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MUSEUMS AROUND THE WORLD

IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

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*p. 8 : Victoria & Albert Museum, London © Getty. Photography Tristan Fewings**

p. 11 : First mediation that took place at the Colonial Museum of the Ministry of Culture, located in Bogotá, once it reopened its doors in late 2020 (photo by Manuel Amaya, 2020) © Museo Nacional de Colombia/ Manuel Amaya

*p. 21 : State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg © State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg**

p. 28 : The Head of Conservation and Restoration of the National Museum of Colombia-Ministry of Culture, located in Bogotá, during the mounting of the temporary art exhibition Cien por ocho (100x8) in 2020 (photo by Catalina Plazas) © Museo Nacional de Colombia/Catalina Plazas

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KEY TRENDS

Museums have been **particularly affected** by the COVID-19 pandemic:

For the institutions concerned, **revenues have dropped** **80%** compared to 2019

43% of museums faced **closures in the first quarter of 2021.**

In the face of COVID-19, the museum sector has adapted by strengthening links with communities and **enhancing cooperation among museums** to set up **common solutions**.

Public support varies widely from one state to another. In **50%** of states that responded to this question, **public subsidies for national institutions have decreased**, in some cases very significantly.

UNESCO estimates the number of museums in the world at around

104,000

SUMMARY

This report is part of the implementation of the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society*. It has been developed as a follow-up to the *Museums Around the World In the Face of COVID-19* report, published in May 2020.

The cultural sector has been severely and persistently affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with museums particularly hard hit: the 2020 UNESCO report estimated that nearly 90%, or an estimated 85,000 institutions, had been closed for varying lengths of time. The role of museums in society is essential, as they are responsible not only for preserving heritage for future generations but also as central actors for promoting lifelong learning and equal access to culture and the dissemination of values on which humanity is based. Their function in terms of social inclusion is vital to ensuring the cohesion of our societies, and they are also major players in the creative and tourism economies.

In this particularly difficult context, UNESCO has launched a 2021 study to reassess, based on contributions from UNESCO Member States, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museum attendance, budgets and activities in order to analyze the threats to the sector and its evolution in the next few years. The questions focused mainly on national museums, but according to responses by 87 Member States[1], similar measures have been followed by most museums.

Update of the situation facing museums

With the contributions of Member States, the survey has helped refine our overall knowledge of the museum sector worlwide. The **number of museums in the world is estimated to be close to 104,000**[1] but these institutions are not evenly distributed: 61% of the institutions are located in Western Europe and North America, 18% in Asia-Pacific, 11% in Eastern Europe, 8% in Latin America and Caribbean, but only 0.8% in Africa and 0.7% in the Arab States.

83% of the States responding to the survey took measures to close in 2020, either totally or partially, for periods ranging from less than a month to a year. On average, these closures were adopted for **over 150 days in 2020**. Museum attendance has fallen sharply in all States. Even for institutions that remained open with sanitary measures in place, the drastic decrease in world tourism resulted in a **drop in attendance of 70%**. Based on estimates from the survey results, the revenues of the institutions (especially the national museums) have decreased between 40% and 60% in comparison to the revenues from 2019.

The evolution of the health crisis has caused nearly **half of the States** (43% of responses) to **take measures to close** museums **again in 2021**, which raises concerns that the situation for museums will remain very difficult this year.

Museum activities in times of crisis

The most visible impact on the activity of museums corresponds to their educational and social work. The interruption of traditional educational activities (school visits, guided tours, workshops) as a result of the pandemic was a painful experience for schools. Yet, many measures have been taken for museums to continue their knowledge dissemination work, either by setting up new devices (mediation kits that can be used by families outside of museums), by using other media, or by the development of digital tools. Here, the role of information and communication technologies, widely referred to in the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Museums*, has confirmed its value, having been deployed by utilizing prior digitization investments, the development of virtual visits, the use of social networks, etc. **The digital divide between regions, already highlighted in previous reports, has been a major obstacle** to fulfilling the educational function of museum's, in the context of lockdown.

The activities of museums are not only related to education. The pandemic has also made difficult the maintainance of measures around the security and preservation of collections and has raised concerns in several States. The world of museums, on the other hand, has particularly recognized the social role it is called upon to play, especially, for example, in the context of the *Black Lives Matter*[2] movement in the United States of America, and more generally in the context of the global economic crisis that has hit societies. This twofold observation leads **museums to renew their commitment to the issues of contemporary societies.** In this regard, museums have been supported by national and international museum associations of professionals, which act as essential partners in the development of the sector.

1 This estimate includes the United States of America and Israel as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector.

Public measures in support of museums

Like UNESCO, Member States have taken many measures to support museums during the pandemic. Some assisted in setting up safety protocols in the event of confinement and the reopening of museums, and others published numerous documents regarding the actions to be taken in compliance with the health measures to protect the public and professionals.

In terms of funding, **public subsidies** have remained stable for a quarter of the States that replied to this specific question and have even increased (to compensate for losses due to closures) for another quarter, but they **have decreased**, sometimes very significantly (by more than 40%), **for almost half of the museums in the Member States** that responded to the survey.

Preparing for the future

In this respect, the main threats to museums are related to the **decrease in revenue and its impact on the organization of the museum sector in general**, as well as to the overall consequences of the crisis on the **conservation or security measures** of the institutions, and their **relations with the public**. Some States have noted the digital challenges brought by this crisis, and a few mentioned the risks of sales of museums collections or permanent closures as a result of the crisis. A quarter of States, however, did not express concern. Member States were also largely aware of the impact of closures and drops in attendance on the surrounding communities, on wage cuts and job losses (one third of responses), and overall on all jobs linked to the tourism sector and heritage-related activities, which are all suffering from the crisis in the long term.

In addition to these threats, which are largely economic in nature, museums are concerned about their role in society, as they are aware of changes, particularly in the context of equal rights, social justice and climate change. Museums, through all their activities, are key actors for fully engaging societies to achieve the **17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda**.

The role of the public authorities in supporting, guiding and financing museums is crucial. In this context, UNESCO's role is more than ever to support Member States in developing the most appropriate measures in favour of the museum sector, in particular through capacity development, taking into account the social role of museums and digital development. These actions are in line with UNESCO's mandate for the protection of cultural heritage, education, the fight against the digital divide and the combat against the illicit trafficking of cultural property. UNESCO is a **platform for dialogue and international cooperation** for the entire cultural sector and the international community, aiming to protect museums, identify their needs and prepare their future. Its role in defining standards and recommending **good practices** aims to disseminate in all regions of the world, and particularly in those where the museum network is still fragile, the knowledge acquired by these institutions founded on the notion of transmission and services to the public. Finally, museums must occupy a central place within the cultural policies that the Member States have adopted, so that they can ensure the protection and the transmission of heritage and the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, and benefit from public funding that enables them to fulfil their functions.

INTRODUCTION

"Museums create links, they are bridges and this is very important. The museum does not belong to us, it belongs to the former and the future generations, we just keep it."

