

Macedonia (2018)

Report by

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Introduction - Key Issues

The Macedonian museums network today consists of 33 museums: 22 public national museums and 11 public local museums¹. Besides the number of national and local museums, there are several museums and museum collections with unclear legal status, concerning the ownership, national or local jurisdiction etc. There are also few private collections that are open to public but they can hardly be called museum collections (regarding to the *Law on Museums*² and the *Book of rules on the standards for the type of museums, their work, space and safe keeping of the museum objects and museum documentation*³).

It is important to underline that in the past ten years several new museums have been opened: *Memorial House of Mother Theresa*, *Museum of Macedonian Struggle*, *Archaeological Museum* (all in Skopje), *Museum on Water* in Ohrid, *Memorial House of Tose Proevski* in Krusevo, etc. However, there has been a lot of public argument about the controversial procedure that was carried along the establishment and the work of these museums. Contrary to the Law on Museums, all the procedures, even the work on the permanent displays in the museums, has been carried out by unknown subjects or the Ministry of Culture itself, without appointing any managing or professional staff in the museums. On the other hand, some of the museums are controversial in the very substance, especially the *Memorial house of Tose Proeski* (pop star recently deceased), etc. All of these museums are national museums, with their costs paid from the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

Museums are responsible for the protection of moveable cultural heritage. According to the latest data (2015) there are 222 850 inventoried museum objects and 245 291 non-inventoried objects⁴. Only 30 434 objects are on display

¹ However, the State Statistical Office (SSO), in its News Release No: 2.1.16.11 from 28.04.2016, stated that there are 28 museums, of which 19 are public (national) museums, 8 are public (local) museums and one is a private museum. The SSO declared that “the data presented in this release were obtained from completed questionnaires for 2015, submitted by 28 museums and 46 museum collections” (Again, the number of museum collections is completely wrong).

² 2004

³ 2005

⁴ According to the State Statistical Office data for 2013 there were 430 642 inventoried museum objects and 189 948 non-inventoried objects! It is not clear what has happened to the 207 792 inventoried objects?

in the museums. Most of the (inventoried) museum objects are archaeological (47 499) and ethnological (33 941) exhibits, then 19 554 historical exhibits, 14 708 artistic exhibits etc.

There is no official museum policy document yet, but the key issues and priorities had been stated in the National Program for Culture 2004-2008 (establishing sustainable conditions for the museums, national and local, according to the world standards; encouraging projects and activities to attract visitors to the museums and developing marketing models; supporting archeological investigations for cultural, scientific and tourist purpose, publishing catalogues of the public museum collections, etc.) and in the National Strategy for Cultural Development 2012-2017 (modernization of the museums and museum displays; support to the development of the new museum forms, such as technical museums, museums of architecture, theatre museums; support to the private initiative for opening private museums; support to the projects for museum education and digitalization, etc.), but very little had been done so far.

On the other hand, some of the key issues and priorities for the future museum politics have been stated in the new National Strategy for Cultural Development 2018-2022:

- necessary changes to the Law on Museums,
- review of the status (national and local) of the museums and decentralisation of the museum network,
- analysis of the space conditions in the major museums,
- analysis of the permanent displays, etc.

According to the National Strategy, a working group on the re-evaluation of the public and professional aspects of the Macedonian museums and the transformation of the museum network has been established.

Museum-related Laws / Definition of a Museum

In 2004 the new *Law on Museums* was adopted by the Parliament. It defines the museum as public non-profit cultural institution in service of the society that collects, documents, stores and conserves, researches, exhibits and popularizes the museum material (movable heritage) in the public⁵.

In accordance with this definition, a museum is therefore an institution that:

- carries out research, protection, storage, conservation and presentation of museum material,
- ensures appropriate premises for the protection, storage and conservation of material as well as other necessary premises for the work of the museum and its staff and for exhibiting material,
- ensures appropriate equipment for museum premises intended for the protection, storage and conservation of museum material,

⁵ The Law on Museums actually defines museum activities rather than museum itself.

- ensures accessibility of museum material and collections for the visit and for research work,
- organizes permanent exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, traveling and other exhibitions,
- organizes seminars, workshops, lectures and other popular educative forms,
- publishes books, catalogues, guides and other publications.

The Law on Museums also defines the public services in this field, the work, types (national, local and private) and the organisation of the museums etc. It specifies certain rules for founding a museum: financial means, building and equipment, highly educated staff etc. The Minister of Culture decides whether these rules are met. The Law on Museums also defines the responsibility of the government to cover the insurance costs for certain foreign exhibitions.

