures. When announcing an increase of visits, the following main reasons were given by the museums of the 'old' Federal Countries:

- prominent international or national exhibitions
- public relations or educational activities in museums
- special local activities.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance in the museums of the 'old' countries for 1999 as to 1998 can be found in table 1 on page 13.

Apart from this, **museum-related exhibitions** are often being shown or organized by institutions which do not have own collections. Therefore, the Institute for Museum Studies within its statistics for 1999 has asked 476 further institutions (exhibition halls) organizing special exhibitions of museum type for their attendance figures. These institutions have organized 2.013 temporary exhibitions in which

5.795.548 visits

were counted.

Also in 1999, visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in West Germany, in about 44 % (1.542) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all, in East Germany about 19 % (186) were free of charge (see table 20 on page 44 and table 21 on page 45 which summarize our findings on conditions of museum visit).

The Institute for Museum Studies already in 1987 had modified its own classification system for museums and is now very near to the categories employed by UNESCO (cf. UNESCO/STC/Q/853).

Altogether we have now the following classification:

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. Specialized museums
9. Museum complexes with different kinds of museums

Due to the particular museum structure in the FRG, ethnography and anthropology museums (UNESCO 2.e) and regional museums (UNESCO 2.g) have to remain in class no. 1. Contrary to UNESCO and ICOM usage zoological and botanical gardens as well as monuments and sites without inventory are **not** included in our list.

Furthermore, the classification does not cover: information exhibits of private and state industry, industry fairs, any own collections, churches.

Table 10 on page 28 shows the variations in attendance as correlated with the different types of museums, for 'old' and 'new' Federal Countries taken together: Item no. (1), museums for local history and local ethnography (2.607 museums), have counted about 18,5 million visits in 1999, (2) art museums (all in all 577) have counted about 15,9 million visits.

Table 3 on page 16 and table 2.3 on page 31 show the variation in attendance figures according to these different types of museums.

Table 16 on page 37 shows the distribution of museum types and their visitor attendance in the individual Federal Countries (Bundesländer).

In order to achieve a better compatibility with other statistical data and inquiries, especially with those of Deutscher Städtetag, we allotted since 1992 the museums also to a different classification of administrative jurisdiction; by this method a clearer picture of private or public maintenance of museums is achieved. Table 17 shows the distribution of museums onto this classification. It shows that approximately 58 % of museums (3.244) are in public administration, about 36 % of museums are privately operated, and 6 % have a mixed (public and private) financial support.

Private financing in the 'new' Federal Länder is not yet as common as in the 'old'. As a rule, cities and local communities (regional bodies) are more often the supporters of the museums in the 'new' Länder. In this field, a comparison with the developments in the following years will be of special interest.

Along with our regular annual questions regarding attendance figures and conditions of visits in museums, we ask varied questions every year.

For 1999 we have asked for the third time (first: in 1988, second: 1993) for information on "public relations of museums".

Of 4.195 museums returning our questionnaire on public relations, 3.249 museums reported that they were informing the public by means of press releases. 86 % of the museums are informing their visitors by means of leaflets (see table 33). Public relations and advertising usually are being looked after by the director himself (see table 35). In the majority of museums the spending figures for public relations are below DM 5.000,- annually, and in most cases (63,4 %) the expenses are financed by the museum's budget (see table 36). A great majority of the museums report that they are being covered by the local print, local tv or local radio media (89%).