

Estonia

Report by Rain Leoma
Statistics Estonia

Introduction – Key Issues

The key issue in the museum scene in Estonia currently is how will the museums and visitors react to the economic crises. From one side state funding has dropped in 2009 to the same level as it was in 2006. At the same time the number of visits and exhibitions has risen when compared to 2008. Number of employees has dropped but the share of labour costs has risen when compared to 2008. Meaning that the main cutbacks were not made out of the labour budget. Hopefully 2010 and 2011 statistics can give the answer have Estonian museums began to operate more efficiently or will the drop in exhibitions and other figures come with a slight delay.

Statistics Estonia will be in a few years 90 years old and a special project for restoring timelines has been started. This also includes the restoration of museum statistics timeline as far back as possible. Restoring timelines back to the soviet times might prove to be a difficult task as in the soviet times figures were often manipulated with to show the growth and power of the soviet culture. As such it might turn out that even though the timelines will be restored they will not be published.

Some key issues in Museum statistics in Estonia that needs to be done are the reclassification of museums as currently no official mechanisms exist for classifying museums. Also how and if should small museums be included in statistics. Should they be included only at national level or not? Should they be excluded from statistics and if yes then how to define a small museum? These are some of the key things that are currently up as topics in the Estonian museums statistics.

Definition of Museum

Museum is an institution that shall collect, study and preserve things of cultural value relating to humans and their environment and relating to a specific field and shall organise the communication thereof to the public for scientific, educational and entertainment purposes.

For statistical purposes also institutions that follow the museum definition in all points except the part about scientific output are included. This raises slightly the number of museums in Estonia especially number of private museums. If the statistical office would follow a very strict line in regards to the museum definition by law then the number of private museums would be quit small and would not properly portray the Estonian Museum scene.

Existence of Museum-related Laws

The main Museum-related law in Estonia is the Museum Act passed in 1996. Its current revision came to force in 2008. The act is directed to the governing of public museums and only slightly regulates private museums. The main areas what the Museum Act regulates are: who is responsible for financing public Museums, how museums can add or exclude museum objects from their collections and who has the right to supervise Museums.

Museums are financed in accordance with their ownership from the state budget, municipality budget or form the budget of of public law institutions. Municipality museums can be

financed from the state budget. Also all museums except state museums can receive financial benefits from the ministry.

Museums (except private) can be supervised by the Ministry of Culture or commissions created by the Ministry of Culture. Also the National Audit Office of Estonia has a right to run financial audits in state financed museums.

Museum act protects museums collections and objects by not allowing them to be handed in as security nor can they be a subject for a claim of payment. Museum objects can only be transferred from one museum to another if this does not ruin the integrity of the museum and the museum object is needed by the receiving Museum to expand their collection. Museum objects can only be removed from the list of museum objects if they have been destroyed beyond repair, is lost, has been transferred permanently to another museum or the museum object has been acquired in good faith and it turns out that it has been stolen and the rightful owner asks it to be returned to them. If a private museum wishes to sell their collection or part of it and they have received financial benefits from the state then the state has a right of pre-emption. This also applies of museums stops operating.

Other acts that regulate Museum work are the Intra-Community Transport, Export and Import of Cultural Objects Act and the Heritage Conservation Act. These two acts are not specifically museum related but they both influence how Museums handle museum objects that are deemed to have cultural value. State Assets Act also influences state museums as their property belongs to the state.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

UNESCO classification is used for the Types of Collection. The biggest type is local lore museums(93) and archaeology and history museums(51). Other types are: special museums(36), art museums(19), science and technology museums(15), ethnography and anthropology museums(10), general museums(10) and natural history museums(2). For 2010 data there is a planned revision of museum types. A commission consisting of the Statistical Office, Ministry of Culture and the National Museum Board will look over all the museum types and if necessary reclassify them.

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

Ownership of museums are divided into four different categories: State(83), local government (84) estonian person in private law (67) and foreign person in private law (2). Ownership data is not asked from museums directly but comes from a statistical database containing general data on all registered entities. This statistical registry is updated regularly by data from the central commercial registry, Estonian tax and costumes board data and with data from various statistical works.

Existing Data – Basic Figures and Diagrams

The newest data on Museums in Estonia currently is for the year 2009. After the reindpendance in 1991 the number of museums has risen. In the last 14 years it has doubled from 118 to 236 as shown in table1. The same is true for most key figures in the Estonian museum statistics. The main exception is the number of employees that has only grown by about 1,11 times. It does mean that museums are being run more efficiently as number of museums pieces, visitors and exhibitions have doubled.

