

EGMUS: Country report – Poland (2017)

Report by Joanna Grzonkowska and Katarzyna Figiel (National Institute for Museums and Public Collections)

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Contact: kfigiel@nimoz.pl

Introduction – Key Issues

Museums in Poland

The typology of Polish museums follows directly from their ownership forms. There are state-owned museums – founded by ministers and heads of central institutions, as well as museums owned by local governments – organised or taken over by territorial entities of local government and considered as institutions of culture pursuant to the Act of 25 October 1991 on Organising and Conducting Cultural Activities. Another category comprises the so-called private museums – in the Act on Museums, dated 21 November 1996 defined as “created by natural persons, legal persons and entities without legal capacity”. These include museums established by private individuals, foundations, associations, churches and religious organisations, universities and scientific institutions, as well as corporate bodies. These museums have no legal capacity. The number of private museums has significantly increased over the recent years. It is estimated that there are ca. 1000 museums in Poland, of which nearly a half are private museums, namely.

According to the Act on Museums, a museum should agree its statute or rules and regulations with the minister responsible for the matters of culture and national heritage. There are also institutions that have not agreed any statute or rules and regulations yet, but they often operate using the non-proprietary name “museum”. Nevertheless, in statistical analyses and published information about the number of museums in Poland, they are treated equally to those that have agreed their statutes or rules and regulations.

Museum statistics

The Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) is the main source of statistical data in the country. Culture statistics is one of its research areas. As part of their annual statistical duty, museums and paramuseum institutions fill a brief form specifying some basic matters related to museum activities (identity information, basic figures on exhibitions, publishing activities, attendance, collection management, other forms of activity). GUS publishes the results of its statistical surveys in a report titled *Culture in the year...*. The publication includes tables with figures each time, all materials being accessible online.

Data collected by GUS turned out insufficient to develop an optimum cultural policy regarding museums. More comprehensive data and analyses should be a basis for activities oriented towards utilizing the potential of museums in Poland in a more comprehensive manner, as well as towards the adequate financing of their operation. For this reason, the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections (NIMOZ), supported by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, initiated a project titled *Museums Statistics*, aimed at creating a database, which is intended to become a comprehensive source of knowledge about the condition of the Polish museum sector. Project questionnaires consist of 18 sections, each covering a different field of the subject-matter and managerial activities of museums. Museums participate the project on a voluntary basis, but the number of institutions willing to share information about their activities is observed to grow year by year. Based on data collected in the survey, the Institute prepares detailed reports that cover as much as 25% of all Polish museums. This group, although a representative sample only, is numerous enough to make the studies a reliable source.

GUS and NIMOZ work in close co-operation in the field of museum statistics. The main focus is to bring consistency to different methodologies used in the existing reporting systems (the publication of the Polish translation of the ISO 18461 International Museum Statistics standard planned for March

2018 will be one of the foundations for the continuation of such activities). Furthermore, the co-operation with GUS is intended to develop fundamentals for a uniform and unified reporting system for museums on the central level. This is a direct response to the undeniable fact that far too many reporting systems exist in Poland (with the central reporting and regional reporting, as well as the museums' obligation to report to their organising bodies), while retaining complete information about museum activities.

Definition of Museum

The definition used in Poland follows from the provisions of the Act on Museums of 21 November 1996:

„Article 1: „ A museum is a non-profit organisational unit the aim of which is to collect and preserve natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, to inform about the values and contents of its collections, to promote fundamental values of the Polish and world history, science and culture, to develop cognitive and aesthetic sensitivity and provide access to the collected holdings.

Article 2. A museum shall pursue the objects referred to in Article 1 specifically through:

- 1) collecting works of art within the scope determined by its charter;
- 2) filing and developing scientific classification of collections;
- 3) maintaining the collected holdings in the manner which will ensure their proper condition and safety, and storing them so that to ensure access thereto for scientific purposes;
- 4) securing and maintaining collections and, if practicable, securing archaeological immovable works of art and other immovable cultural and natural assets;
- 5) arranging permanent and temporary exhibitions;
- 6) organising research and scientific expeditions, including archaeological;
- 7) conducting educational activities;
- 7a) encouraging and pursuing artistic and culture-promoting activities;
- 8) providing access to collections for educational and scientific purposes;
- 9) ensuring proper conditions to visit a museum and take advantage of its exhibits and collected information;
- 10) conducting publishing activity.”

