

## Italy

Report by

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### Introduction – Key Issues

In the last years, political relevance, and the economic and social importance of cultural activities and behaviours are increasing in Italy. In fact, the number of people employed, public and private funds involved and mass participation in cultural activities all imply that relevant statistical information on the sector has to be available. As consequence of the administrative decentralisation (*devolution*) process, the role of Regions has increased also in cultural heritage management. At the same time, the need of harmonised and integrated statistics, in order to co-ordinate policies, has become more relevant.

In the statistical field, in 1997, a Working Group on Cultural Statistics - called SISC (*Sistema Informativo Statistiche Culturali*) - was created to build up an integrated system of cultural statistics. ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) has coordinated the Working Group, formed by the representatives of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, Regions, Provinces, Municipalities and University. In particular, Regional governments are represented in SISC by *CISIS (Conferenza Interregionale Sistemi Informativi e Statistici)*, a statistical Committee created to establish common regional policies in public administration and co-ordinate statistical activities.

SISC has set up several task forces to work on statistics in different cultural fields (libraries, sport and so on) and one is, in particular, on museums. The Museum Task Force of SISC has conducted a preliminary exploration of national and regional statistical sources and data. Then, the Task Force has worked on the revision of definitions, classifications and nomenclatures for museums. In fact, comparisons between data were difficult as they are based on different definitions. A result of the Museum Task Force activity has been the building up of a basic questionnaire for the surveys on museums, at local and national level. The Task Force completed the activity in 2000, proposing a questionnaire with the main questions, which have to be included for basic information. The common questionnaire has been tested by many Regions, as *Marche, Emilia Romagna* and *Piemonte*, in local surveys autonomously carried out. This questionnaire is more articulated than the previous one - used by ISTAT for museums census, in 1992 - and it's divided in three main sections.

In the first section we collect general and more usual variables like:

- Address
- Museum Type – Type of Collections (in this questionnaire we have a double query: the first is a multiresponse query, so it is possible to define also a polythematic museum, only in the second part one must indicate the predominant subject of the exhibits and collections)
- Administrative Status - the proposal is to distinguish between public and private museums. Public museums are broken down into the State owned museums and other public museums administered or owned by local authorities (province, region, municipalities);
- Number of Visitors;
- Admission Fees;
- Staff (with detailed information: a distinction between permanent and temporary staff, between scientific staff and others, voluntaries, apprentices).

In the second section there are variables about:

- Management (financial resources – income and expenditures)
- Exhibits (number of, ownership)

- Cataloguing
- Activities (Exhibitions, restoration, seminars and conferences, research, etc.)

In the third section, there are data about the building where the museum is housed, ownership, period, condition of preservation and the space layout (exhibition rooms, storage rooms, café, restaurant, information point, etc.), plant engineering and equipment (didactic, new technologies, etc.).

### **Prospects**

ISTAT is collaborating with many Regions, establishing the basic data that has to be collected; testing the questionnaire, with a standard question block; sometimes coordinating local surveys; integrating and collecting data from several resources; promoting a new national survey. The goal for ISTAT is to find out the basic information on the museums, in order to construct common Key Indicators. In fact, the risk is that - because of the present lack of a national census - any region could carry out a local survey using different instruments, definitions, classifications and methodologies in collecting data.

At present, a complete list of museums doesn't exist in Italy and information is scattered between many sources and institutions. On account of the foregoing statements, ISTAT is planning to construct an Archive with the file address and basic information and to map the museums. The project concerns the updating and the integration of the list of the museums, elaborated through the 1992 census by ISTAT, as such starting point.

In order to integrate and update that file, ISTAT intends to identify the main sources on museums, spread over the several Authorities that have direct or indirect competence (administrative or in managing) on museums, and on similar institutions that operate in the field of conservation, promotion, scientific research, study, and enjoyment of museums and cultural heritage, at central and local level, such as:

- Regions,
- Provinces,
- Municipalities,
- *Soprintendenze* of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage,
- Universities,
- Other local authorities and public entities,
- Ecclesiastical entities,
- private entities (for example, the National Guide of Museums by the Touring Club).