Table 1: Museums in Estonia, 1995-2009

	1995	2000	2005	2008	2009
Museums	118	183	209	224	236
Main collection, million museum pieces	4,9	5,9	8,4	9,4	9,8
Visits, thousands	975	1539	1762	2059	2229
Visits per 1000 inhabitants	679	1124	1309	1536	1663
Exhibitions	754	1250	1378	1518	1596
Employees	1394	1516	1576	1618	1552
Income, million euros	4,81	11,34	20,27	36,75	32,04
Expenditures, million euros	4,58	11,8	20,02	31,21	27,35
..acquisition cost, %	..	1,7	2,1	1,7	1,8
..labour cost, %	..	40,3	46,3	49,2	56,8

Charts 1 and 2 consist of Museums by type in 1995 and 2009. When comparing the figures one must know that in the last 14 years some museums have been reclassified although the collections they have haven't changed drastically. Meaning that slight comparison issues are present but since it is museum statistics and museums preserve the past as it is then it's perfectly fine as it shows how the mentality has changed in operating museums and classifying them. There has been a growth of local lore and archaeology and history museums. That's quit logical for a country after occupation especially if during the soviet times operating museums about history and local lore was hindered do to political reasons.

Chart 1

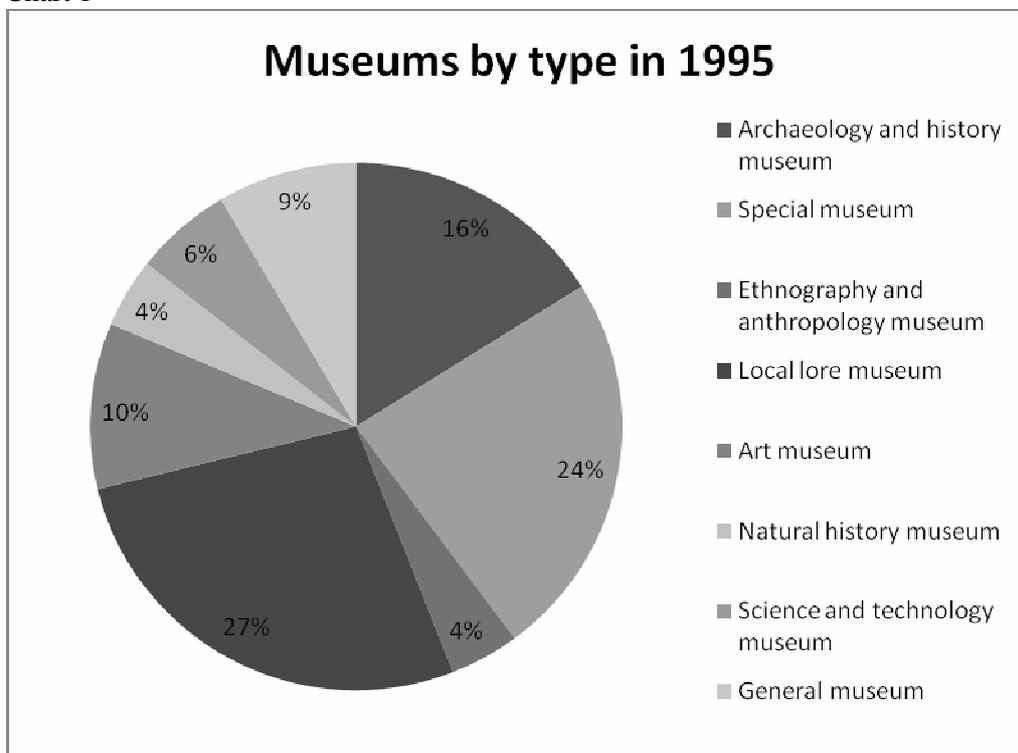


Chart 2

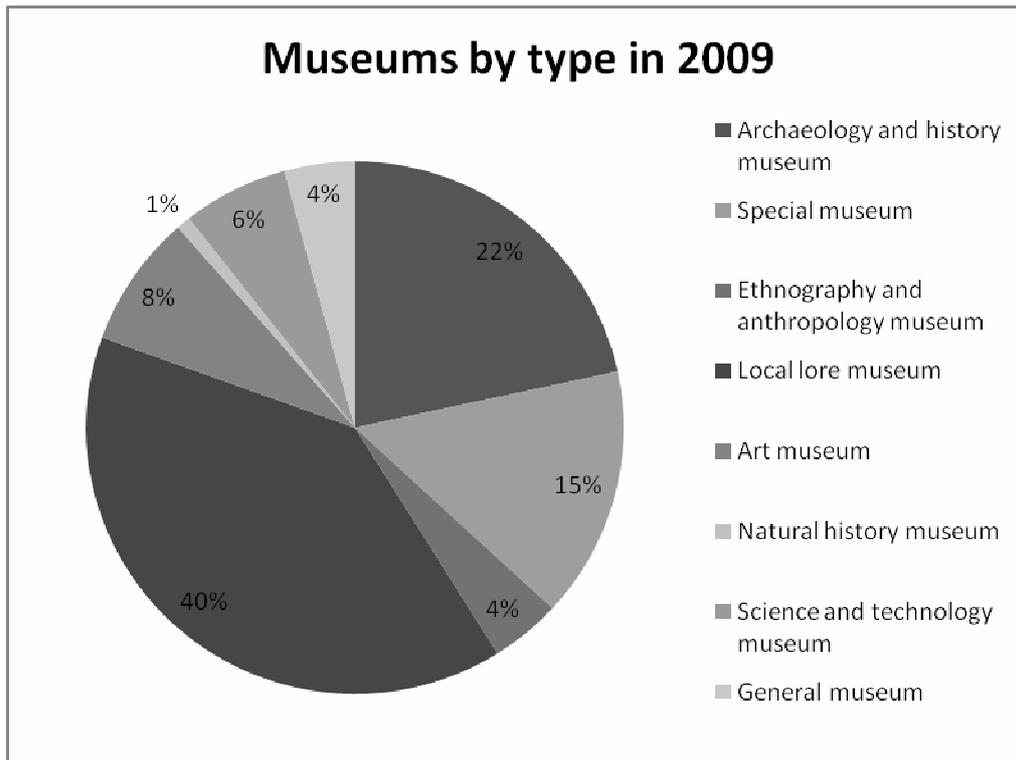
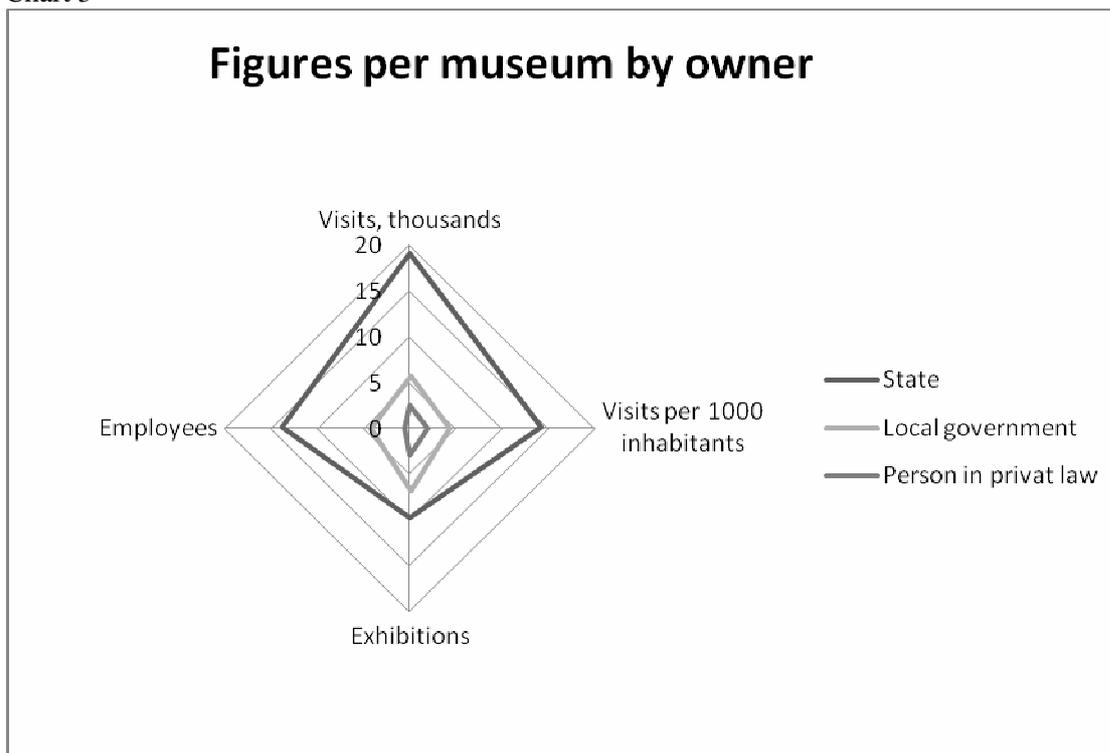


