

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 their most reliable instrument in this field.

The total number of museums registered for 1985 was 2.255.

The list does not include information exhibitions of private or state industry, castles or monuments without proper collections, churches, industry fairs or exhibitions in private galleries; sculpture gardens and other public sites with monuments on them are also excluded.

The total number of museums taken into account for the 1985 survey was 2.043 (1984: 2.025), and thus has remained about stable.

The quota of questionnaires for 1985 which were returned to us, although already quite high, again went slightly up (1984: 88,9 %; 1985: 90,1 %).

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

Museum attendance in 1985:

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

60.778.921

Of the 2.043 museums which were asked for their data, 1.640 were able to report them. The number of visits given above also includes attendancy in special exhibitions in museums or organized by them.

In 1985 3.578 special exhibitions were reported by 820 museums (1984: 3.435 by 788 museums). Of course no complete survey of all visits in special exhibitions is possible, since only 248 museums counted their visitors to special exhibitions as distinct from those to their permanent exhibitions. As we have already mentioned, the figure of 3.478 exhibitions does not include private galleries, exhibitions, arranged privately outside of museums, or similar occasions. Therefore, in order to avoid misinterpretations, no attendance figures are being given for special exhibitions. As compared to the precedent year the amount of exhibitions shows that more museums were able to report special exhibitions for 1985, of which some also were more active in this field than in the year before.

As compared to 1984, the total attendancy number for 1985 shows that visits in museums have increased by over four million.

Various reasons can be found for this astonishing increase.

The two main ones are:

- great international or national exhibitions
- a considerable increase of visits to museums in those classes which count less than 5.000 visits and less than 10.000 visits annually.

Whereas the 1984 increase had been caused predominantly by the large museums, some of these museums in 1985 had to report a slight decrease in their attendance numbers. A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance for 1985 as to 1984 can be found in table 2 on page 10.

The principal reason given for such increases are special exhibition activities. The most frequent one given for a decrease is the closing down of parts of museum exhibition premises.

Table 3 on page 11 shows that almost half the number of all museums listed reported less than 10.000 visits in 1985.

Table 4 on page 14 shows the variations in attendancy as correlated to different types of museums. Item no. (1), the museums for local history and local ethnography (844 museums), has counted 12,8 million visits in 1985 (1984: 12,2 million), (2) art museums (in all 288) counted 11,7 million visits (1984: 11,3).

Other types of museums are: (3) castles, (4) specialized museums (science museums), (5) technical museums including transport museums, (6) history museums, (7) complex museums with different kinds of collections, (8) specialized museums (cultural history) and (9) museum complexes with different kinds of museums.

Table 5 on page 16 and table 6 on page 19 show the variance in attendance figures according to these different types of museums.

The tables following these are of more or less local interest.

Table 7 on page 24 shows the distribution of museum types and their visitor attendance for the single Federal Countries (Bundesländer).

Table 8 on page 25 shows the distribution of museums correlated to their forms 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 organizations for one given museum and (9) several different institutions for one given complex of museums.

Henceforth this report will be published regularly with an English summary, so that the results of our national survey can be shared with international institutions, possibly through UNESCO and ICOM.