The first goal would be to collect, compare and integrate several registers and local information, in order to construct a database with elementary information on museums and their basic characteristics (who, where, what) and a map of them. The second step is to select and classify the museums found, on the basis of international definitions and classifications, and to describe the distribution of the museums, if possible, broken-down by the main characteristics, such as: Ownership, Type of Collection, Dimension (collections conserved) and Average of visits in the year.

This database is preliminary to a new census and/or a sample survey – statistically representative – on the universe of museums.

### **Definition of Museum**

The legal definition of museum, such as in “Complete-only one text on the cultural heritage” (D.Lgs. n. 490/1999; art. 99), is:

*“institution, however named, organised for conservation, exploitation and exhibition of the collection of cultural goods”.*

The State law defines museums in a very broad sense. A more technical definition is from the statistics. As in national surveys (ISTAT), a museum, according to the definition given by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), is:

*“A permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, whose priority activity is not a commercial one, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of man and his environment”.*

In addition to museums designated in the strict sense as such, the following “*similar institutions*”, recognised by ICOM as *having the character of museums*, are also covered by the ISTAT survey:

- a) Conservation institutes and exhibition galleries dependent on libraries and archives centres, schools, academies and other scientific institutes.
- b) Natural, archaeological, and ethnographic monuments and sites and historical monuments and sites of a museum nature, owing to their acquisition, conservation and communication activities (including: Natural sites, Historical gardens, Botanical and zoological garden, Aquaria, Vivaria, Nature reserves, Science centres and Planetaria).

This definition is used in Italian surveys, comparing data and figures at international level.

### **Existence of Museum – related Laws**

The outline State law concerning the management of the cultural heritage, called “*Complete-only one text on the cultural heritage*” (Decreto Legislativo 29 ottobre 1999, n° 490 - Testo Unico delle disposizioni legislative in materia di beni culturali e ambientali; see at URL: <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/99490dl.htm>), has been made, in 1999, by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage. Previous legislation on State museums has been assembled within this State law, establishing the general policy and regulation of the whole matter. With this law, the Ministry has decided to delegate and decentralize the management of some museums to the local Authorities and Entities. A National Commission should identify the museums and similar institutions that have had to be entrusted to territorial Authorities for management.

Conservation, organisation, management of the staff and additional services, security, enjoyment and exhibitions are delegated and entrusted to the Regions, Provinces and Municipalities. At present, almost every Region has legislated about local museums (see, for example, for Emilia-Romagna, the Regional Law n.18/2000, at URL: [www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/LEGGI/Lr%2018-2000.htm](http://www.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/LEGGI/Lr%2018-2000.htm)).

The Ministry reserves the authority and offices concerning the protection of cultural heritage and conserves the responsibility for the control and definition of technical and scientific minimum standards that have to be respected and assured by local entities for management and services. In particular, as by ministerial decree enacted in 2000 (D.M. 25/07/2000 - Atto di indirizzo sui criteri tecnico-scientifici e sugli standard di funzionamento e sviluppo dei musei), the Ministry has defined the guidelines with technical and scientific criteria and standards for the functioning and developing of museums. The guidelines are defined according to the standards of professional practice by ICOM (International Council of Museums). These standards concern legal status, expenditures, infrastructures, personnel, security, Management of collections, public services and relationship with the local territory of museums.

Concerning the property and the managing of the cultural heritage, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002, the Italian Senate approved a decree (“safe deficit” decree), deciding to privatize (denationalize) some public goods and public overhead capital (such as buildings, lands and infrastructures) owned by central and local administrations, in order to valorise them and improve the national accounts, and also to reduce the deficit from their sale. At the moment, the debate is about guarantees needed for the cultural heritage. Although cultural heritage is protected by the Constitution that prohibits selling and transferring public goods of cultural interest, at the present, there isn’t a list or register of the inalienable and untransferable goods within the cultural heritage.