Mikhail Piotrovskiy, General Director of the State Hermitage Museum (Russian Federation) [II]

UNESCO has always put museums at the heart of its mission. *The 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* recalls their major role in and for societies, as places for dialogue and sharing as well as their research and educational function, contributing to development, quality of life, inclusion and social cohesion.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, culture is currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis and museums are paying a heavy price. This is why UNESCO has been stepping up its efforts since the beginning of the crisis in 2020 to assess the impact of the crisis, launch joint reflections and coordinated initiatives to help museums and the cultural sector through this difficult period. In this regard, UNESCO has:

- brought together more than 130 Ministers of Culture for an online meeting in April 2020 to discuss actions to support the cultural sector and co-organized several debates with museum institutions around the world to provide a space for debate to cultural professionals and institutions, to imagine together how to better protect museums in the future:
  - with Ibermuseos (Brazil), three Resiliart debates were organized, "Museums in times of pandemic – innovation and perspectives" (May 2020), "Museums and their audiences in times of crisis" (June 2020) and "Reaffirming the social role of museums in times of crisis" (July 2020);
  - with the International Institute for the Inclusive Museum , India, a webinar, "What museums Post Pandemic?" (June 2020);
  - with ICCROM, a webinar, " Museums after the Pandemic "(July 2020);
  - in the framework of *ResiliArt Lebanon*, "Museums and art galleries for the return of cultural life in Beirut" (September 2020);
  - the UNESCO online debate with 12 museum directors "Reflections on the future of museums " (March 2021).
- assisted Member States, such as Croatia in March 2020, together with ICCROM and ICOM, to organize online capacity-building workshops for museum directors to help them deal with the double disasters of the earthquake and the COVID-19 crisis.

II *All quotes are from the online debate organized by UNESCO on Tuesday 18 March 2021, and of the ResiliArt Lebanon debate of 17 September 2020*

- issued in April 2020 the "Culture & COVID-19: Impact and Response Tracker" in order to provide an overview of the rapidly changing situation, including that of museums (No. 4).
- published in May 2020 a report entitled Museums around the world in the face of the COVID-19.This report, carried out with the support of UNESCO Field Offices, presented statistics on the number of museums in the world and highlighted the following elements:
  - almost 90% of museums worldwide were closed during the first months of the pandemic,
  - the museum sector reacted by developing new means for remaining connected to the public, particularly by increasing its online offers, often in an innovative way,
  - however, the digital divide remains significant, as already mentioned in the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation and a large number of reports.
- published a practical guide in December 2020, Culture in Crisis: Policy Guide for a Resilient Creative Sector, which highlights emergency measures that have proven to be effective and beneficial, including some for museums, and offers practical advice to help policy makers position the cultural and creative industries in economic and social recovery plans.

This present updated report is part of UNESCO's ongoing effort to protect, promote and assist museums. Its objective is to take stock of the situation, fifteen months after the beginning of the pandemic, as regards the impacts of the health crisis on museum institutions around the world. The museum sector has undergone radical transformations, it is however not yet possible to anticipate the full consequences. However, it can be estimated, as stated in reports by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO) or the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), that a certain number of institutions may have to close their doors.

This report is based on an online questionnaire carried out in March 2021 among UNESCO's Member States. It aims at specifying the constraints museums faced during the lockdown period, the difficulties they encountered during the year 2020, in particular following the decrease in their attendance, as well as of their budget. The survey focused on the results related to the activity of national museums, but it quickly became apparent that the measures and affecting the latter were largely passed on to the entire museum network.

This report was produced in conjunction with UNESCO Field Offices. It was completed by responses gathered on the difficulties museums faced in carrying out their activities during the pandemic, as well as the good practices they implemented [3] It also provides the opportunity to refine the estimation of the number of museums in the world, based on the contribution of Member States.

I. UPDATE ON THE SITUATION FACING MUSEUMS

"COVID has done something incredible, creating the notion of social distancing. It has fragmented our societies, and in the process of healing we must defragment our societies, and create a new humanity."

Hamady Bocoum, Director of the Museum of Black Civilizations (Senegal)

The results published in May 2020 presented the various closure measures taken between December 2019 and May 2020 to control or prevent the pandemic. According to this analysis, the global findings were as follows [4]:

Number of countries with closure measures

Situation in May 2020

Measures taken	Number of countries	States
No	13	Antigua and Barbuda, Cook Islands, Djibouti, Dominica, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, St-Kitts-and-Nevis, St-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines, Palau, South Sudan, Tuvalu
Minor measures (restrictions) or no measures	11	Benin, Belarus, Burundi, Chad, Guinea, Liberia, Maldives, Niue, Somalia, Sweden, Tajikistan
Partial measures (closure of part of the museums network)	14	Albania, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Japan, Malaysia, Mali, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America
Measures for the entire network of museums (at least the public network)	157	All other countries

According to this first survey, nearly 90% of the institutions, i.e. more than 85,000 museums worldwide, had been forced to close their doors for a time. This first observation, as well as the information concerning the very important online presence of museums, highlighted the role of museums during the pandemic, seeking to maintain contact with the public as best as possible, both through their websites and social networks. These statistics have also made it possible to evaluate the expected impact of museum closures both in terms of attendance and operating budget. It is for this reason in particular that it was decided in this new report to survey the Member States in order to obtain more detailed information on the situation facing museums throughout 2020 and the first months of 2021.

In order to optimize the number of responses, the requests for information focused on the museums most directly associated with the policies of Member States, i.e. national museums. A question was asked as to whether the measures adopted for these institutions have also been extended to all museums, which is largely the case (see below). A first set of questions was related to the year 2020, the first year fully associated with the COVID-19 crisis, another set of questions concerned 2021. Questions were also asked about the future of museums, in order to specify the threats to these institutions as well as those for surrounding communities. A total of 87 UNESCO Member States from all geographical regions responded to the survey, thus providing a fairly comprehensive picture of the situation worldwide (the survey methodology is presented in Annexes 1 and 2).

