

## 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 (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 1990 survey of attendance figures of museums. This survey for the first time 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 1990 survey was 4.034 (3.221 museums in West-Germany and 813 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 1990 which were returned to us is 89,3%.

### Museum attendance in 1990:

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

**97.089.535.**

Of the 4.034 museums which were asked for their attendance data, 3.314 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 1990 has asked 334 more institutions, which are organizing special exhibitions of museum type, for their attendance figures. These institutions have organized 1.533 special exhibitions in which

**3.855.530 visits**

were counted.

Beside these exhibitions in special exhibition institutions, 7.114 special exhibitions were reported by 1.768 museums in 1990. 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 7.114 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 the number of exhibitions shows that more museums were able to report special exhibitions for 1990.

As compared to 1989 the total attendance number for 1990 shows that visits in museums have decreased by about 5,1 mio.

Taken for themselves, however, the museums in the 'old' Federal Countries – compared with the figures for 1989 – show an increase of 3.747.355 (5,4 %) to the amount of 73.782.617 visits.

Museums in the 'new' Federal Countries on the other hand show a decrease of 8.862.692 (27,5 %).

Visitor attendance figures in museums of 'new' Federal Countries as compared to the preceding year 1989, have decreased by more than one fourth to the figure of 23.306.918 (1989: 32.169.610 visits). This marked decrease can be attributed to the political and economic (social) changes in that region. Most museum institutions which had been included in the preceding surveys of the Institut für Museumswesen (GDR) have survived through 1990. Very few institutions have had to close down.

Alltogether 719 directors (heads) of museums have replied to questions about marked increases and/or decreases of attendancy figures in their relative institutions. Of these two thirds, i.e. 481 museums informed that the attendancy figures had significantly decreased in 1990 as compared to the preceding year. Main reasons given were political and economic changes, and that consequently certain groups of visitors had ceased to come, f.e. from holiday camps, visitors from eastern European countries, and because of unemployment; new tourist destinations were available which hitherto had been unaccessible.

Only few museums in the 'new' Federal Countries have markedly higher attendancy figures than in the preceding year. Amongst them are mostly institutions of more than regional repute, f.e. East-Berlin, Eisenach and Weimar.

In the year 1990 the number of museums of West-Germany 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 by the museums of the 'old' Federal Countries:

- great international or national exhibitions
- public relations or educational activities in museums
- (re)opening of museums

The principal reason given for a decrease in attendance figures was given as closure caused by construction works or for organisational reasons; this was followed by fewer or less attractive (less important) special exhibitions.

A listing of causes for significant increases or decreases in attendance for 1990 as to 1989 can be found in table 1 on page 12.

The survey on special exhibitions brought the result that of 7.114 special exhibitions of 1.768 museums a number of 6.333 were held in the museum itself.

Also in 1990 visiting a museum has belonged to the less expensive cultural activities for the consumer; in West-Germany in about 50 % (1.326) of museums which have answered this question no entrance fee was asked at all, in East-Germany about 12 % were free of charge (see table 25 on page 42 and table 26 on page 43).

Table 4 on page 17 shows that more than half the number of all museums listed reported less than 15.000 visits in 1990.

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 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 7 on page 22 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 (1.961 museums), have counted 17,9 million visits in 1990, (2) art museums (in all 426) have counted 16,8 million visits.

Table 3 on page 14 and table 10 on page 25 show the variance in attendance figures according to these different types of museums.

Table 23 on page 40 shows the distribution of museum types and their visitor attendance in the single Federal Countries (Bundesländer).

For the time being no information on forms of administration of museums in the former GDR is available, or these forms are being adjusted to new political configurations. Table 24 on page 41 therefore shows forms of administration for museums in the 'old' Federal Countries only, as correlated with attendance figures.

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.

Apart from the recurrent questions concerning attendance figures and general conditions of museum visits, such as opening hours, entrance fees, special exhibitions etc., we have asked for some more items: which of the 4.034 museums included in the survey is directed on a full time, part time, voluntary bases? The answers show, that about 40 % have a full time directorship. About one third is being administrated on an unpaid basis.

About half of the museums (1.960) are operating in premises which at least partly (in many cases also completely) are protected monuments.

To our questions about changes in their permanent exhibits museums have replied that in many institutions in the course of the last years their collections had been augmented. At least three of four museums have exchanged single objects in their exhibition areas with others, one third remodelled single departments or their whole exhibition areas (see table 19).