

Hungary

report by

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Introduction – Key Issues

Since, by virtue of the guiding principle of the Hungarian museum management, the values of our cultural heritage involve both the irreplaceable sources of studying our past and present and the inseparable components of the national and international cultural heritage, it is an all-time social obligation to preserve, maintain, and scientifically process these values as well as to make them available to the broader public in an objective manner.

Hungary has been managing the matter of museums within the scope of one single system ever since the 1920's. This process became really intensive in the post-war years. From this period onwards, laws and decree-laws regulated the matter of museums. Early on, the demand for the unity of museums required a uniform statistical system covering every museum. Systematically collected and processed statistical data have enabled the Government as well as counties, settlements or other communities maintaining museums to rely on relevant data when drafting their maintenance and development plans.

The very first statistical publication surveying the status of museums in Hungary came out in 1960. This was followed by a statistical study encompassing a five-year (1961-1965) planning period. Special annual collections of museum data have been issued from year to year ever since 1966. Currently the 34th volume, including the data of 2001, of a series of statistical yearbooks consolidating the operational data of Hungarian museums is awaiting publication.

Museum statistics constitutes an organic part of the national cultural statistics prepared by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Although such a statistical review is also issued annually, its processing criteria are much more generic, less detailed and comprehensive than those of the earlier mentioned Yearbooks of Museum Statistics.

Since museums pursue scientific research work as well, a portion of their operational data is reflected in research and development statistics.

The ultimate onus lies upon the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage to issue statistical data on Hungarian museums. The organisation, responsibilities, and even the name of this Ministry have seen frequent changes over the past few decades. At present, it performs its tasks with regard to culture and public collections under the above-referred name. Act XLVI/1993 provides for the obligation of statistical data collection itself, thus, regardless of their ownership structure or maintainer, each institution shall provide statistical data. For decades now, one or another supportive institution of the Ministry has been responsible for data collection and processing. Currently, this responsible institution is the Statistical Group of the National Office of Cultural Heritage. The professional and administrative supervision is provided by the Museum Department of the Ministry.

The manager of each institution is held responsible both for the provision and the quality of statistical data. Hungarian legislation uses the term "museological institution" for institutions included in the statistics. This notion has a much broader scope of interpretation than the notion of "museum" (the detailed definitions are discussed under Point 2). The above-mentioned Office and its Statistical Group keep an inventory of the institutions and prepare the issue of operational licences as well. As it is, no museological institution may operate in Hungary without a valid operational licence issued by the Ministry. As a rule, before a licence of registration is issued, specialists look into the value of the collection and find out whether the conditions of operation and preservation are in place. No licence is issued without the availability of certain pre-set conditions. Thanks to these procedures, the data of every museological institution can be found in the Office's inventory; ergo, all of them can be included into the statistical data collection. Data collection is based on a twelve-page questionnaire with 10 detailed data sheets included. The questionnaire comprises about 140 questions.

With regard to any museological institution, the questions relate to the following major data clusters:

The identification, major administrative and task-related data of the museological institution;

- Financial management data;
- The staff and their specialisation;
- The amount of works of art and the registration status thereof;
- Conservation activity;
- Public educational activity;
- Number of visitors.

Instructions attached to the questionnaire ensure that each question is answered in a standardised way. February is the deadline of submitting statistical data. In view of changing conditions and requirements, the questionnaires are from time to time reviewed and modified. All the incoming data sheets and consolidated tables are kept in the Data Warehouse of the Office of Cultural Heritage. DataEase has been used for retrieving electronically entered annual data since 1990.

Definition of Museum

The definition of museums in Hungary can be derived from the two Acts on museological institutions, as described in detail under Point 3. “Museological institution” involves the broadest notion defined by law. Law distinguishes museums, public museological institutions, and public exhibition areas.

Within the meaning of the said Acts, museums are cultural institutions involved with preserving scientifically catalogued cultural goods, performing collection-based scientific research, and displaying collected items and relevant information at exhibitions and in other forms, thereby providing education that promotes scientific knowledge. Thus, this definition reflects the well-known triple function. Every museum has to dispose of all the standard, task-required material conditions, an appropriate building, and a highly qualified staff with the right professional specifications. No museum may call itself as such without having an official operational licence granted to it by law. When processing statistical data relating to museums, however, the various categories of museums and ownership structures, as defined by UNESCO, are also used alongside with categories that reflect the conditions in Hungary in more specific terms. Museum-related ICOM definitions are not in use in Hungary.

Within the category of “*Museum*” national museums, specialised museums (with a national collection scope), county museums, regional museums, and museums organised around a specific subject matter (thematic museums) are enlisted. The category of public museological institutions includes specific subject-oriented collections of local, institutional, religious history, and the history of Church as well as collections dealing with outstanding personalities. Public exhibition sites are institutions that lack a fairly remarkable collection of their own. They present cultural goods relating to particular persons, events, geographical locations or organisations.