The term “museum” is not a protected designation in Poland.

Existence of Museum-related Laws

The first legal document applicable to the protection of historical objects in Poland was issued in 1918. This was the Regency Council Decree on the Guardianship of Monuments of Art and Culture, dated 31 October 1918. The next one – the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland on the Guardianship of Monuments, dated 6 March 1928 – was a major legislative achievement of its time – it indicated the primacy of historical values over the interest of the owner, established the right of the state to interfere in the event of hazard and provided for criminal sanctions intended to ensure effectiveness of the act. In 1933, the Act on the Guardianship of Public Museums was adopted. The two latter acts had remained in force until the Act on the Protection of Cultural Property and Museums was adopted after the World War II (in 1962).

Today, the operation of museums is regulated by two basic legal acts:

- the Act of 21 November 1996 on Museums (subject to numerous minor amendments, the last of which was made in 2017),
- the Act of 25 October 1991 on Organising and Conducting Cultural Activities.

Other legal acts that should be mentioned here include the Act of 8 May 2019 on Warranties and Guarantees Granted by the State Treasury and Certain Legal Persons and the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 8 June 2012 regarding an application to grant warranty or guarantee and the procedure of the State Treasury grant of warranties and guarantees – both related to the important problems of the movement of museum objects within the exchange of exhibitions in Europe.

Moreover, the Act of 25 May 2017 on the Restitution of the National Cultural Property, is another major legislative achievement.

Many specific issues are elaborated on in the following regulations of the Minister of Culture:

- collection management issues are covered by the Regulation of the Minister of Culture dated 30 August 2004, on the scope, forms and methods of cataloguing historical objects in museums and the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage dated 15 May 2008, on the conditions, method and Procedures of transferring museum collection objects;
- the way how the register of museums meeting the highest standards shall be kept by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage is provided for in the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 13 May 2008, on the way of keeping the National Register of Museums, the Register inscription application form, the conditions and procedure for inscriptions and the circumstances under which an audit can be ordered to verify whether a museum still meets the conditions for being listed in the Register;
- the consultative body for the minister of culture and national heritage is established pursuant to the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage dated 14 February 2017, on the specific scope of activities of the Council for Museums and Places of National Remembrance and the procedures for appointing its members and chairperson;
- museum management issues are covered by the Regulation of the Minister of Culture of 30 June 2004, on the organisation of and procedures for conducting a competition for a candidate for the post of the director, the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 30 July 2015 on the list of regional and municipal institutions of culture, where candidates for posts are selected through a competition;
- professional qualifications of employee of museums are covered by the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 30 December 2016 on the adaptation internship and skill tests within the procedure of recognizing qualifications for the museum professionals and the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 15 December 2016 on the authorisation of the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections to recognise qualifications for the museum professionals;
- free of charge admission and discounted museum admission fees are covered in: the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 9 May 2008 on the list of state-owned martyrology museums with no admission fees and the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 20 July 2017 on the types of documents confirming the eligibility for discounted admission fees or free of charge admission to state-owned museums;
- relevant legal acts apply to museum collections safety, e.g. the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 2 September 2014 on protecting museum collections against fire, theft and other destructive hazards or loss.

Furthermore, the act on the protection of monuments indirectly applies to museums, too.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

Using its reporting form, the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) researches two types of institutions carrying out museum activities: museums and paramuseum institutions (the latter including zoological and botanical gardens). The National Institute for Museums and Public Collections collects data from museums only.

