

S U M M A R Y

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

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1988 survey was 2.624 (1987: 2.314).

The Institute for Museum Studies is not pretending to decree which institutions are museums and which are not. This choice is being made 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 selection made by the Federal Countries themselves.

The quota of questionnaires for 1988 which were returned to us is 89,1%.

Museum attendance in 1988:

The total number of visits in museums in the FRG was
66.377.219

Of the 2.624 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 2.107 were able to report them. The number of visits given above also includes attendance in special exhibitions held in museums or organised by them.

Apart from this, museum related exhibitions are often being shown or organized by institutions which do not have their own collections. Therefore the Institute for Museum Studies within its statistics for 1988 has asked 216 more institutions, which organize changing exhibitions of a museum type, for their visitor attendance figures. In these institutions 3.903.400 visits in 1.157 exhibitiones were counted.

Beside these exhibitions in special exhibition areas 4.210 special exhibitions were reported by 1.071 museums in 1988 (1987: 4.065 by 944 museums). Of course no complete survey of all visits to special exhibitions is possible, since only 437 museums counted their visits to special exhibitions as distinct from those to their permanent exhibitions. As we have already mentioned, the figure of 4.210 exhibitions does not include "Verkaufsgalerien", 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 the number of exhibitions shows that more museums were able to report special exhibitions for 1988; some of these museums also were more active in this field than in the year before.

As compared to 1987 the total attendance number for 1988 shows that visits in museums have slightly increased by about 40.000.

In the year 1988 the number of museums with a marked rise in attendancy figures was about the same as those with a marked decline in these figures. When announcing an increase of visits, the following main reasons were being listed:

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

The main reason for a decline was given as the closing down of parts of museum exhibition premises.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance for 1988 as to 1987 can be found in table 1 on page 10.

Since special exhibitions and public relations were been given as main reasons for a change in visitor attendance in museums, the Institute for Museum Studies decided to ask for some additional data on these topics, with the result that:

of 2.337 museums returning our questionnaires, 1.476 museums reported that they were informing the public by means of press releases. Every second museum is informing its visitors by means of posters or other outside advertising (see table 11). Public relations and advertising usually are being looked after by the director himself (see table 13: in 1.087 of 1.780 museums). In the majority of museums the spending figures for public relations are given as being below DM 5.000,- annually, and the relative funds are being syphoned from the museum's budget. The greatest part of the museums refer that they are being covered by the local print and radio media.

The survey on special exhibitions brought the result that of 4.210 special exhibitions of 1.071 museums a number of 3.781 were held in the museum itself.

Of 1.071 museums, 429 charged the same amount of entrance fee for a special exhibition as they did for access to the permanent collection. 41 museums generally asked an entrance fee for their special exhibitions, and the considerable amount of 465 museums did not charge any entrance fee - neither for permanent nor for special exhibitions.

Also in 1988 visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in almost half (1.012) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all (see table 21 on page 32).

Table 3 on page 13 shows that more than half the number of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1988.

The Institute for Museum Studies 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 the following classification:

1. Local history and local ethnography and regional museums
2. Art museums
3. Castles
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 the 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 4 on page 15 shows the variations in attendance as correlated to the different types of museums. Item no. (1), the museums for local history and local ethnography (1.048 museums), has counted 13.7 million visits in 1988 (1987: 13.0 million), (2) art museums (in all 242) counted 11,2 million visits (1987: 12.9).

Table 5 on page 16 and table 6 on page 18 show the variance in attendance figures according to these different types of museums.

Table 19 on page 30 shows the distribution of museum types and their visitor attendance for the single Federal Countries (Bundesländer).

Table 20 on page 31 shows the distribution of museums correlated to their form of administration. In the FRG museums are run by (1) countries, (2) district areas, (3) communes, (4) national or governmental institutions, (5) societies and other public bodies, (6) private institutions, (7) foreign governments, (8) several different institutions for one given museum and (9) several different institutions for one given complex of museums.