Chart 3 contains information about few figures on museums calculated per museum and by owner. National and foreign persons in private law have been look at together. It illustrates that state run museums are on the average a bit bigger and more active than local or private museums. This is especially true for the amount of visits per state museums that is almost 20 000 visits per museum while private museums average at around 2500 visits annually.

Chart 3



A Guide to European Museum Statistics

Table 2:

	State	Local government	Person in private law
Museums	83	84	69
..archaeology and history museums	24	17	10
..local lore museums	20	45	28
..natural history museums	2	0	0
..art museums	11	3	5
..ethnography and anthropology museums	6	1	3
..other museums	20	18	23
Main collection, million museum pieces	8,9	0,7	0,1
Attendance, thousands	1580	480	169
Attendance per 1000 inhabitants	1179	358	126
Exhibitions	819	574	203

Table 3: Museums by type, 2009

	Museums	Main collection, million pieces	Exhibitions	Visits, thousand	Income, thousand euros	..income from state budget, thousand euros	Expenditures, thousand euros
Archaeology and history museum	51	2,27	247	502	6482	3315	5234
Special museum	36	3,22	257	281	4690	3425	4571
Ethnography and anthropology museum	10	1,35	81	216	6941	2180	4016
Local lore museum	93	1,13	656	306	4891	2073	4196
Art museum	19	0,23	186	439	5034	3208	4957
Natural history museum	2	1,32	28	42	1029	557	1114
Science and technology museum	15	0,06	59	386	2546	865	1763
General museum	10	0,24	82	58	427	125	1499

List of References

Statistics Estonia database (http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/I_Databas/Social_life/01Culture/12Museums/12Museums.asp)