

Slovak Republic

Report by

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Introduction - Key Issues

In Slovakia, like in many other countries, collecting as the forerunner of museology was practised in individual cases already in the Renaissance period. The idea of collecting and its actual realisation began to develop on a larger scale under the influence of the Enlightenment in the 18th century. Apart from exhibiting, the first museums also had an educational role.

A specific feature of collecting in Slovakia was its connection with the process of national independence. The representatives of the Slovak nation regarded the collecting of antiquities as an evidence of cultural advancement of our predecessors and an acknowledgement of the historicity of the nation and its right of national independence. After the first Czechoslovak Republic had been established in 1918, Slovak museology developed under the influence of a more advanced Czech museology, thanks to which the first professional museum organisations formed (Czechoslovak Union of Museums).

The establishment of galleries as autonomous specialised art museums started only after the Second World War. The efforts to constitute the national gallery date back to the mid-1800s, however, they were successful only after the Act of the Slovak National Council No. 24 on the Slovak National Gallery had been adopted on 29 July 1948. In the past fifty years, a network of twenty galleries has been set up, covering the whole territory of Slovakia.

Art historians are members of the Union of Slovak Artists and some of them are members of the international organisation AICA or the Art-Historical Society of Slovakia. In the 1990s, an autonomous Association of Theoreticians, Critics and Art Historians was established and in 1990, the representatives of galleries established a professional organisation, the Council of Galleries of Slovakia.

Many museums and galleries in Slovakia and their professional staff are members of the Slovak Committee of the International Council of Museum – SK ICOM.

Definition of Museum

The definition of the museum in the Slovak Republic used by members of the museum profession is identical with that defined by ICOM. Moreover, the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 115/1998 on museums and galleries and the care of museum and gallery objects defines the museum in Article 2, Section 4 as follows:

“The museum or gallery is a specialised corporate entity or an organisational body of the corporate entity, which ensures that collecting, scientific appraisal and management of the collections is conducted on the basis of scientific study and research. The collections should be accessible to the public and used in the public interest.”

Other articles of the Act define the goals and objectives of museums, particularly as regards the specialist care of objects – e. g. the recording and documenting of collections, classification, presentation.

* By "gallery" we understand the art museum (Fine Arts Museum)

Existence of Museum- related Laws

The questions of establishing, operating and defining museums were first regulated in the Slovak Republic by the Act of the Slovak National Council No. 109/1961 on museums and galleries.

The Act was followed by the directives, which regulated the conditions of the care of the collections in museums and galleries. The regulations valid from 1980 set out conditions for forming the database of collection items in the supreme institutions – the Slovak National Museum and the Slovak National Gallery.

At present, museology and, in a broader context, the care of the cultural heritage is regulated by the following legislation:

1. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 115/1998 of the Code on museums and galleries and the care of the museum and gallery objects in accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 387/2001 of the Code.
2. Resolution No. 91/2001 to Declaration of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the preservation of the cultural heritage.
3. Regulation of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic No. 342/1998 of the Code on the care and management of the museum and gallery collections.
4. Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Republic No. 94/1958 of the Code About covenant of the preservation of the cultural heritage in war conflict and the subsequent protocols (The Hague Protocol).
5. Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic No. 15/1980 of the Code About agreement on the safeguards against illicit import, export and the transfer of ownership of the cultural heritage.
6. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 49/2002 of the Code on the preservation of the monuments fund.
7. Agreement on the preservation of the world cultural and natural heritage legal notice No. 159/1991 of the Code.
8. Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 287/1994 of the Code on the preservation of nature and landscape in the version of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No.222/1996 of the Code.
9. Act No. 183/2000 of the Code on libraries and amendments to the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 27/1987 of the Code on the State care of monuments on revisions and amendments to the Act No. 68/1997 of the Code on Matica slovenská in accordance with the Act No. 416/2001 of the Code.
10. Act No. 149/1975 of the Code on keeping archives in the version of revisions and amendments declared unabridged in the Act No. 332/1992 of the Code.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

The classification of collection items is regulated by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 115/1998 of the Code on museums and galleries and the care of the museum and gallery objects (Article 6, Section 2) and the Regulation of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic No. 342/1998 of the Code on the management of the museum and gallery collections in Article 14.

“The classification committee determines the classification of objects into categories. The classification of the collection items into categories can be re-appraised in accordance with the current knowledge of the cultural, historical, artistic or scientific significance.”

Categories used regarding Type of Ownership

In accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 115/1998 of the Code on museums and galleries and on the care of the museum and gallery objects in the version of the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 387/2001, museums can be established by

- bodies of the State administration
- regional administration
- communities
- other corporate entities
- private persons

The museum founder determines the classification of the ownership of the collections – the objects are the property of the State, of the regional administration, of communities and other corporate entities or

private persons. Over 90 % of the objects displayed in the museums and galleries of the Slovak Republic are the property of the State or the regional or local administration. Only a fraction is in the possession of private owners.

