

## 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 1996 survey of attendance figures of museums. This survey includes the museums in the former German Democratic Republic, which ceased to exist on 2nd October 1990.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1996 survey was 5.040 (3.994 museums in West-Germany and 1.046 museums in 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 are in general accordance with the decisions taken locally by the Federal Countries themselves.

The quota of questionnaires for 1996 which were returned to us is 88,8%.

### Museum attendance in 1996:

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

**90.555.566.**

Of the 5.040 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 4.113 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 1996 has asked 504 more institutions organizing special exhibitions of museum type for their attendance figures. These institutions have organized 2.103 special exhibitions in which

**4.836.121** visits

were counted.

Beside these exhibitions in special exhibition institutions, 8.394 special exhibitions were reported by 2.219 museums in 1996. 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 8.394 exhibitions does not include 'Verkaufsgalerien' (art shops), 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 1996.

As compared to 1995 the total attendance number for 1996 shows that visits in museums have decreased by about 0,5 mio.

Taken for themselves the museums in the 'old' Federal Countries – compared with the figures for 1995 – show a decrease of 1.855.789 (2,7 %) to the amount of 67.107.488 visits.

On the other hand it must be emphasized that the decline in attendance figures in the 'new' Federal Countries came to an end in 1992.

Visitor attendance figures in museums of 'new' Federal Countries as compared to the preceding year 1995, have increased by about 6 percent to the figure of 23.448.078 (1995: 22.098.899 visits).

Altogether 254 directors (heads) of museums in the 'new' Federal Countries have replied to questions about marked increases and/or decreases of attendancy figures in their relative institutions.

159 museums informed that the attendancy figures had significantly increased in 1996 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons given were increased public relations work or educational activities in museums and important special exhibitions.

About one third, i.e. 95 museums informed that the attendancy figures had significantly decreased in 1996 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons given were organizational reasons and less attractive (less important) special exhibitions.

In the year 1996 the number of museums of West-Germany with a marked rise in attendancy 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:

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

One principal reason given for a decrease in attendance figures was less attractive (less important) special exhibitions, followed by organizational reasons and that entrance fee was introduced or risen.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance in the museums of the 'old' countries for 1996 as to 1995 can be found in table 1 on page 12.

In the FRG the survey on special exhibitions brought the result that of 8.394 special exhibitions of 2.219 museums a number of 7.813 were held in the museum itself.

Also in 1996 visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in West-Germany in about 46 % (1.451) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all, in East-Germany about 17 % (151) were free of charge (see table 19 on page 39 and table 20 on page 40).

Table 7 on page 19 shows that more than half the number of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1996.

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 use 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 usance 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 25 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 (2.397 museums), have counted about 18,7 million visits in 1996, (2) art museums (in all 540) have counted about 14,5 million visits.

Table 3 on page 14 and table 13 on page 29 show the variance in attendance figures according to these different types of museums.

Table 14 on page 32 shows the distribution of museum types and their visitor attendance in the single Federal Countries (Bundesländer).

Table 15 on page 33 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 in 1992 the museums to a different classification of administrative possibilities; by this method a clearer picture of private or public maintenance of museums is achieved. Table 16 shows the distribution of museums on last year's newly created classification. It shows that approximately 59 % of museums (2.989) are in public administration, about 34 % of museums are privately operated, and 7 % 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 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 questions regarding attendancy figures and conditions of visits in museums in this year's survey we have asked for some more items.

The supplement questions this year were concerned with security in museums. Asked by the security committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-ICMS) we posed some questions about the guardance of the museums. Selected results were shown in this publication in chapter 4. Nearly 50 % of the museums with guardance while the museum can be visited use a combination of personnel and technical alarm systems. In 56 % the exhibition is guarded by self-employed staff, in about 10 % it is a private company which is hired. In 35 % the exhibition area is guarded by volunteers. During the time when the museums are not open for the public, they are more often protected by an alarm system (see table 35 and figure 17). The complete results of this survey on museum security will be published by ICOM-ICMS.