

S U M M A R Y

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 1998 survey of attendance figures of museums.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1998 survey was 5.376 (4.239 museums in former West Germany and 1.137 museums in former East Germany). 157 were newly included. The figure of 5.376 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 1998.

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 1998 which were returned to us is 89,6%.

Museum attendance in 1998:

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

95.342.524.

Of the 5.376 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 4.451 were able to report them (82,8 %). 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.

9.201 special exhibitions were reported by 2.502 museums in 1998. 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 9.201 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 1998.

As compared to 1997, the total figure of museum attendance for 1998 shows that visits in museums have increased by about 2,7 mio.

Taken for themselves, the museums in the 'old' Federal Countries – compared with the figures for 1997 – show an increase of 2.274.422 (3,3 %) to the amount of 71.393.698 visits, whereas the museums in the 'new' Federal Countries showed only a slight increase of 382.213 visits (1,6 %). The total sum of visits for all the museums in the 'new' Federal Countries amounted to the figure of 23.948.826 (1997: 23.566.613 visits).

Table 7 on page 22 shows that 73,6 % of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1998.

Out of 9.201 special exhibitions of 2.502 museums, a number of 8.425 were held in the respective museum itself.

Altogether, 253 museums in the 'new' Federal Countries have replied to questions about **marked increases and/or decreases of attendance figures** in their relative institutions.

For 151 museums, the attendance figures had significantly increased in 1998 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons stated were increased public relations work or educational activities in museums, and important special exhibitions.

102 museums named reasons for a significant decrease of the attendance figures in 1998 as compared to the preceding year. The reasons included less attractive (less important) special exhibitions and organizational issues.

In 1998, the number of museums of West Germany with a marked decline (989) in attendance figures was smaller than those with a marked rise (1.009) 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
- new buildings, reopening.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance in the museums of the 'old' countries for 1998 as to 1997 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 1998 has asked 484 further institutions (exhibition halls) organizing special exhibitions of museum type for their attendance figures. These institutions have organized 2.100 temporary exhibitions in which

5.824.950 visits

were counted.

Also in 1998, visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in West Germany, in about 43 % (1.473) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all, in East Germany about 17 % (168) 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 sites with monuments are **not** included in our list.

Furthermore, the classification does not cover: information exhibits of private and state industry, industry fairs, castles and monuments without 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 (2.517 museums), have counted about 18,7 million visits in 1998, (2) art museums (all in all 559) have counted about 15,3 million visits.

Table 3 on page 16 and table 13 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 allott 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 59 % of museums (3.144) are in public administration, about 35 % 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'. Cities and local communities (regional bodies) are much more frequently supporting

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 1998 we have asked for the second time (first: in 1994) for information on "Computers in the museum". Of 3.968 museums answering this question 2.107 reported that they already use computers (39,2 % of all museums and 53,1 % of the museums answering this question), about 7 % plan to use them in the future and about 3 % did not know yet (see table 33 to table 37). Those answering in the affirmative form, roughly, 10 % more than 1994.

Our enquiry concerns only the use of computers for internal administrative matters in museums, not their use at the interface with visitors (visitor information systems, display tools).

It is interesting to note, that the highest percentages of computer use do not concern the essential part of museum work - collection management applications appear only on rank 3:

clergy work (manuscripts, letters) 79,6 %
general administration 70 %
collection management/documentation 48,8 %
library administration 42,4 %
digital imaging 14,7 %

Internet access 25,1 %.

As regards the number of museums with internal use of computers grouped by Federal Countries, the figures are slightly higher in those Länder which are in fact metropolitan cities (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg).

More results of our evaluation regarding this topic will be published in a separate booklet, because of the wealth of resulting material.