Existing Data - Basic Figures and Diagrams

A systematic processing of statistical data on the activities of museums and galleries began in the 1960s. In 1967, the Slovak National Museum processed the first complex statistics on the museum activities in Slovakia.

Since then, museums annually forward statistics on their activities to the specialist centre of the Slovak National Museum. Statistics of the galleries are not continually processed – each gallery processed its own statistical records for the Slovak Statistics Bureau, but the complex data were processed in the Slovak National Gallery only at the time when the SNG had a methodical department – until the year 1990. This practice was, however, reintroduced in 1997.

Currently, museums are obliged to produce two types of statistics. The KULT record is processed for the need of the Statistic Bureau of the Slovak Republic. It is a summary of the basic quantification data, such as the number of collection items, visitors, operational costs for museums and galleries, number of displays and exhibitions, employment and its structure. This is an official indicator of the data concerning the activities of museums and galleries processed for the needs of the State administration. The structure of data in the statistical report - KULT for museums and KULT for galleries - was different in the past, but since 2002 it has been harmonised.

Since 1967, the specialist department of the Slovak National Museum – the National Museum Centre has elaborated the Annual Report on Activities of the Museums in Slovakia. Besides the quantification data contained in the KULT record, it also provides a written description of the state, activities and problems of museums in the Slovak Republic. Since 1996, these statistics have been processed by special software – Automated Museum Statistics Information System (AMSIS). The software has been distributed to museums that are obliged to forward statistics to the Slovak National Museum – National Museum Centre every year in February. After processing, the complex statistics are supplied to museums, the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and to the founders of museums in the Slovak Republic.

The summary of data is also published in the press – in the journal MÚZEUM.

AMSIS - The automated museum statistics information system monitors the following data:

1. General data on museums – address, contacts, director, superior authority, opening hours, affiliated branches, problems
2. Care of the collections – equipment of museums with electric security alarm, fire alarm, costs of conservation and preparation – by subcontracting, acquisitions in photo documentation of collection items
3. Acquisition – acquiring collection items and acquisition methods (own collection, research, gift, purchase, transfer) classified into social sciences (archaeology, history, ethnography, art history, music history, numismatics and others), natural sciences (geology, mineralogy, petrography, palaeontology, botany, zoology, anthropology), history of technology
4. Documentation of collection items – social sciences, natural sciences, history of technology
5. Permanent displays (title of display, address, date of origin, catalogue, type – social sciences, natural sciences, open-air display, memorial display)
6. Exhibitions (title of exhibition, curator – author of scenario, date and place of exhibition, exhibition catalogue, type of exhibition – own, transferred, exported, imported)
7. Scientific research (title of research task, researchers, duration, scientific field, result)
8. Publishing (title, published in the year, circulation, type of publication – catalogue, guide, monograph, etc.)
9. State of archives, library – quantification indicators
10. Promotion (promotion of museums in mass media – number of titles, programmes, etc.)
11. Human resources development (total number of museum employees – of which the number of curators according to scientific branches, lecturers, restorers, librarians, conservationists, photographers, technical and economic personnel)
12. Curators of collections
13. Number of visitors – according to museum premises – paying, non-paying admissions

14. Study trips abroad

15. Museum budget – funds from the founder, income from museum activities, income from admission, structure of costs (salaries, purchase of collection items, publishing, permanent displays and exhibitions, expenditure for restoration and conservation).

Both statistical forms have identical qualitative data, however, the AMSIS programme is more detailed. In 1999, the Slovak National Gallery requested the authorised software producer to tailor it to the needs of statistical data of galleries. The changes were made in the structure of the collections (painting, sculpture, drawing, graphic art, other media, applied arts, non-professional art) – report of acquisitions (3) and documentation of the collections (4), displays and exhibitions (5) – title, author of concept, venue, date of origin, accompanying publication; publishing (6) – title, author/compiled by, year of publishing, circulation, type of publication, other items are identical. Since 1999 the Slovak National Gallery has elaborated the Annual Report of the Gallery in AGSIS software.

List of References

Naturally, the best reference to the Slovak statistics is its 36-year old history. The current statistics is based on the knowledge of museum and gallery practice, taking into account the needs of museums as well as official statistics.

In accordance with the changes of the founders of museums and galleries during the transformation processes in the Slovak Republic after 1989, the new founders accepted the current method of processing statistical data in the museums and galleries. The Statistic Bureau of the Slovak Republic accepted specific proposals of the Slovak National Museum – the National Museum Centre in processing the KULT report – for the official statistics form of the Slovak Republic for the operation of museums.