

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).

The German government, regional and local political bodies and cultural organizations in the FRG are regarding these statistics as their most reliable instrument in this field.

This publication documents the 1997 survey of attendance figures of museums.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1997 survey was 5.219 (4.144 museums in former West Germany and 1.075 museums in former East Germany).

The Institute for Museum Studies is not pretending to decree which institutions are museums and which are not. This decision is being taken by the regional organizations of museums in the Federal Countries (Bundesländer) of the FRG; such a procedure is a logical consequence of the political structure of the FRG, which is federal. Therefore, the museums taken into account for the yearly statistics and registered in our data base will normally reflect the decisions taken locally by the Federal Countries themselves.

The quota of questionnaires for 1997 which were returned to us is 89,3%.

Museum attendance in 1997:

The total number of visits in museums in the FRG (western or 'old' Federal Countries plus eastern or 'new' Federal Countries) was

92.685.889.

Of the 5.219 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 4.274 were able to report them. The number of visits given above also includes attendance in special exhibitions held in museums or organized by them.

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 1997 has asked 494 more institutions organizing special exhibitions of museum type for their attendance figures. These institutions have organized 2.026 special exhibitions in which

5.671.696 visits

were counted.

Beside these exhibitions in special exhibition institutions, 8.766 special exhibitions were reported by 2.385 museums in 1997. Of course, no complete survey of all visits to special exhibitions is possible, since only a few museums are able to count their visits to special exhibitions as distinct from those to their permanent exhibitions. As we have already mentioned, the figure of 8.766 exhibitions does not include 'Verkaufsgalerien' (sales galleries), and/or exhibitions not intended for a general public. Therefore, in order to avoid misinterpretations, no attendance figures are being given for special exhibitions.

As compared to the precedent year, more museums were able to report special exhibitions for 1997.

As compared to 1996, the total attendance number for 1997 shows that visits in museums have increased by about 2,1 mio.

Taken for themselves, the museums in the 'old' Federal Countries – compared with the figures for 1996 – show an increase of 2.011.788 (3,0 %) to the amount of 69.119.276 visits, whereas the museums in the 'new' Federal Countries showed only a slight increase of 118.535 visits (0,5 %). The total sum for all the museums in the 'new' Federal countries amounted to the figure of 23.566.613 (1996: 23.448.078 visits).

Altogether, 271 museums in the 'new' Federal Countries have replied to questions about marked increases and/or decreases of attendance figures in their relative institutions.

139 museums informed that the attendancy figures had significantly increased in 1997 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons stated were increased public relations work or educational activities in museums and important special exhibitions.

About one third, i.e. 132 museums, informed that the attendance figures had significantly decreased in 1997 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons included less attractive (less important) special exhibitions and organizational issues.

In the year 1997, the number of museums of West Germany with a marked rise in attendance figures was smaller than those with a marked decline in these figures. When announcing an increase of visits, the following main reasons were being listed by the museums of the 'old' Federal Countries:

- prominent international or national exhibitions
- public relations or educational activities in museums
- new buildings, reopening

One principal reason given for a decrease in attendance figures were less attractive (less important) special exhibitions, followed by organizational reasons and the decline of tourism.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance in the museums of the 'old' countries for 1997 as to 1996 can be found in table 1 on page 13.

In the FRG, the survey on special exhibitions brought the result that out of 8.766 special exhibitions of 2.385 museums a number of 8.130 were held in the museum itself.

Also in 1997, visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in West Germany, in about 45 % (1.487) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all, in East Germany about 17 % (152) were free of charge (see table 21 on page 45 and table 22 on page 46).

Table 7 on page 22 shows that more than half the number of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1997.

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 (cfr. 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 27 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 (2.448 museums), have counted about 18,1 million visits in 1997, (2) art museums (all in all 555) have counted about 14,4 million visits.

Table 3 on page 16 and table 13 on page 30 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).

Table 17 on page 38 shows forms of administration for museums, as correlated with attendance figures.

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 possibilities; by this method a clearer picture of private or public maintenance of museums is achieved. Table 18 shows the distribution of museums on this classification. It shows that approximately 59 % of museums (3.069) 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 Countries is not yet as common as in the 'old' Federal Countries. Cities and local communities (regional bodies) are much more frequently supporting museums there. In this field, a comparison with the developments in the following years will be of special interest.

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

This year we have asked for the third time (first: in 1987, second: 1992) for information on educational activities in museums. The number of educational personnel active in the

museums is being published in this booklet (see table 34 to table 39 some restrictions apply, however, to the information content of these data (see 4.2).

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