The collection of data from museums is obstructed by the museums organisational structure. There are single-site and multi-site museums in Poland. The latter have a main site and independent local sites – branches. The main site of a museum is a sort of its headquarters, responsible for the co-ordination of organisational and financial matters of the entire institution. Branches, depending on their size, can deal with small-scale exhibitions only or they may constitute museum units comparable to the main office. Statistical reporting of GUS, as well as that of the Institute, covers all museum sites. The difference lies in the method of counting museums in Poland: GUS reports museums together with their branches, while the Institute adopts an institutional approach (an quotes data for museums without a breakdown by sites in most cases).

As far as the classification of museums by collection types is concerned, GUS distinguishes: art, archaeological, ethnographic, historical, biographic, literary, martyrological, natural history, geological, technology and science, military, open-air (until 2016 distinguished as a sub-category of ethnographic museums), regional, interior and interdisciplinary museums. So far, the same classification has been used by the Institute in the questionnaires of the “Museums Statistics” project. The only difference is in the way how interdisciplinary museums are distinguished: in the Institute’s questionnaires, museums are first asked to indicate, whether their collection represents a single

discipline or is interdisciplinary in its nature. The next step is to indicate the collection type (or the prevailing type - in the case of interdisciplinary museums). From 2018 on (reports covering the year 2017), the questionnaires used by the Institute will adopt the classification specified in ISO 18461.

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

As far as the ownership form is concerned, museum statistics distinguish: state-owned museums, local government museums and so-called private museums. Differences in the presentation of statistical data collected by GUS and the Institute for Museums and Public Collections can be found in the latter category. In GUS publications, the following sub-categories are used: cooperative units; social organizations, political and trade union; churches and religious organizations, foundations, natural persons and others. In the reports of the Institute, the so-called private museums can be run by: non-government organisations, natural persons, business entities, churches or religious organisations, schools or universities.

Existing Data – Basic Figures and Diagrams

1. Data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland

MUSEUMS - Basic figures

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland

No	SPECIFICATION	Museums ^a	Exhibits in thousands	Temporary exhibitions			
				own		external	
				in country	the abroad	national	from abroad
		as of 31 XII					
1	2014	844	16458	3160	167	1606	169
2	2015	926	15911	3348	157	1661	150
3	2016	944	15979	3525	171	1702	165
4	PUBLIC SECTOR	751	15275	3182	168	1549	158
5	of which						
6	government administration	76	2374	322	29	115	24
7	self-government entities	605	9453	2640	128	1361	124
8	PRIVATE SECTOR	193	704	343	3	153	7
9	social organizations	59	137	142	2	26	4
10	church organizations	31	83	45	—	47	1
11	other	103	484	156	1	80	2
12	Art	85	2255	462	23	188	31
13	Archaeological	30	2117	92	5	24	7
14	Ethnographic	67	467	268	3	126	15
15	of which skansens	27	130	73	—	22	1
16	Historical	166	1674	642	45	210	13
17	Biographical	52	58	135	7	18	4
18	Literary	10	52	25	—	3	3
19	Martyrological	24	270	53	5	28	7

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20	Natural history	32	2516	86	2	47	6
21	Geological	15	799	40	2	6	—
22	Technology and science	74	714	199	1	62	2
23	Military	55	175	73	1	29	1
24	Interdisciplinary	65	2147	463	19	299	39
25	Regional	173	1195	668	10	482	23
26	Interior museums	11	31	11	—	9	3
27	Other	85	1509	308	48	171	11

a Including branches.

NOTE. Due to the rounding of data, in some cases sums of components can differ from the amount given in the item "total".

MUSEUMS - Basic figures

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland

No	SPECIFICATION	Visitors in thousands		
		grand total	of which school youth ^b	in total free of charge
1	2014	30609	5841	13700
2	2015	33271	5485	14771
3	2016	36082	5582	13749
4	PUBLIC SECTOR	33885	5163	13469
5	of which			
6	government administration	15994	1516	7442
7	self-government entities	17161	3442	5822
8	PRIVATE SECTOR	2197	419	280
9	social organizations	969	145	75
10	church organizations	548	66	85
11	other	680	208	120
12	Art	8189	895	3734
13	Archaeological	1101	302	278
14	Ethnographic	1999	391	645
15	of which skansens	1061	235	277
16	Historical	7283	967	2213
17	Biographical	1275	293	265
18	Literary	84	24	22
19	Martyrological	2769	544	1252
20	Natural history	564	171	187
21	Geological	122	44	56
22	Technology and science	1424	321	354

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23	Military	655	76	200
24	Interdisciplinary	5337	573	3319
25	Regional	1444	405	628
26	Interior museums	862	189	120
27	Other	2973	389	477

b Primary and secondary school students visiting museums in organized groups.