### **Categories used regarding Type of Collection**

In Italian surveys and statistics, the permanent collections conserved by museums are classified by the following categories, depending on the main character of the materials and objects:

**a) Art, archaeology and history museums, including:**

1. Art museums: museums for the display of fine and applied art works. Sculpture museums, picture galleries, photography and cinema museums, architecture museums, including art exhibition galleries permanently maintained by libraries and archives centres, fall within this group (UNESCO classification);
2. Archaeology and history museums: the aim of history museums is to present the historical evolution of a region, country, or province, over a limited period or over the centuries. Museums of archaeology are distinguished mainly by the fact that they owe all or a part of their collections to excavations. The group includes museums with collections of historical objects or remains, commemorative museums, archives museums, military museums, museums on historical persons, archaeological museums, antiques museums, etc. (UNESCO classification).

**b) Science and technology museums, ethnology museums, including:**

1. Natural history and natural science museums: museums dealing with subjects relating to one or several disciplines such as biology, geology, botany, zoology, palaeontology and ecology (UNESCO classification);
2. Science and technology museums: museums in this category are devoted to one or several exact sciences or technologies such as astronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medical science, construction and building industries, manufactured objects, etc.; also included in this category are planetaria and science centres (UNESCO classification);
3. Ethnography and anthropology museums: museums displaying materials on culture, social structure, beliefs, customs, traditional arts, etc. (UNESCO classification).

**c) Mixed museums, including:**

1. Specialized museums: museums concerned with research and display of all aspects of a single theme or subject not covered in one of the previous categories (UNESCO classification);
2. Regional museums: museums which illustrate a more or less extensive region constituting a historical and cultural entity and sometimes also an ethnic, economic or social one, i.e. whose collections refer more to a specific territory than to a specific theme or subject (UNESCO classification);
3. General museums: museums, which have mixed collections, not specialized collections, different types of collections and cannot be identified by a predominant field (UNESCO classification);
4. Other museums: museums not entering into any of the above categories (UNESCO classification).

### **Categories used regarding Type of Ownership**

Ownership entails the possession of a museum, both as structure and institution (building, permanent collections, materials and items conserved). In ISTAT statistics, main categories regarding type of ownership are:

a) *Public owned museums*: museums that are owned by the State, a University, Region, or Other public entity (Province, Municipality, city, town, etc);

b) *Private-owned museums*: museums owned by private entities as foundations or associations registered under private law or families and individuals, legally recognized (including also public/private partnership), or not recognized (private entities without any agreement or contracts with public institutions to run a museum).

### **Existing Data – Basic Figures and Diagrams**

The most recent data on all the museums existing on Italian territory date back to 1992 (referred to 1992 data and published in 1995). In fact, the last census was planned and carried out by ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Institute) in 1992 and it was partially updated (no. of museums, addresses, etc.) in 1996.

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This census referred to museums and “similar institutions” together. The detailed data on museums, published by ISTAT, concern information on the number of admissions, income, collections conserved, staff and services only for the museums open in the considered year. In 1995, ISTAT and the Ministry updated the list of all the museums existing in Italy, by region, ownership and character. The number of museums by ownership and character are the following:

### Museums and similar institutions by ownership and type of collection, at 31<sup>th</sup> December 1995

<b>By Ownership</b>							
	State-owned museums	University-owned museums	Regional-owned museums	Other local-owned museums	Other public-owned museums	Private-owned museums	<b>Total</b>
<b>N.</b>	492	221	86	1.695	150	1.146	<b>3.790</b>
<b>%</b>	13,0	5,8	2,3	44,7	4,0	30,2	<b>100,0</b>
<b>By type of collection</b>							
	Art and archaeology museums	History museums	Science, natural history and technology museums	Ethnology and anthropology museums	Other museums (Specialized, Regional, General museums)		<b>Total</b>
<b>N.</b>	1.915	306	537	250	782		<b>3.790</b>
<b>%</b>	50,5	8,1	14,2	6,6	20,6		<b>100,0</b>

Source: Istat and Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, 1996.

Some detailed data, after 1995, on Italian museums are available, but just concerning State-owned Museums. In fact, at present, ISTAT collects, elaborates and publishes only data on State-owned museums, annually provided by the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage.

