

Denmark

Report by
The National Cultural Heritage Agency
Denmark

Introduction - Key Issues

A new museum law has been established in Denmark in 2012.

Definition of Museum

The term “museum” is not a protected designation in Denmark. Only registered museums are eligible for federal funding. Finance authorities are responsible for deciding whether cultural facilities are eligible for tax exemption. The term “museum” is similar to the situation in other countries. The definition of the term “museum” is largely aligned with the ICOM definition¹ and is also set down in Danish Museum Law. Visitors to zoos are not included in museum statistics, as is also true of exhibition spaces, science centers, planetariums and nature reserves. However, some monuments and points of interest are included.

Existence of Museum-related Laws

The Danish Museum Law includes museums under two categories depending on the form of the agency legally responsible for them: State museums (of which there are 6 in 2015) and state-supported museums (numbering 98 in 2015, of which 56 are cultural history museums, 27 art galleries and 2 natural history museums. 13 museums are both cultural history and natural history museums)².

In 2012 a revised museum act was passed. It states that museums should work to be in contact with and reflect contemporary society. The Act states that museums should be sustainable units – economically and professionally. They must act to actualize knowledge about heritage and culture, and make it available and relevant to the public as well as ensure the preservation of heritage and culture for future generations. Every state-subsidised (approved) museum has a special responsibility defined in time, subject and if possible geography.

In addition, the cultural heritage museums are engaged in preserving the cultural heritage of Denmark's countryside and towns and cities. For example, they must advise local authorities in connection with the planning of new construction works, etc. (<http://english.slks.dk/cultural-heritage/sites-and-monuments/archaeology/>)

The annual museum statistics include (2015³) 254 museums. 104 are approved by the State. In the annual museum statistics there is information about the following topics:

- No. of museums in the different museum categories (national museum, cultural history, art, natural history, other)
- Type of ownership (State, municipality, association/private foundation, private)
- No. of visitors, location (municipality) and yearly opening hours

¹ A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

² Source: Danish Statistics

³ Source: Danish Statistics

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

Museums in Denmark are divided into four categories with regard to their main area of collecting: museums of cultural history (including technological museums), art museums, museums of natural history and museums that are a mixture of the above. This classification of museum types is an approximation of the UNESCO classification.

State museums are almost entirely financed by the state. State-supported museums receive state subsidy along with support from local authorities, from the district in which they are located, as well as from private foundations and the like.

Existing Data – Basic Figures and Diagrams

As part of the educational plan for Danish museums, which is to contribute to improving the educational role of museums, The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces is conducting a number of different user surveys.

Danish museums report every year on their activities to the Agency for Culture and Palaces

Danish Museums in Numbers is an annual publication informed by reports from the state subsidized under the Danish museums Act. It presents the key figures describing the museums' professional activities and their organizations. It follows up on several of the recommendations that given to the museums over the last ten years in different strategies, reports and key learnings.

The information is used by the agency for Culture and Palaces as part of the supervision of the museums.

Also the key figures are meant as a tool for benchmarking for the museums.