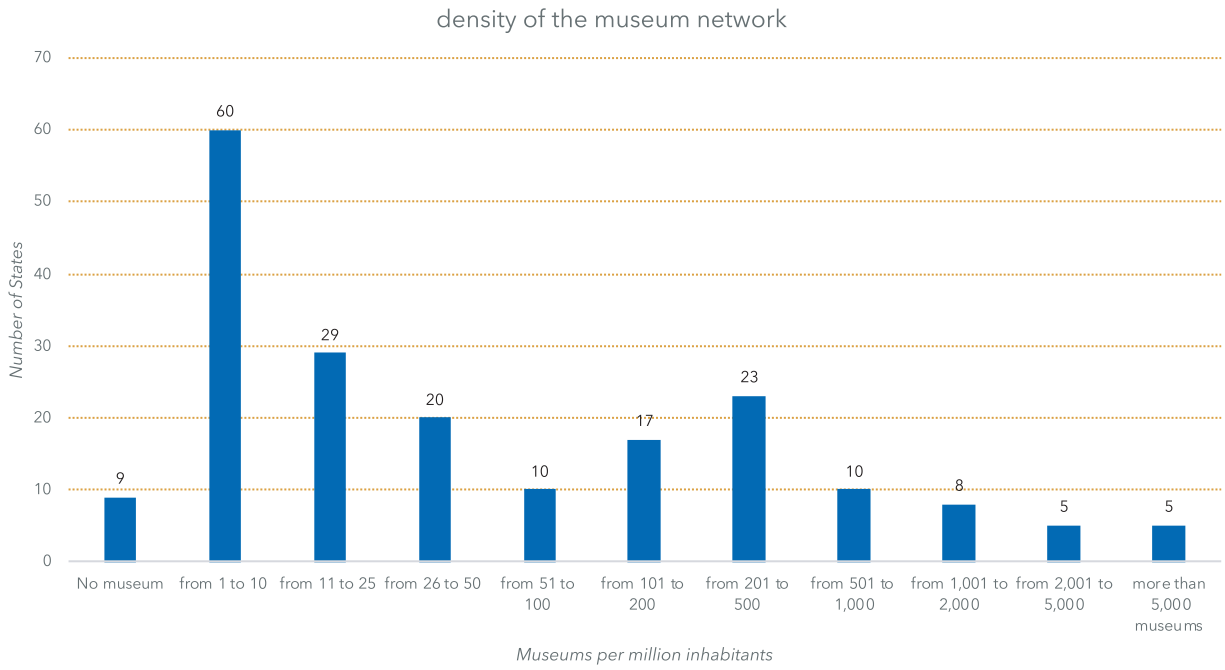


Fig.1. *Density of the museum network, 2021*

The responses from Member States have made it possible to refine the statistics on the number of museums throughout the world provided in the 2020 report. By compiling the answers presented in this survey with those of previous analyses, it seems possible to estimate[III] the number of museums at approximately 104,000 institutions (the details of this estimation are presented in Annex 3). These statistics confirm the uneven distribution of museums around the world, as highlighted in the first report, and consequently the inequalities in terms of access to culture.

It should be emphasized that this is only an estimate, based on statistics drawn up according to sometimes varying criteria by Member States. As long as different counting methods are used, the number of museums cannot be accurately calculated.

III This estimate includes the United States of America and Israel as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector.

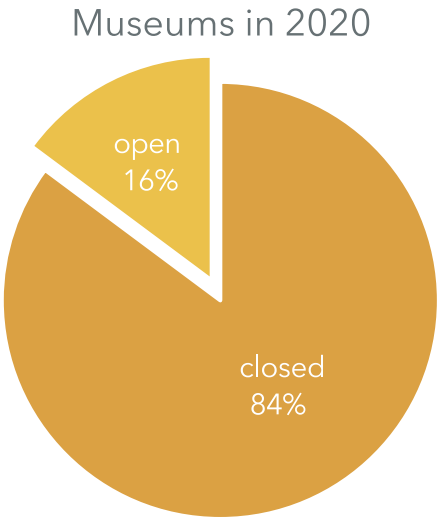
Museums in 2020

In 2020, a total of 72 Member States (out of 87 responding), i.e. 83% of the sample, took measures to close their national museums, either totally and strictly or partially (for a more limited number of days, or with some flexibility). The estimates of the first report are corroborated here, showing an almost total closure of the museum network throughout the world in 2020, yet for a limited time.

National museums closed to the public in 2020

Measures taken	Number of countries	States
YES, total closure	29	Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Mozambique, Palestine, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Turkey, Uzbekistan
YES, partial closure	43	Argentina, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Estonia, Gambia, Georgia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, Latvia, Libya, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Nepal, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Seychelles, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Zambia
NO, no closures	14	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cameroon, Marshall Islands, Malawi, Mali, Palau, Paraguay, Samoa, Sweden, Tonga, United Republic of Tanzania
NO museums	1	South Sudan

More than 80% of Member States (including those with the largest museum networks) mention that these measures were applied not only to national museums, but to the whole museum sector.



Identical measures for other museums

Measures taken	Number of countries	States
YES, total	71	Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iraq, Iceland, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Montenegro, Mozambique, Northern Macedonia, Pakistan, Paraguay, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan
NO, partial	14	Antigua and Barbuda, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Palau, Palestine, Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Tonga, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia
NO	1	Marshall Islands

Not all museums were closed according to the same protocols and during the same periods. The distribution of museums according to the number of days of closure in 2020 shows the extent of the measures and their exceptional nature for certain States. In some countries,

indeed, closures have been relatively limited. However, many other States were affected not only by a first wave of the pandemic between March and May 2020, but also by a second or even third wave that hit several regions, including Europe, North America and Latin America, leading to further museum closures. Some states have experienced additional outbreaks of the virus. About a third of the Member States closed their museums for one to three months. In contrast, a very large number of other states, in particular in Europe and Latin America, have closed museums for periods ranging from four to eight months, and in some cases up to ten months, in 2020. On average, taking into account the measures mentioned by the 87 States that replied, museums remained closed for 155 days in 2020, i.e. slightly over five months (States that did not close their national museum were not included in the average). The average weighted by the number of museums in each state gives a slightly lower result (148 days of closure).

Number of days of closure for national museums in 2020

Number of days	Number of countries	States
0	14	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cameroon, Marshall Islands, Malawi, Mali, Palau, Paraguay, Samoa, Sweden, Tonga, United Republic of Tanzania
1-30	5	China, Cook Islands, Cyprus, Libya, Zambia
31-90	22	Andorra, Angola, Cabo Verde, Croatia, Estonia, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Malta, Mauritius, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Portugal, Rwanda, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey
91-120	8	Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Hungary, Kenya, Pakistan, Switzerland, Uzbekistan
121-180	10	Armenia, Colombia, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Lesotho, Lithuania, Madagascar, Uganda
181-240	13	Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Canada, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Guinea, Nepal, Ukraine, United Kingdom
241-365	13	Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Iraq, Liberia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Togo