The Ministry uses the same definitions and classifications as the ISTAT census, in accordance with the guidelines given by the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The units covered by Ministerial survey were 386 State-owned Museums and similar institutions (Galleries, Monuments, Archaeological sites), in 2001. Another 16 institutions were permanently closed all the year round, either due to repairs, unfitness for use, or shortage of personnel. The survey concerns also 32 Circuits of museums with an inclusive price (museums belonging to the same circuit are accessible with one price all-in). The data on the visits and the income of the Circuits of museums are elaborated and published separate from the single museum or institution belonging to it.

The last data available on State-owned museums and similar institutions are illustrated in the tables as well.

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<b>State-owned museums, galleries, monuments and archaeological sites, visits and incomes by kind of the institute and year - Years 1996-2001 (absolute figures; income in 1.000 €)</b>										
Year	INSTITUTIONS			VISITS						Income (1.000 Eur)
	with paid admission	with free entrance	Total	of institutions with paid admission			of institutions with free entrance	Total		
				Paid entries	Free entries	Total				
<b>MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES</b>										
1997	132	45	177	6.026.908	4.210.583	10.237.491	345.179	10.582.670	29.431	
1998	129	50	179	6.657.040	4.065.564	10.722.604	343.812	11.066.416	33.301	
1999	131	50	181	6.129.391	4.027.624	10.157.015	338.941	10.495.956	32.108	
2000	137	49	186	6.647.513	3.884.931	10.532.444	340.077	10.872.521	33.383	
2001	140	48	188	6.530.960	3.652.750	10.183.710	346.139	10.529.849	33.130	
<b>MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES</b>										
1997	70	113	183	5.981.640	3.893.708	9.875.348	5.604.457	15.479.815	26.817	
1998	68	117	185	7.214.425	4.222.542	11.438.166	5.224.787	16.662.593	32.673	
1999	71	114	185	7.246.398	4.433.050	11.679.448	4.992.335	16.671.783	32.834	
2000	74	119	193	6.966.989	3.754.462	10.721.451	6.134.661	16.856.112	28.246	
2001	76	122	198	6.641.680	3.324.120	9.965.800	5.328.855	15.294.655	28.477	
<b>CIRCUITS OF MUSEUMS (a)</b>										
1999	14	-	14	116.994	10.835	127.829	-	127.829	1.063	
2000	25	-	25	1.873.271	573.389	2.446.660	-	2.446.660	15.387	
2001	32	-	32	2.538.384	1.176.245	3.714.629	-	3.714.629	19.316	
<b>TOTAL</b>										
<b>1999</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>13.492.783</b>	<b>8.471.509</b>	<b>21.964.292</b>	<b>5.331.276</b>	<b>27.295.568</b>	<b>66.005</b>	
<b>2000</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>15.487.773</b>	<b>8.212.782</b>	<b>23.700.555</b>	<b>6.474.738</b>	<b>30.175.293</b>	<b>77.016</b>	
<b>2001</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>(b) 386</b>	<b>15.711.024</b>	<b>8.153.115</b>	<b>23.864.139</b>	<b>5.674.994</b>	<b>29.539.133</b>	<b>80.923</b>	

*Fonte:* Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities.

(a) The values on visits and income of circuits of museums have to be added to those on museums and galleries, monuments archaeological sites.

(b) The total State-owned institutions are 402, but 16 of them are permanently closed during the year considered because of repairs.

The figures are elaborated on the basis of the data collected by the Territorial Agencies on Cultural Heritage of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities (n. 500 *Soprintendenze*).

Data on Incomes refer only to the Gross-income of museums managed by the State, including the share (pay out ratio) of booking and ticket offices. The cutprice tickets of State-owned museums are defined by law and the 50% reduction is for European citizens, from 18 to 25 years old, and public school teachers.

### Other qualitative and quantitative surveys

In the last years, the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage has realized some qualitative surveys on museums, too. They are surveys on samples of museums, concerning the level of satisfaction by some categories of public and the museums services.