Existence of Museum-related Laws

Two Acts regulate the matter of museums in Hungary. Act CXL/1997 provides for the protection of cultural goods, for museological institutions, public libraries, and cultural education.

Thus, alongside with regulating the domain of museology, this Act provides for the operations of public libraries and public cultural education, thereby identifying them as state or municipal responsibilities. Act LXIV/2001 regards the protection of cultural goods. This is the Act that provides for the protection of movable and real cultural assets, with tasks relating to the protection of historical buildings also included. Furthermore, the Act covers archaeological excavations and the traffic of the works of art, as well. The said Acts make mention of all the national museums that are maintained by the government. Thirteen is the number of institutions assigned to this category but the Budapest History Museum, which is maintained by the capital’s municipality, is the fourteenth institution belonging here.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

Institutions are classified by Hungarian Museum Statistics on the basis of the museum-related legislation.

Statistics, however, sets out even more detailed categories in view of professional specifications. Such a more detailed typifying involves a more precise classification, especially with regard to collections of public interest and public exhibition areas. As it was pointed out in the introduction, UNESCO

categories are also used for collecting and processing the data of museological institutions in Hungary. And then the collections of various museums are further broken down to collections of local or religious history specialised collections; alongside with a broad range of exhibition areas (such as e.g. country museum, non-commercial gallery, archaeological park) there feature memorial museums and memorial places, too.

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

Museum statistics in Hungary conducts two kinds of data collection even in terms of ownership categories.

Partly it collects information in accordance with UNESCO ownership categories, and – by taking Hungarian conditions into account – it classifies institutions by maintainers, as well. Based on this latter categorisation the statistical system differentiates institutions maintained by the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, other Ministries, organisations with a national scope of authority, county and Budapest municipalities, local governments of settlements, or other bodies.

As a matter of fact, these museological institutions are all publicly owned. Church collections are also assigned to this category. A special category is the group of private museums, owned by individuals, families or private enterprises. There are 18 collections of this kind altogether. On the strength of the law the collections of each museological institution with an operational licence are protected, which means that the items of such collections are either non-negotiable or negotiable with certain restrictions. Unless the minister lifts the protection, such items by no means should end up abroad.

Existing Data – Basic Figures and Diagrams

In accordance with the statistical data of the year 2000, 812 museological institutions have an operational licence in Hungary. More than 95% of the institutions provide data.

As usual, merely provisionally closed, smaller exhibition places without a staff of their own remain outside the range of data providers. Of the 802 institutions, 139 meet *sensu stricto* requirements set against museums, which means that they can be classified as museums. 238 is the number of museum collections and 435 is that of exhibitions sites.

Type of museological institutions	Number of institutions	Number of visitors
Art museums	122	2,003,105
Archaeological and history museums	74	1,230,802
Natural history museums	35	251,576
Scientific and technical museums	91	818,621
Ethnographic museums	61	471,466
Specialised museums	36	534,679
Regional museums	122	1,818,863
General museums	22	41,088
Historic buildings, memorial places	229	2,463,690
Other museums	20	261,544
Total	812	9,895,434

The research workers' staff (museologists) of museological institutions total 1,251 persons. There is a staff of 371 involved with the preservation of works of art (restorers, taxidermists). 784 is the total number of employees who look after collections (collection managers, photographers, drawers, geodetic surveyors), 1,099 is that of public education staff (personnel tasked with arranging exhibitions, museum teachers, cultural managers); operational staff (business, maintenance) account for 3,457 persons in total. The objets d'art accrued in museological institutions count 46,298,452 pieces in total. Statistics provides a detailed analysis of all the works of art assigned to various

specialised areas of research and collections. The statistical inventory maintains separate sections for generic historical documents, photos of historical value, and documents of the history of literature. Moreover, we dispose of national data on the number of negatives and slides of documentary value, films, video and sound records. The total number of library units is 1,581,655.

The business data of museological institutions include both revenues and expenditures. Within the category of revenues, statistics distinguishes between maintainer's subsidies, other subsidies, and own earnings. Expenditures are broken down by wage and wage-type costs, the costs of maintenance, reconstruction, operations, and other costs. Statistical reports relating to the conservation of museological institutions specify the exact annual amount of cleansed, conserved, restored, and repaired works of art. The data are broken down museum by museum. Within the scope of research work conducted in museological institutions, statistical reviews give an account of publishing efforts individual institutions and disciplines take. A similar statistical method is applied for analysing the data raised by processing works of art, stocktaking and registering. The number of exhibitions and events, their types, subject, and the number of visitors are presented by analysing the public education activity of museological institutions in a statistical way.

List of References

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