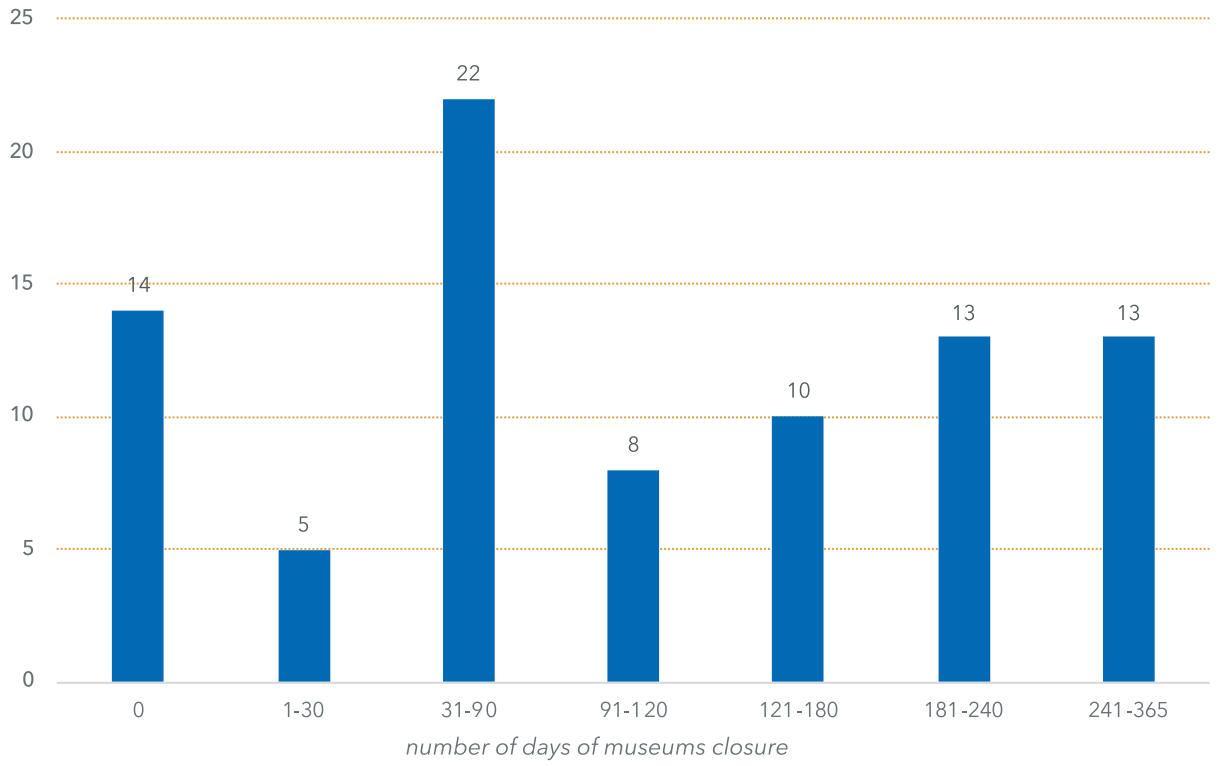


Fig.2. *Number of days of museums closure in 2020*

The first impact of the closure of museums includes the drop in attendance. It was rightly assumed that all closed museums would experience such a decrease, but this has also affected institutions that have remained open or have reopened their doors, due to the drastic drop in international tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), destinations worldwide experienced 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year, an overall decrease of 74% compared to 2019[5]. On average, taking into account the statistics given by the States that answered this question, one could estimate that national museums, and probably all museums, seems to have experienced a drop of 70% of their visitor attendance during the year 2020[6]. Health measures taken by States have also often prohibited school visits and guided tours, while measures limiting the number of visitors were put in place. The statistics presented by the Member States on the level of attendance at national museums illustrate these difficulties.

Decrease in attendance at national museums between 2019 and 2020

Percentage of decrease	Number of countries	States
0	4	Burkina Faso, Malawi, Palestine, Tonga
1-20%	2	Paraguay, Samoa
21-40%	4	Dominican Republic, Marshall Islands, Nepal, Rwanda
41-60%	16	Andorra, China, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Mali, Russian Federation, Senegal, Switzerland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia
61-80%	25	Algeria, Austria, Bahrain, Cameroon, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Czechia, Ecuador, Ghana, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Portugal, Serbia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan
81-90%	17	Argentina, Armenia, Cabo Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Malta, Montenegro, Pakistan, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles
91-100%	16	Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, North Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine

Very few institutions have not experienced any decrease (sometimes due to the creation of a new museum or its renovation), but the majority - 70% of the Member States - report decreases of more than 60% in attendance. A large number of States are even reporting decreases in visitor numbers of more than 90%.

The financial consequences for the museum sector are considerable. The impact on museum revenues shows these significant decreases, when the latter depends on the price of admission paid by visitors, but also on partnership actions or the organization of events (most of which had to be cancelled at the beginning of the pandemic). Member States that were able to provide this estimate often report decreases of more than 50% of the budget, with many institutions reporting revenues that are 60-80% lower than for 2019. On average, taking into account the measures mentioned by the 52 States that answered this question, (national) museums have lost between 40% and 60% of their budget in 2020, compared to 2019 . However, this statistic is only an estimate and does not take into account the great heterogeneity of the museum network and the differences between public and private museums.

Decrease in revenue for national museums between 2019 and 2020

Percentage	Number of countries	States
1-20%	8	Argentina, Austria, Brazil, China, Croatia, Czechia, Mauritius, Rwanda
21-40%	10	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Mali, Madagascar, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania
41-60%	10	Andorra, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Estonia, Marshall Islands, Nepal, Palau, Senegal, Sweden, Thailand
61-80%	21	Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Iceland, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mozambique, Portugal, Russian Federation, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Uganda, Uzbekistan
81-90%	6	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Guinea, Libya, Montenegro, Pakistan
91-100%	3	Lesotho, Liberia, North Macedonia

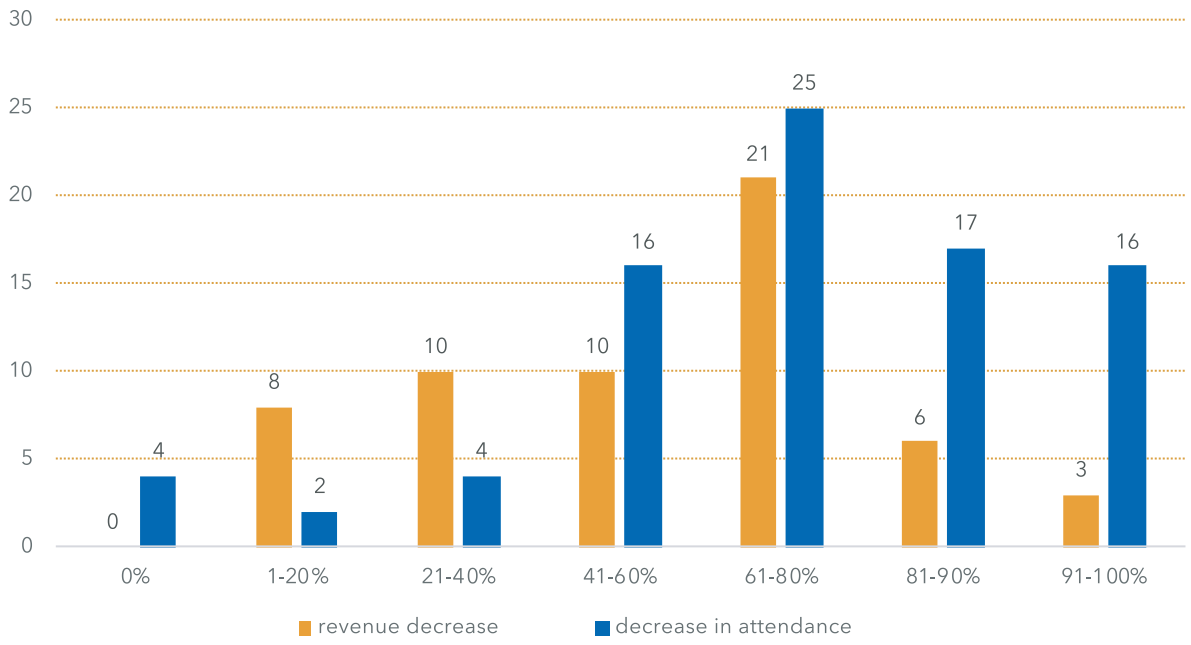


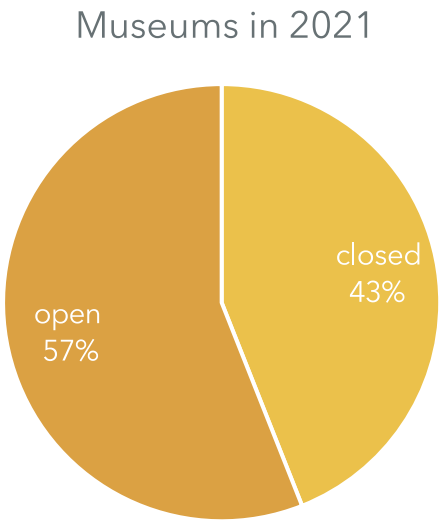
Fig.3. *Effects of the pandemic on museum revenues and attendance*

National museums in 2021

Museums in the majority of States were able to remain open in 2021. Based on their responses, less than half (43%) of the institutions have still experienced a period of closure early this year. As is well known, some regions of the world have managed to control or even eliminate the risks associated with the pandemic, while others have suffered the arrival of a second or even third wave of the virus, particularly because of its mutations. In any case, cultural tourism, as well as transport, have experienced a considerable slowdown throughout the world, with major repercussions for museums, even for those that have reopened their doors. It is highly likely that overall statistics on museum attendance and revenue will remain similar to those presented for 2020.