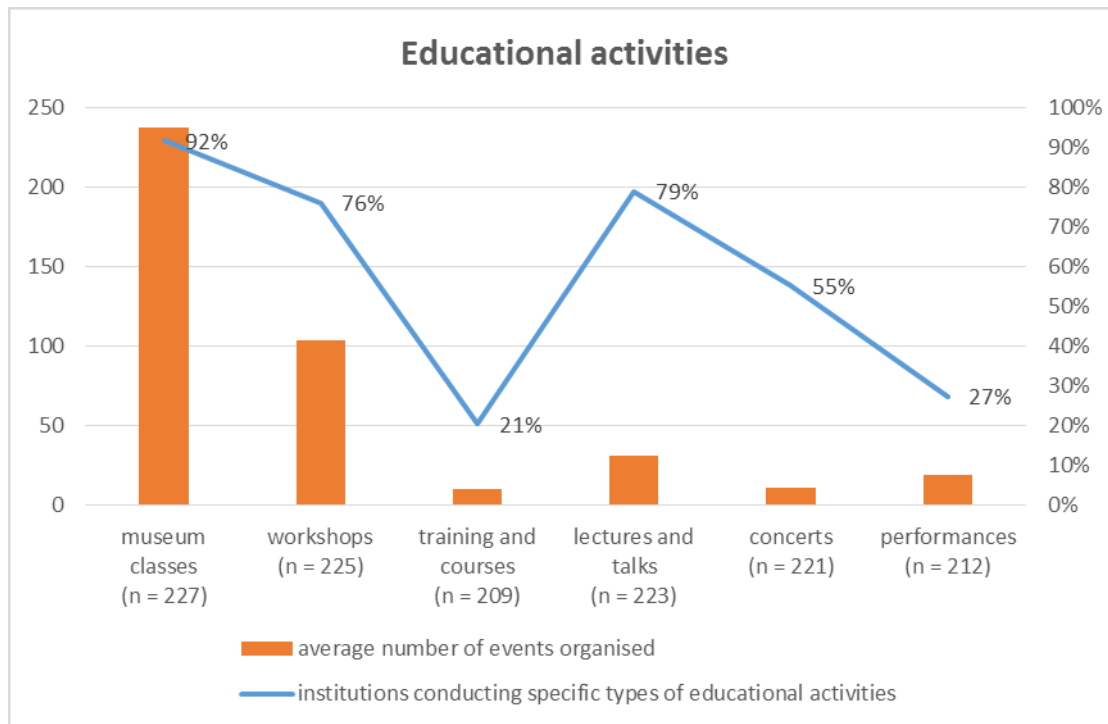
NOTE. Due to the rounding of data, in some cases sums of components can differ from the amount given in the item "total".

2. Data from the “Museums Statistics” project (National Institute for Museums and Public Collections).

Museums in 2016

(a representative sample of 232 museums)