Many Italian Regions, especially in Northern and Central Italy, collect statistical data on local museums, but these local surveys aren't regular (it depends on budget availability). In particular, *Emilia-Romagna* and *Marche* regional authorities have just elaborated and published data on the museums collected through local surveys in 2001. With these pilot surveys, Regions have tested a standard questionnaire - arranged with ISTAT and Ministry, defining a restricted, fixed set of basic questions - and an additional set of questions on specific items (such as museum education programs, use of computers and technical standards) for administrative and local interests. At the present, the Region *Piemonte* is going to start a new pilot survey, collaborating with ISTAT. Concerning visits, ISTAT takes an annual Sample Survey on free time and cultural activities. The sample is about 20.000 families interviewed, equal to 55.000 persons. A special section of the questionnaire is dedicated to persons from 6 years and older having visited a museum and/or a gallery during the last 12 months. The definitions of museum and gallery are not specified and they are generic and indefinite, but the

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data allow the description of evolution and trend of the cultural participation by gender, age, educational qualification and regions.

Persons from 6 years and older having visited a museum and/or a gallery during the last 12 months, by gender, age, educational qualification and districts - Years 1995-2000 ( <i>per 100 persons with the same characteristics</i> )						
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>GENDER</b>						
Males	25,2	25,6	27,3	27,3	27,3	28,5
Females	24,3	25,7	26,3	26,2	26,4	28,6
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
6-10 years	28,9	30,2	33,2	32,2	33,1	38,5
11-14	38,8	41,7	45,9	44,0	45,0	46,8
15-17	36,6	37,2	38,5	40,5	40,7	40,0
18-19	35,3	36,7	40,5	38,0	35,9	39,2
20-24	30,4	33,3	33,2	34,2	33,0	34,0
25-34	30,1	31,1	31,6	32,1	31,2	34,0
35-44	30,2	30,1	31,0	31,6	31,2	30,9
45-54	25,5	26,9	28,6	27,8	29,1	31,9
55-59	19,8	20,3	21,8	20,9	22,7	26,3
60-64	14,5	14,9	15,9	19,2	20,4	21,2
65-74	10,5	11,3	12,2	11,1	11,7	13,3
75 and over	3,7	4,2	4,1	4,5	5,0	6,4
<b>EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION</b>						
University degree	56,3	61,6	61,9	63,8	63,1	64,1
Upper secondary school certificate	42,1	41,3	42,1	42,6	42,2	43,6
Lower and primary school certificate	23,3	23,2	24,2	24,0	23,6	25,7
None	12,2	13,2	13,6	13,3	14,1	15,3
<b>DISTRICT</b>						
North-West	30,6	31,9	31,6	32,3	32,0	33,2
North-East	34,3	34,2	35,8	33,8	34,5	35,8
Centre	26,2	25,8	29,1	27,9	27,8	32,0
South	14,6	16,2	16,8	18,4	17,4	18,8
Islands	15,4	17,3	18,4	18,1	21,0	21,2
<b>ITALY</b>	<b>24,8</b>	<b>25,6</b>	<b>26,8</b>	<b>26,7</b>	<b>26,8</b>	<b>28,6</b>

*Source: Istat - Sample Survey on population (Free time and Cultural Activities, in particular, as Reading, Theatres, Cinema, Tv, Radio, Libraries, Sport, etc.).*

Also some research centres and private centres carry out statistical activities, for example TCI (Italian Touring Club).

### List of References

*Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali*- D.ssa Rosa Caffo – Ufficio di Statistica- Via del Collegio Romano, 27 – 00186 - Roma – [www.beniculturali.it](http://www.beniculturali.it); [rcaffo@beniculturali.it](mailto:rcaffo@beniculturali.it).

*Cisis; Centro Interregionale per il Sistema Informatico ed il Sistema Statistico*; Via A. Depretis, 65 - 00184 Roma; [www.cisis.it](http://www.cisis.it).

*Regione Emilia Romagna*; D.ssa Maria Pia Guermendi - Istituto per i Beni Culturali; Via Farini, 17 – 40124 - Bologna; [www.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it](http://www.ibc.regione.emilia-romagna.it).

*Regione Piemonte*; Daniela Formento; Dirigente responsabile Direzione Beni Culturali settore musei e patrimonio culturale; Via Meucci, 1 – 10121 – Torino; [www.regione.piemonte.it](http://www.regione.piemonte.it); [daniela.formento@regione.piemonte.it](mailto:daniela.formento@regione.piemonte.it);

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