National museums closed in 2021 (as of March 2021)

Measures taken	Number of countries	States
YES	37	Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Cook Islands, Iraq, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Palestine, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Switzerland, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom
NO	48	Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahrain, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Croatia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Ecuador, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Madagascar, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Montenegro, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Rwanda, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Zambia



II. MUSEUM ACTIVITIES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The Museums report published in May 2020 described all the measures taken by the institutions to adapt to this new situation during the lockdown period, particularly by enhancing their investments in digital technologies. This dynamic activity, analyzed immediately in this first report, has been the subject of a number of subsequent analyses by the scientific and professional community, which are also summarized here.

The impact of COVID-19 on education

"Today there are programs that have been developed, with online sessions in Arabic, there are a number of programs on heritage, on conservation, educational programs for young professionals all of which are now online."

Barbara Helwing, Director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Germany)

The responses provided by UNESCO's Field Offices show the considerable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the activities of museums, starting with education, which is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate. Among the Member States that replied to this question, Mozambique points out that it is not so much a question of school education but, more generally, of awakening to civic life and of learning about the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Cabo-Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, like many other Member States, mention the disruption of educational activities, particularly when the target groups are children and teenagers. Cameroon reports specify awareness-raising measures for school officials to improve the flow of visitors while respecting barrier measures. Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay recall, however, that while the closure of the museums has had a profound effect on educational activities, all day-to-day activities, from conservation to the development of exhibitions, including the security of collections and research, were affected as well. The museum is not simply a place of exhibition and education: even without visitors, it is bustling with activity (research, conservation, organization, communication), and it is this interaction that has partially slowed down, due to remote work and measures taken to protect staff. This has not prevented museums, such as those in Japan and Uruguay, from using this difficult context to develop projects to document this historical moment, collecting objects and testimonies related to the pandemic.

For many States, educational activities represent, along with visits, the main source of visitors to their national as well as local museums. However, in response to these difficulties, many museums have developed new types of mediation tools for children and families that can be used at home. This is all the more important for States with a still fragile museum network, where the culture of museum visits is not yet really established, as Eritrea underlined. The aim of museums is to instill in children the pleasure of discovery through school visits, but also to parents who accompany them on these outings. The closure of museums greatly endangers these practices. Comoros emphasize the loss of this fundamental right to learn as a result of the closures. This problem, as Mozambique points out, is all the more glaring when coupled with the digital divide that is observed throughout the world, where collections have not been digitized and online education is almost impossible. Museums have not stopped at these

observations to think of new modes of communication, in parallel with digital technology. Some States, such as Gambia, have used local television stations to present aspects of the collections during the lockdown period.

The growing role of digital technology

> *"I hate this pandemic: it has been a terrible year, there has been very few good upsides, but having all these digital materials available to support the professional development of teachers is one of the good outcomes. We can reach many more teachers now and we will keep doing that."*
>
> Tristram Hunt, Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum (United Kingdom)

The role of the digital sphere is presented, in the 2015 UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* as a significant challenge for museums worldwide. The report on the implementation of the Recommendation, published in 2019, as well as *Museums around the world in the face of the COVID-19* published in 2020, referred to the importance of digital technology in the context of the health crisis and lockdown measures. Both reports also presented the difficulties caused by the digital divide between different regions, especially in those where the museum network is still fragile, in Africa and in Small Island Developing States. The implementation of a digital policy is based on a global reflection that takes into account at the same time internet access, the digitization of collections (itself based on the inventory of the collections), a minimal IT infrastructure (photography, scanners, computers), and above all, a staff with the necessary skills and time to carry out these tasks. As noted in previous reports, the all-important collection inventory issues have not been resolved for all institutions, and few museums have staff dedicated to the digital strategy of their institution. This was again mentioned by Member States, which also reported, like Kenya, on their efforts to improve virtual visits by digitizing more exhibitions. Comoros also offered training during the pandemic in computerization, database creation and digitization of collections.

The museum community has widely reported, through scientific publications, on the efforts of some institutions in the digital field. The first articles published during the pandemic, from 2020 onwards, referring to the actions of museums are both prescriptive and descriptive. A number of publications have been produced on the main types of response favored by museums. The most visible activities are certainly those related to education: many authors emphasize the opportunity seized by museums to develop new types of learning experiences or reflections on social issues[7]. Two elements also emerge fairly quickly: the question of collecting, on the one hand, in order to document this period, which the museums consider to be historic and which most are certain will leave a lasting impression[8] ; and the question of reopening, on the other hand, in order to consider and then present the measures to be taken to reopen the museums in complete safety for their visitors and staff after the lockdown periods[9].

However, the digital issue has generated the greatest number of scientific analyses. The first

articles on this subject appeared at the end of 2020, aiming to evaluate the activities of institutions in this field. In this way, the investment of Italian museums is analyzed based on its 100 most frequented museums, through the real-time observation of their activity on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). Although the online activity of these institutions has often doubled in comparison with previous activity, it appears that the interactions generated with the public remain very brief, compared to the possibilities of the *in situ* museum visit[10]. The development of virtual museums, as well as that of online videos or podcasts, has been the subject of sometimes critical analysis, with some researchers believing that they merely replicate, most often, the experience *in situ*, without really taking into account all the new possibilities offered by information and communication technologies[11]. Overall, the digital offer thus appears to be essentially a communication medium, aimed at presenting the museums' activities, as well as its "backstage", but intended for audiences already familiar with the institution. As one author points out, digital technology can reinforce exclusion and risks creating second-class audiences, fostering ghettos and cultural deserts, rather than the other way around, since only those who have already frequented museums seem to be using virtual visits[12].

It is in this context that the Member States often underlined the importance of reaching out to new audiences and, through schools, to future generations. While audiences seeking to learn have clearly benefited from the large number of online programmes, outreach activities appear less present in the eyes of the researchers[13]. Moreover, it appears that although the online offer was abundant, questions on difficult subjects or heritage linked to painful episodes (armed conflicts, terrorism) were generally not explored by these means, perhaps in order to contribute to resilience with regard to the current situation, which in very distressing[14].

The social role of museums

> *"The museum is important in its role of social cohesion, sense of citizenship and belonging. This crisis may mean that museums will no longer be considered, will perhaps be less important, because priorities will undoubtedly lie elsewhere. Everything possible must be done to ensure that museums do not die."*
>
> Anne-Marie Maila Afeiche, Director General of the National Council of Museums of Lebanon (Lebanon) [15]

The text of the 2015 UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* strongly emphasizes the social role that museums play for communities. This role is not simply a matter of education, which is a central aspect, but of all the links that museums build with surrounding communities, and in particular their efforts to integrate and include the most vulnerable groups in society, as well as their efforts in favour of social justice and equality of all citizens, regardless of their gender, or social and cultural affiliation.

Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, museum professionals and researchers have reacted, not only by implementing the activities already presented in the first report (use

of available digital means, activities on social networks, educational activities), but also by questioning the consequences of the pandemic and the resulting future. It is a question of "thinking" the virus and the epidemic, of considering the action but also the impact, and the future of museums in this perspective. Almost a dozen special issues of professional or scientific journals have been dedicated to the phenomenon, including in *La Lettre de l'OCIM, Museum & Society, University museums and collections, Museum Worlds*, etc. [16]. The question of the role of the museum, in a context marked by decolonization and postcolonial thinking, has been widely addressed in these various articles. This observation is largely reflected in the concerns that Member States have expressed about the links between museums and their communities (see below).