a) Educational activities

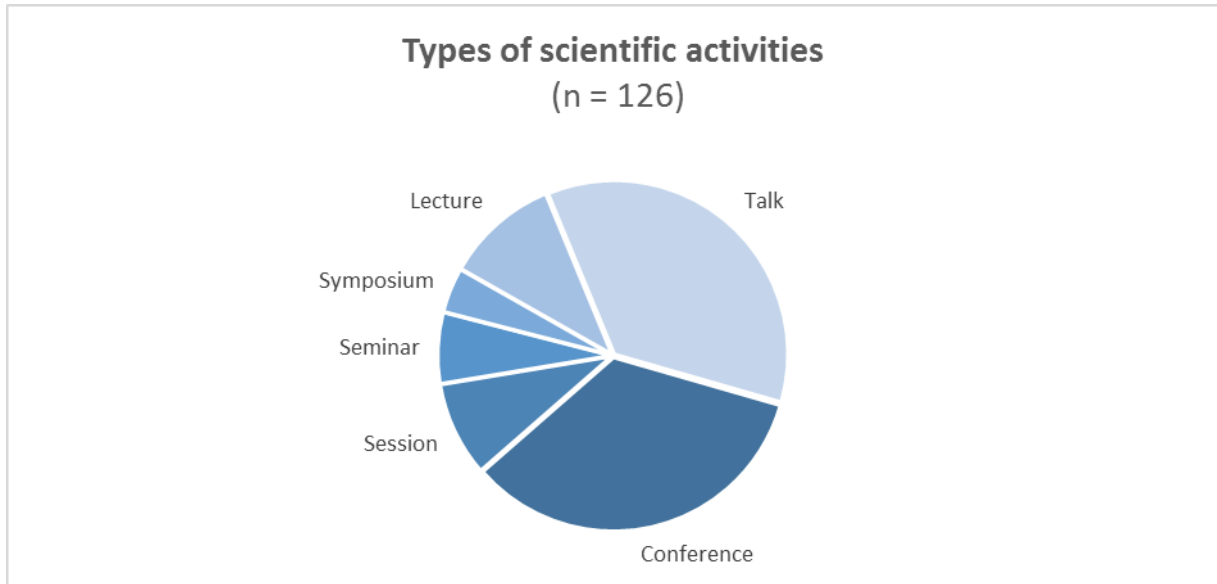


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- 13% of museums had an offer targeted toward national minorities
- 6% of museums had an offer targeted towards immigrants and refugees
- 35% of museums had an offer targeted towards socially excluded groups