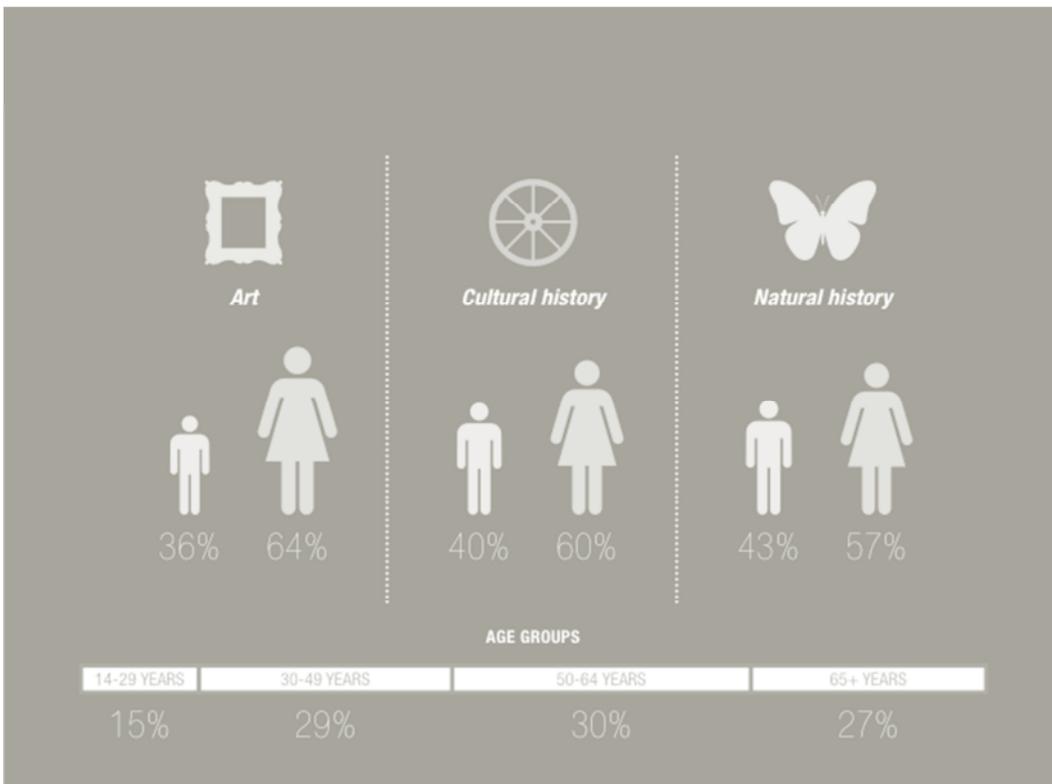
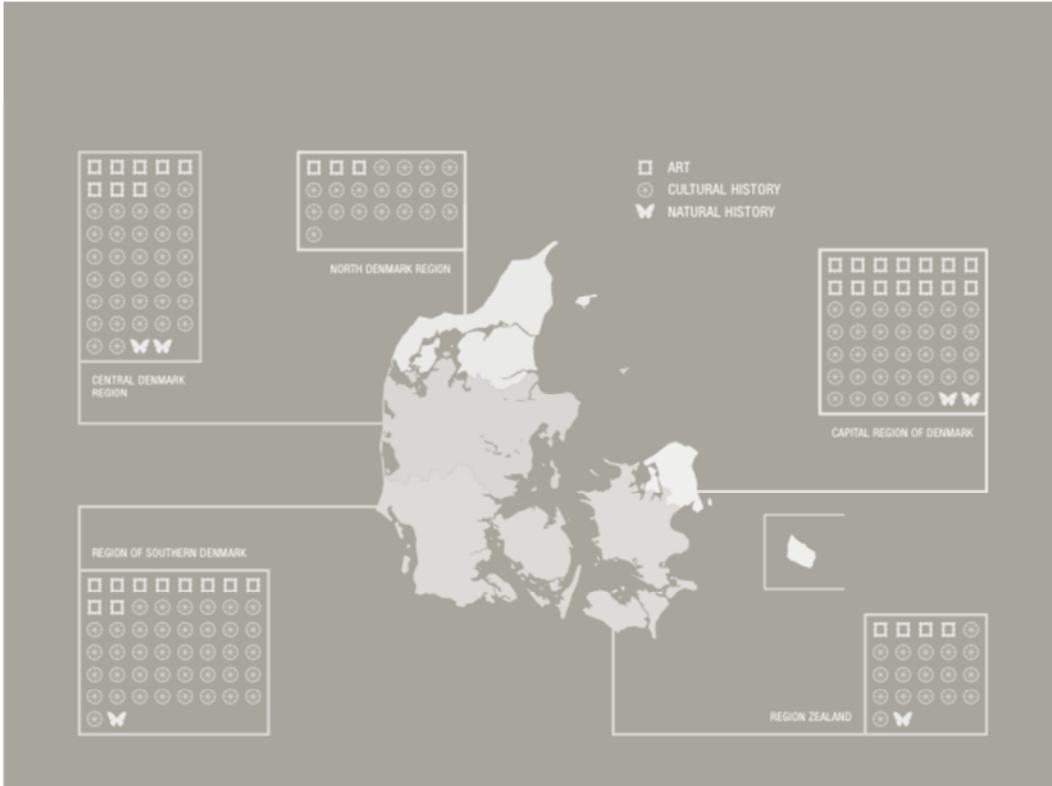
Danish Museums in Numbers has not been published since 2013, but a publication is planned for 2017.

User Surveys at museums and cultural institutions in Denmark

As something new, even in an international setting, the Danish Agency for Culture's national user survey includes all of the national and government-approved museums in Denmark as well as other important cultural institutions, and it therefore provides a comprehensive and systematic insight into who use – or do not use – the museums. The user survey offers insight into who uses the museums, how they use them and the users' assessments of the museums.

From the user survey 2014:

A Guide to Museum Statistics in Europe





WEB USER SURVEY

The Danish Agency for Culture has completed a web user survey in 2010 that supplements the national user survey of the museums' physical users at national and government-approved museums. (Published in Danish only.)

List of References

- <http://english.slks.dk/english/museums/>
- <https://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1920>
- <http://english.slks.dk/english/museums/museum-surveys/>
- <http://slks.dk/museer/fakta-om-museerne/statistik-om-museer/museernes-webbrugere/>