

Switzerland

Report by

Josef Brülisauer / Bernard A. Schüle

Verband der Museen der Schweiz/

Association des Musées Suisses/

Associazione dei Musei Svizzeri

Introduction - Key Issues

In Switzerland culture traditionally is within the responsibility of the cantons. Therefore a compelling, central coordination is neither desired nor possible. For this reason the world of museums is extremely various and fragmented. In addition the position of the museums is in each of the cantons quite different. Some cantons are conscious about the cultural meaning of museums and began to raise statistic data concerning their museums. The Swiss Museums Association is the only organisation that collects nation-wide data on a regular basis. This is done on a volunteer basis and by a militia system. To a large extent the few statistics of the Federal Office for Statistics are based on these data.

Definition of Museum

The Swiss Museums Association seeks to guarantee the quality of museums. Art. 2 of its statutes gives a definition of the term museum. It closely follows the ICOM definition.

For an admission as a member or to be included into the museum guide the Association requires the following conditions:

- a) Professionally managed own collection of appropriate cultural value.
- b) A professionally done documentation of the collections, open for research.
- c) The quality and the content of the collections are not diminished by sales.
- d) An own exhibition of appropriate value accessible to the public as well as an appropriate communication to visitors.
- e) Guarantee of the durability, especially in legal, financial and personnel regard.
- f) Acknowledgment of the definition of the museum, as it is fixed by ICOM in article 2 of the statutes, and of the Code of Ethics of ICOM.

Existence of Museum- related Laws

As the cantons are responsible for the culture within their boundaries, there is no federal law concerning museums. At the moment a new culture promotion law is in preparation. It's based on article 69 of the revised Federal Constitution (assumed 2000). The major points are:

The federation maintains its own museums (National Museum with its seven branches, the collection Reinhart in Winterthur and the museum Vela in Ligornetto). It supports certain institutions of paramount importance.

The legal situation differs from canton to canton. Some cantons maintain own museums, but they have no appropriate laws e.g. Zurich. Other cantons delegate the management to foundations e.g. Berne (public legal foundations of canton, city and Burgergemeinde) or Appenzell IR (Innerrhoder Kulturstiftung = art foundation, 1999). Others have a legislation for the promotion of museums, but no law for their own museums e.g. Tessin. If legal regulations exist, they are mostly embedded in decrees on cultural heritage or the preservation of monuments e.g. Wallis (Loi sur la promotion de la culture, 1996). There are two articles concerning the cantonal museums and the promotion of regional and local museums (AVML).

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

The Swiss Museum Guide differentiates the following types of museums:

A Guide to European Museum Statistics

- Art museums (art and applied art)
- Museums of History (history, archaeology, military and religious history)
- Ethnographic museums (European and non-European cultures)
- Scientific museums (natural history, medicine and health museums, botanical and zoological gardens)
- Technical museums (science, technology, industrial history, traffic and telecommunications)
- Regional and local museums (city museums, museums of local and regional importance)
- Specialized museums (collections of topics not mentioned above).

Some museums, possessing different collections, belong to several types.

Therefore the allocation is as follows:

Total museums	915	
Art Museums	173	17,7 %
Museums of History	89	9,1 %
Ethnographic Museums	14	1,4 %
Scientific Museums	85	8,7 %
Technical Museums	66	6,7 %
Regional / Local Museums	388	39,6 %
Specialised Museums	164	16,8 %
Total	979	100.0 %

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

There is no reliable investigation concerning the ownership structure in Swiss museums. It has to be stressed, that divided ownership structure often occurs. Therefore it needs to be asked, who is the legal body of the museum, who owns the collection, who is in possession of the house, in which the museum is located, and who manages the institution. Especially in smaller museums (however not only in these) each of these functions may be in the responsibility of another institution. Secure data concerning the ownership can only be given for 102 institutions:

Federation	10
Cantons	71
Municipalities	6
Foundations	7
Associations/Cooperatives	13
Companies	1
Private Persons	4
Unknown	803

Existing Data - Basic Figures and Diagrams

Since 1999 the Swiss Museums Association has been asking its members for the number of visitors in the preceding year. The association receives the data of approximately 350 museums (out of 600 members and a total of 900 museums). These figures are however communicated confidentially. For this reason the aggregated totals only are published and may be handed out to the research and the media.

1998: INFO 63 (December 1999) p .67; 1999: INFO 65 (December 2000) p.45; 2000 not published: 408 museums with a total of 10'620'995 visitors; 2001 not published. 2002 INFO 74 (July 2003) p. 27. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) has unfortunately put off their project with the Museums Association to gain a representative museum statistics at the end of September 2003 after one years work. The person in charge of this project is leaving the FOS and other projects are put on hold in order to save money.

Specialized occasional research of professors and students at universities and high schools (e.g. Mottaz Baran et al. see below) cannot compensate a regular and continuous statistics of the museums and their visitors.

List of References

Swiss Museums Guide: Schweizer Museumsführer = Guide des musées suisses = Guida dei musei svizzeri = Guid dals museums svizzers. Museen, Sammlungen und Ausstellungsorte in der Schweiz und im Fürstentum Liechtenstein. - Basel: F. Reinhardt Verlag, 2002, 9. Auflage, 592 Seiten

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Die Museen in der Schweiz. Entwicklung und Standort der verschiedenen Museumstypen 1990. Bundesamt für Statistik, Bern 1993, 19 Seiten

Öffentliche Ausgaben für Kultur und Freizeit; Ausgaben von Bund, Kantonen und Gemeinden = Dépenses publiques pour la culture et les loisirs, Dépenses de la Confédération, des cantons et des communes 1990. Bundesamt für Statistik = Office fédérale de la statistique; 16 Kultur, Lebensbedingungen und Sport / Culture, conditions de vie et sport. Bern 1994

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Indikatoren der öffentliche Kulturausgaben. Standardisierte Kennziffern 1990-1996. Bundesamt für Statistik; Office fédérale de la statistique; 16 Kultur, Lebensbedingungen und Sport / Culture, conditions de vie et sport. - Neuchâtel 1999.