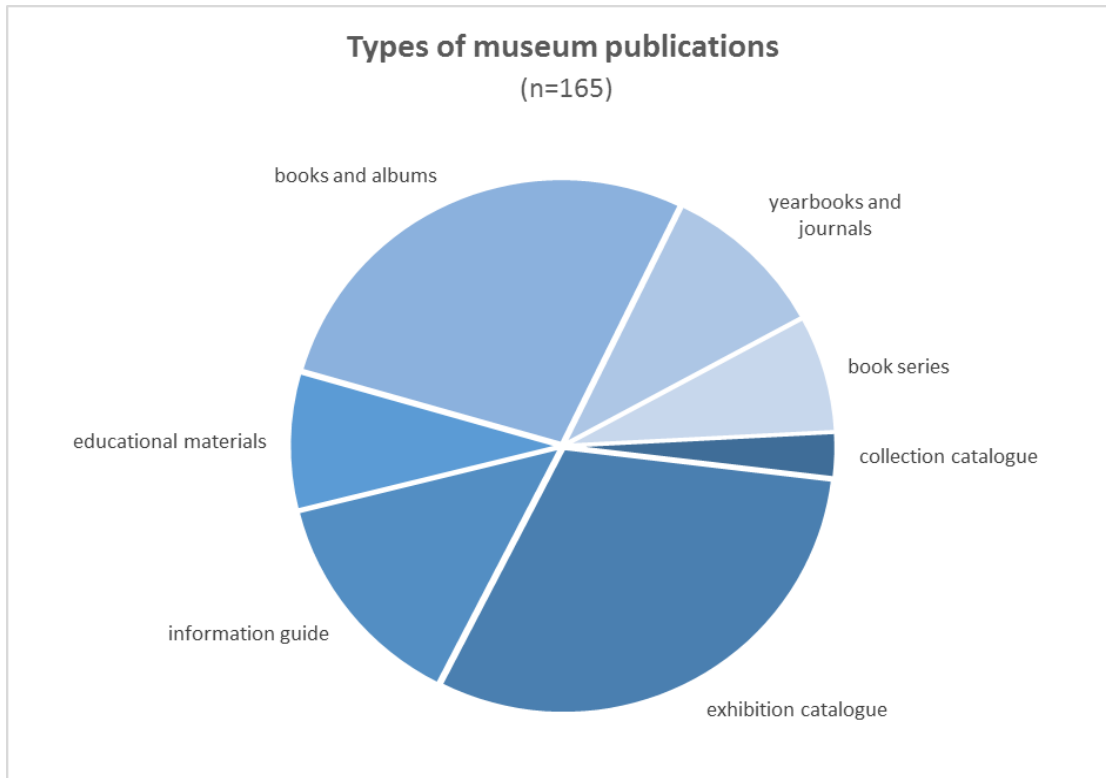
Scientific activities

- 55% of museums organised scientific events
- 2 – the average number of scientific events

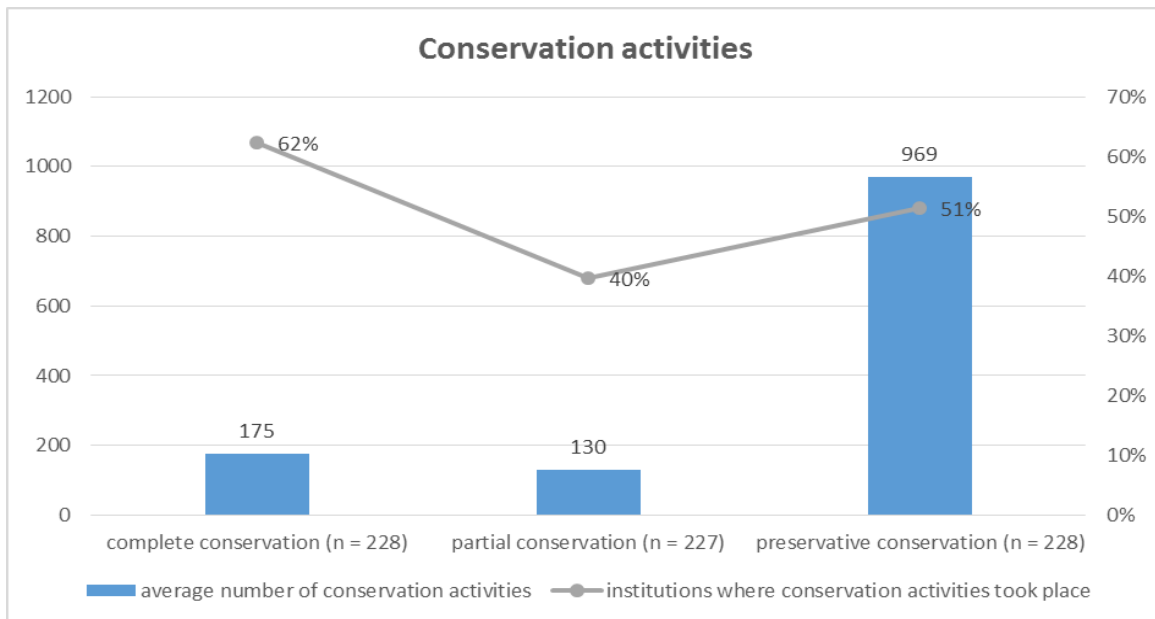


Publishing activities

- 71% of museums issued at least one publication with an ISBN/ISSN assigned
- 3 – the average number of publications issued
- 2 – the median of publication issued
- 836 – the average print run of a publication
- 5% of publications were accessible online
- 1% of publications were suitable for visually impaired users



Conservation activities



List of References

1. Collective work. *Kultura w 2016 r.*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Urząd Statystyczny w Krakowie. Warszawa 2017.
2. Collective work. *Statystyka muzeów. Muzea w 2016 roku.* Narodowy Instytut Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów, Warszawa 2017.
3. The Act of 21 November 1996 on Museums, Journal of Laws 1997 No 5 it. 24.
4. Base of legal acts: <http://nimos.pl/pl/bazy-danych/akty-prawne/akty-prawne-muzea> [dostęp: 24.10.2017].