This is a long-standing social trend, which has led to the recent publication of reports on social inclusion issues, with the aim of encouraging museums to develop new, more inclusive approaches to their audiences [17]. The American *Black Lives Matter* movement, which began in the United States, had a worldwide impact in 2020, questioning society, but also leading some museums to question the role they can play in this respect[18]. As Deborah Lynn Mack, Director of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian (Washington D.C.), remarked during the debate organized by UNESCO in March 2021 on the situation of museums in the world, it is necessary to recognize the existence of a second pandemic, which is grafted onto the first, and which concerns the consequences of racism. Museums, as spaces for education but also for dialogue, critical analysis and reflection, can play a central role in society to respond to this worrying situation.

Cooperation and the role of associations

"The pandemic has shown us that there is no better time in history to work together."

Juliana Restrepo, Director of the National Museum of Colombia (Colombia)

The world of museums is not only made up of isolated institutions: it constitutes a vast network of collaborations but also of mutual aid, to which the museum associations bear witness to through the quality of their activities. In May 2020, UNESCO and ICOM coordinated their efforts to publish two complementary reports, respectively for UNESCO, the *Museums around the World in the Face of COVID-19* report and for ICOM: *Museums, Museum Professionals and COVID-19* (May 2020) and *Museums, Museum Professionals and COVID-19: Follow-up Survey* (November 2020)[19]. The *Network of European Museum Organizations* (NEMO) has also published two reports in 2020 and 21[20]. For its part, the *American Alliance of Museums* (AAM) presented its national study on the impact of COVID-19 on its museums in June 2020[21]. Several national or regional associations have also published documents on this subject: Colombia published a similar report in November 2020[22], as did the Museum Association of the Caribbean and New Zealand[23].

Because of the crisis and the drastic decrease in both the number of visitors and the revenue they bring, museums have felt the need to seek support outside the market: the fundamental

role of the public authorities, on the one hand, and that of the inhabitants of the territories in which they are located, on the other. The notion of a link with the public thus emerged strongly - this is the whole question of the social role of museums, mentioned above – as evoked by the responses relating to the concerns for the future (see below). The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation with other museums in order to consider collective solutions. It is in this context that the work of professional associations, many of which are UNESCO's institutional partners, has been crucial.

The first of these, ICOM, through its network of over 130 national committees, has played a significant role in developing materials and guidelines to ensure the safety and preservation of collections during periods of confinement, and then the safety of the audiences when they reopen, how to better reach audiences at a distance and support community resilience. NEMO has played, at the European level, a similar role, both in providing information to museums and in establishing contact with the European Union. An online map of the situation of European museums is regularly kept up to date, while the national responses of European countries to the crisis are circulated to all members (contributions from Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Netherlands, Italy, Latvia, Switzerland, Finland, etc.). In France, OCIM (*Office for Cooperation and Information between Museums*), published a special issue on COVID-19, conducted several webinars and provided a digital monitoring on the subject. The British *Museums Association* has developed similar actions, but also a crowdfunding campaign for the association's institutional members.

The *American Alliance of Museums* has been equally active in disseminating information on the management of the crisis. In the particular context of the *Black Lives Matter* social movement, a great deal of material has been produced to strengthen museum measures for diversity, equity and accessibility (both physical and social) to culture. The *American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* (AIC) also presented extensive documentation on collections management, including issues of cleaning, funding, and contingency planning.

III. PUBLIC MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF MUSEUMS

"Governments should all feel responsible for supporting culture."

Barbara Helwing, Director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum (Germany)

In 2020, the reactions of Member States have been accompanied, in terms of culture, science and education, by UNESCO, in order to prepare the resilience and recovery of these sectors. UNESCO immediately mobilized, bringing together over 130 Ministers of Culture in April 2020 to take stock of the situation on a global scale. The Organization has also launched numerous initiatives to implement crisis and post-crisis solutions for this key sector (*ResiliArt*; *Culture & COVID-19 : Impact and Response Tracker*) but also by proposing ways of exploring heritage online (and in particular World Heritage sites), or ways of sharing heritage online (#livingheritage). Interactive maps on the repercussions of COVID-19 on the education system and World Heritage sites have been drawn up, as well as numerous guides and documents aimed at developing the digitization of heritage, presenting all the measures that can be taken by Member States in the field of culture, and relaying good practices[24]. For the first time in its history, the G20, which met in November 2020 in Saudi Arabia, also put culture on the agenda by discussing the important role of this sector and the impact of the pandemic on the creative economy.

Strengthening protection plans and security protocols

For museums, the issue of security is complex in two respects, as it involves both ensuring the security of the public and professionals, as well as that of the collections, which is one of the major risks identified by several Member States[25].

At the national level, the authorities concerned in the Member States have taken care to support the museums for which they are responsible and have taken measures during the periods of confinement and deconfinement, as in the case of New Zealand[26], Mauritius, Côte d'Ivoire or Paraguay. Many departments, such as the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (IBRAM), have drafted documents to prepare the museums for the reopening. The British government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has also published a study on the impact of the virus, and presented, through a specific bulletin (*Coronavirus bulletin*), the rules in force, the funds that can be released to help museums, and good practices for reopening. The *Institute of Museum and Library Services* (IMLS) in Washington, D.C. has also developed similar measures. Argentina, through the *Museos abiertos al cielo* plan, has developed an initiative to open museum gardens to the public and develop outdoor activities.

At the international level, UNESCO and its technical partners support museums in their efforts to update emergency prepardness plans for the event of any emergency or disaster, on the one hand, and to put in place health protocols to ensure the safe reception of the public[27], on the other. The *International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property* (ICCROM) has developed a large number of resources concerning safety of personnel at heritage sites or institutions, the definition of tools to identify risks, or ways of ensuring the continuity of museum work, while relaying other documents (for example the

Practical guidelines for monitoring the safety and security conditions of collections during a lockdown[28], developed by the International Committee of the Blue Shield).

The role of public authorities in financing museums

Not all museums, including national museums, benefit from the same support and assistance from Member States. According to the data provided by the latter, the level of public subsidies can vary from less than 20% to more than 90%. The intervention of public authorities is generally significant. More than a third of the Member States that replied mention support of over 90%, and more than half of the national museums receive, according to the same sources, support of more than 80% from the public authorities. These subsidies generally make it possible to support all the items (staff, general maintenance, scientific activities, communication, etc.) related to the activities of the museums, although in some cases the public investment is more focused for personnel costs.

Public subsidies to national museums

Percentage of expenditure covered	Number of countries	States
0%	0	/
1-20%	6	Antigua and Barbuda, Comoros, Georgia, Iraq, Liberia, Syrian Arab Republic
21-40%	2	Cameroon, Ukraine
41-60%	8	Algeria, Armenia (for a part of), Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, North Macedonia, Palaos, Ouganda, Royaume-Uni
61-80%	11	Austria, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, Gambia, Germany, Iceland, Malta, United Republic of Tanzania
81-90%	8	Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mauritius, Montenegro, Serbia, Togo
91-100%	19	Angola, Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Chile, Croatia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Palestine, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Thailand, Uzbekistan (for a part of)

The COVID-19 crisis has led to very different reactions from Member States in terms of funding. Confronted with the lack of resources caused by the disappearance of their profit-making activities, museums depend much more heavily on public support. For about a quarter of the Member States that replied to this question, subsidies remained stable, and in a quarter of cases they increased, sometimes significantly (over 20%). However, for half of the national institutions, these grants have decreased, in some cases substantially. In addition to the decline in the tourist industry and in the number of visitors to museums, there is the difficulty of a reduction in public subsidies.

Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Public Subsidies

Stable	13	Angola, Brazil, China, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Malaysia, Montenegro, Palau, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Uzbekistan
Decrease in Subsidies		
0-10%	8	Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Botswana, Georgia, Iraq, Marshall Islands, Ukraine
11-20%	6	Burkina Faso, Chile, Comoros, Gambia, Mauritius, Rwanda
21-40%	4	Colombia, Mali, Uganda, Seychelles
41-60%	4	Liberia, North Macedonia, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania
61-80%	5	Costa Rica, Lesotho, Malawi, Mexico, Palestine
81-100%	2	Antigua and Barbuda, Syrian Arab Republic
Increase in Subsidies		
0-10%	4	Austria, Iceland, Japan, Sweden
11-20%	5	Belgium, Canada, Hungary, Lithuania, United Kingdom
21-40%	3	Latvia, Malta, Serbia
41 et plus	2	Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire

International action, at the level of UNESCO, and national action, at the level of Member States, is vital for museums. The measures that are taken for all cultural organizations, and in particular museums, must be linked both to the protection against the pandemic and to the security of collections. In the absence of visitors who can contribute to the financing of the institutions, Member States also play a crucial role in the financing of museums and, in most cases, in their survival. The stakes are high, as these institutions not only work for today's society, but also preserve the memory of past generations, in order to pass it on to the future ones.

Ticket verification and asking visitors to present their health codes at the pre-check window © The Palace Museum
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IV. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

"Our museums will continue to explore and combine online and offline activities, because we also know that it is important to humanize the contact and there is always this mission to promote education and teaching."

Xudong Wang, Director of the Palace Museum (China)

"But what is most important is to reach out to our partners and audiences in the country to see what we can do better to help them, to empower them, whether they are teachers, people in need of care at home, the elderly, children..."

Deborah Lynn Mack, Director of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution (U.S.A)

The current health crisis leads museums and Member States to reflect on the future development of this situation. Foresight is central to UNESCO's actions in culture, education and science development. This principle lies at the heart of the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* but also more broadly in the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A large number of States envisaged a particularly difficult but temporarily limited situation during the spring 2020 crisis. Fifteen months after the appearance of COVID-19, the new episodes of re-confinement, the scale of the crisis, as well as the mutations of the virus, lead to increased uncertainty about the overall consequences of the crisis on health, education or the world economy and, more specifically, on the medium-term future of museums.

A difficult context

The issue of threats, not only to museums but also to the surrounding communities, has been raised to the Member States in the context of this report. While a quarter of the latter do not see any particular threats to these institutions, the other three quarters consider that there are risks to their development. Among the detailed answers given by the Member States, a number of distinctive features allow certain recurring concerns to emerge[29]. The issue of the general organization of the museum and, in particular, that of the security of the collections and their conservation, appeared to be one of the most important in the eyes of the Member States - the closure of borders leads to a lack of specific equipment for the museums, notes Burkina Faso. The lockdown measures have led to an additional risk to the collections themselves, which several Member States have mentioned. To prevent these dangers, Uzbekistan has developed cooperation with the British Museum to combat theft and illicit trafficking. Of course, the loss of revenue is seen as a major risk by many States, and may affect the overall organization of museums. The same applies to the decline in visitors, which is the raison d'être of museums for many States, particularly in Small Island Developing States. Colombia mentions the fear of a permanent closure of some institutions,

or of being forced to sell part of the collections. Museums in the Cook Islands, for example, must learn to think "out of the box" in a radically different way in order to generate revenue. The digital challenge is also a source of concern, as many institutions do not always have the infrastructure to adequately meet the new needs of visitors.

Threats to museums

Type of threat	Number of countries	States
YES: general management, conservation, security, etc.	15	Andorra, Belgium, Burkina Faso, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, North Macedonia, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Zambia
YES: reduction of revenues and organization of the museum	17	Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Mozambique, Palau, Sweden, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom
YES: decrease in visitors and revenues	14	Armenia, Cameroon, Comoros, Cook Islands, Ghana, Croatia, Czechia, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Iceland, Samoa, Seychelles, Iceland, Singapore, Thailand
YES: digital challenges	5	Austria, Botswana, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Lesotho
YES: risk of closing, selling part of the collections	1	Colombia
YES	12	Azerbaijan, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Georgia, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Palestine, Senegal, Switzerland, Uganda, Uzbekistan
NO	20	Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, China, Dominican Republic, Iraq, Latvia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Nepal, Paraguay, Rwanda, Serbia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tonga, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania

The impact of the crisis on surrounding communities is equally important, although one third of the Member States do not share this view. More than a third of the States mention the reduction in salary and the loss of jobs for a large number of professionals who were involved, to a greater or lesser extent, in the museum economy as a whole: many institutions rely on a large number of self-employed workers, particularly for reception and mediation tasks. Many craftsmen who work for museums (production, scenography, repairs, etc.) have also seen their income collapse. The observation is necessarily similar for the entire tourism industry directly associated with the museum sector. Some Member States also mention the fundamental social role played by museums in communities and in the context of school visits. The Dominican Republic describes in particular the public's sense of frustration with the closure of museums and the type of cultural experience they offer. However, as Switzerland notes, it is too early to present a detailed response on the impact of the pandemic.

Impact of the crisis on surrounding communities

Type of impact	Number of countries	States
YES: Decrease in wages or loss of jobs (self-employed)	30	Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Ecuador, Estonia, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Honduras, Iceland, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Palau, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom
YES: tourism, shops, craftsmen, hotels, etc.	18	Austria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chile, Cyprus, France, Guinea, Hungary, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, Samoa, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Zambia
YES: community linkage issues, school visits	4	Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Malawi, Mali
YES	8	Belgium, Costa Rica, Czechia, Japan, Lesotho, Libya, Singapore, Switzerland
NO	25	Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China, Cook Islands, Georgia, Iraq, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan

These concerns largely corroborate previous surveys of museum professionals, particularly in economic terms. In regions where museums are largely funded by the market and philanthropy, such as the United States or United Kingdom, job losses have been rapid and particularly significant[30]. When endowments and philanthropy emerge as the main sources of income, as the American *Association of Art Museum Directors* points out, museums have a fragility that is undermined during difficult periods like this[31].

The economic crisis and job losses, however, conceal other issues related to the social role of museums. Widely highlighted in recent years - notably in the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums*, they have never appeared more central, especially in the context of anti-racism movements[32]. While many researchers and professionals consider these issues to be crucial, others emphasize the urgency of taking action against global issues such as global warming: would this difficult context not constitute an opportunity to take real action in order to prepare for the global crisis that awaits us, ask researcher Robert Janes and the *Coalition of Museums for Climate Justice* (Canada)[33].

The concerns for museums mentioned by the representatives of the Member States, resonate with and echo an older context. This is reflected in a number of important reports that were conceived prior to the pandemic but published during this period. The digital issue is one of

the major trends whose influence is transforming the museum and the public's relationship with it. With this in mind, NEMO carried out a survey of European museums to find out how far they had progressed in this area[34]. Similarly, issues of social inclusion and accessibility are a major challenge in many parts of the world. This is demonstrated by the cycle of online conferences prepared by the trio of Presidencies of the Council of the European Union on the social responsibilities of museums, but also by the work carried out by the *American Alliance of museums* on the same questions[35]. Museums also have a central role to play in sustainable development issues[36], both through their concrete actions in running the museum and through their exhibitions and educational or participatory activities, in order to envision the future for the generations to come.