Although the Law on Museums stipulated that the National Council for Museums should have been established, it was never done. The National Council for Museums was supposed to be a professional consultative body at the Ministry of Culture that would monitor and supervise the implementation of public service within the framework of the museum network. It also should have offered proposals for performing the public service in this field, propose changes to the museum network, suggestions for resolving specific issues and appropriate measures, etc.

Another important museum related law is the *Law for Protection of Cultural Heritage* (2004). Among other things it defines the two main categories of cultural heritage (movable and immovable), establishes legal provisions and introduces stricter controls to the cultural heritage, stipulates the public right of access to cultural heritage, regulates the archaeological researches, including foreign archaeological researchers operating in Macedonia, introduces penalties for offenders etc.

A new Law for Protection of Cultural Heritage is in preparation.

Types of Museums

In December 2003, the government passed the *Decision on the Network of National Institutions in the Field of Culture*. According to this Decision, 15 (from the previous 22) museums gained the status of national institutions that are completely financed by the Ministry of Culture. The other museums were considered local and were financed by the local governments (salaries, running costs etc.). The local institutions can still apply for annual funding from the Ministry of Culture for programmes and specific projects. Since June 2005 this division of jurisdiction has been put into practice.

Today, regarding the ownership, the museums in Macedonia are classified as: 22 public national and 11 public local museums.

Regarding the subject of their work there are:

- 12 specialized museums, and

- 21 general (complex) museums (mostly historical, ethnological, archaeological etc.).

Regarding their professional field of work (type of collection) there are museums for the following fields:

- archaeology,
- history,
- arts,
- ethnological heritage,
- natural history.

Basic Tables and Figures⁶

Table 1: Museums in Republic of Macedonia, 2018

Regarding ownership	National	Local	Total
Public	22	11	33
Private	/	/	/
Regarding subject of work			
General national	9		
Specialized national	13		
General local	10		
Specialized local	1		

Macedonian museums have a total of 47.755 sq. meters, of which 26.755 sq. meters are exhibition halls, 6.277 are depots, 1.124 are for laboratories for conservation and preparation etc (2015).

A total of 449 employees (226 female) work in the Macedonian museums, of which 280 are professional staff (150 female) and 160 other personnel (2009). The majority of the museum professionals work as curators (or senior curator and curator-adviser), and other professional positions (considered as "technical museum occupations") are museum technicians, conservators, preparation workers, photographers etc.

Table 2: Exhibits by type of collections, 2015⁷

Type of inventoried exhibits	Number
Archaeological	49 542
Ethnological	34 418
Historical	20 521
Arts	13 150
Technical	10
Paleontological	1 594

⁶ Most of the figures used in the tables are from the reports of the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia

⁷ However, the data from the statistical survey for 2012 was: archaeological 179 146; ethnological 38 237; historical 56 574 exhibits, etc.!

Geological	863
Zoological	90 622
Botanical	10 907
Other	3 152
Inventoried exhibits - total	224 779
Exhibits on display	36 980

Table 3: Exhibitions and visitors, 2015

Exhibitions	Museum's exhibitions	Imported exhibitions	Traveling exhibitions	Total
		102	52	55
Visitors	64.244	39.484	38.468	142.196

Finance

The Ministry of Culture is still the main source of funding for the national museums. It provides regular annual funding to the museums on two bases:

- salaries, running costs (such as heating, insurance of equipment, buildings, exhibits), investments, etc., and
- specific projects / programmes on the basis of annual competition.

The local self-governments provide regular annual funding for the local museums. Still, local museums can apply for annual funding from the Ministry of Culture for programmes and specific projects.

Table 4: Ministry of culture, Sector breakdown, in MKD, 2017-2018

Sector	2017	2018
Protection of Cultural Heritage	242 651 143	441 400 000
Museums	398 299 276	420 300 000
Visual Arts	28 803 321	37 100 000
Publishing	162 251 531	96 200 000
Libraries	86 322 362	88 000 000
Film	149 874 562	159 863 000
Performing Arts	2 942 608 819	1 629 100 000
International co-operation	96 561 818	121 169 000
Cultural events, festivals, other manifestations	93 663 098	113 331 000
Decentralisation	234 335 000	249 882 000
TOTAL (MKD)	4 435 370 930	3 235 176 000
TOTAL (EUR)	72 710 998	53 035 672

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2018

Statistical survey

The general statistical survey is being conducted by the State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia. As a regular survey it is conducted every third year.

List of References

Portals and directories of museums

State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia (www.stat.gov.mk)

Ministry of Culture (www.culture.gov.mk).