An exercise of foresight

The reports and debates organized or produced by UNESCO, with the participation of museum professionals, clearly show the important role that the latter attach to foresight. That said, the very different situations of museums, depending on their status, funding, geographical location and access to technology or information, illustrate that there is no single solution.

The issue of the future and the evolution of the sector is thus a primary concern for museums across the world. The foresight exercise, which aims to think of plausible scenarios based on the study of trends (economic, social, demographic, political, climatic, etc.), has already been envisaged on many occasions by heritage professionals[37]. The COVID-19 crisis has thus given rise to several reports seeking to define the potential evolution of the society in the years to come[38]. These reports mention in particular the possible continuation of the social transformation, based on social justice and inclusion, while underlining the development of digital technology, but also the risks of disintegration of the social system and the traditionel modes of socialising.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the work of the *Center for the Future of Museums*, which was set up in 2008 within the *American Alliance of Museums* and publishes an annual report on trends in the museum world, *Trends Watch*. In 2020, the Centre published a document explaining the scenario method so that museums can better plan their response to the COVID-19 crisis[39]. The latest *Trends Watch*, published in 2021, is based on the health situation, of course, but also on other trends mentioned by the Member States in their replies. While questions of communication technology are not forgotten, nor the adaptation of educational measures to the new situation, it is probably more broadly those of the inequality of resources and the distribution of power that appear at the heart of the analysis and concerns of museums

Such an exercise needs to be put into perspective with the challenges defined by the leaders of states and governments in the framework of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, defined for 2030, constitute a reference program for all UNESCO Member States. Of course, the fourth goal, "*Ensuring inclusive and equal quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*", as well as the Sustainable Development Goal 11 Target 4, "*Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage*", are closely linked to UNESCO's mandate in the field of museums. However, museums are equally important stakeholders in the other Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those dealing with discrimination, poverty and inequality, climate change, as well as the fight for gender equality, sustainable development,

peace and justice[40]. What the COVID-19 crisis has shown, beyond the difficulties inherent in the organization and financing of museums, is their major role in the search for social links and cooperation, as well as working with the communities. These efforts are a remarkable illustration of the role of these institutions, as defined in the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Museums*.

The COVID-19 crisis thus forces us to rethink the museum after the pandemic. It also leads us to consider the role of the public authorities and, more generally, that of UNESCO in this context. This questioning invites a re-examination of the projects already mentioned by Member States in the *Report on the Implementation of the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Museums and Collections*, published in 2019. In the light of the pandemic, as we confront major global challenges, the consultation and planning bodies are of cardinal importance. UNESCO plays a central role in assisting Member States in their efforts to preserve movable heritage and museums and to build the capacity of its professionals. The Organization is also an important platform for dialogue to foster exchange, disseminate good practices and communicate the most efficient measures for the best development of the museum world. This role is a crucial issue, in the context of the pandemic, of course, but even more in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

CONCLUSION

"It is important to keep in mind what we have thought during the past months. Because sooner or later we will be dragged by the new normality and it will be easy to forget those fantastic ideas that we had during the lockdown. Let's make the most of these reflections and put them at work together in the near future.

Antonio Saborit, Director of the National Museum of Anthropology (Mexico)

Museums are at the same time depositories of collections that they preserve and pass on to future generations, places of memory and research, as well as spaces of exhibition and communication, of sharing and exchange. As part of society, they play a fundamental role in improving the quality of life of the community, in the attractiveness of the regions, but also in support of inclusion and participation of all in society. Their situation, following the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a concern in all regions of the world.

The survey of UNESCO Member States on the situation of museums around the world in the context of the pandemic has highlighted a number of elements of particular importance to the museum world, which are summarized here.

A sector hit hard by the health crisis

The crisis has affected the entire museum sector, both in 2020 and 2021. Almost all institutions, even when they were not closed, have witnessed their attendance plummet (70% on average), due to changes in visiting practices, as well as those, notably, linked to the drastic decrease in international tourism (-74% in 2020). Museums have experienced very significant budget cuts, and while some States have been able to partially compensate for these cuts by increasing subsidies, many museums have also faced decreases in subsidies. The important place that the museum sector has taken in national cultural policies over the decade could be jeopardized if urgent policies to support this sector are not adopted by States.

There are significant concerns in the museum sector, particularly with regard to these budgetary restrictions, but also with regard to the security of collections. The crisis has undermined a number of heritage preservation measures (reserve management, preventive conservation), while lockdown measures have sometimes been conducive to theft, a fear for many institutions around the world. Of course, these concerns also relate to the transformations in visiting practices, and in particular the need to further develop policies for digitization and dissemination of knowledge and participation through the Internet. Some States are concerned about the very survival of the institutions and the risk of the dispersal of their heritage.

For the public, this period risks increasing inequalities in access to culture and the diversity of cultural expressions. Indeed, the measures severely limit the public's ability to enjoy cultural property and services in their diversity. These inequalities are all the more acute for vulnerable groups who are most affected by the digital divide - such as Africa and Small Island Developing States, millions of women and indigenous peoples - and who may therefore find it even more difficult to access culture.

Museums have also been able to measure the fundamental role they play in communities, in terms of knowledge, education and personal development, but also through their sometimes very significant contribution to the creative economy, at the local or national level. Many seasonal or one-off jobs have been lost, while the cultural tourism industries (hotels, restaurants, shops) have been particularly affected, causing serious difficulties for the inhabitants of the area where the institutions are located.

Museums, an asset for societies and their development

Museums were able to show, through their actions, the links that connect them with surrounding communities. They play an essential social role as a focus for community life, a forum for discussion and reflection, and a place of emancipation. The museums have also been able to see the importance of the links between them and the driving role of the professional associations, which have played a particularly important role in informing, representing, training, exchanging and sharing. In the area of strengthening international cooperation and partnerships among museums, UNESCO and its partners will be able to make a greater difference to development and rehabilitation of museums. The same applies to the mastery of new technologies and means of communication, which are more necessary than ever both for inventories and for the dissemination of cultural content enabling contact to be maintained with the public.

Museums, as agents of social inclusion, education and empowerment, but also as economic actors, are essential to States and to the communities in which they are located. They are a fundamental investment for the future, actively participating in the economy of creativity. Through their view of heritage and history, they are a vital part of understanding the present and preparing the future. They are actively involved in solutions to emerge from crises, while being closely involved in many of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Support for this sector, especially in times of crisis, is an important investment for development, both in terms of education and culture, and in terms of the economy and social life. The report confirms the unequal distribution and resources available to museums around the world, particularly in Africa and Small Island Developing States. It is therefore more necessary than ever to pay special attention to them. The challenge is twofold: to support museum institutions and cultural professionals, and to promote access to culture for all. These challenges can only be met within the framework of ambitious cultural policies aimed at helping museum institutions overcome this crisis and to protect and improve the status of cultural sector professionals and collections.

Supporting the development of the museum network

The crisis of COVID-19 highlights the important role of public authorities in the development of museum institutions, which is central to the development and transmission of knowledge in our society. The *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Museums* already underlined the major challenges of digital technology, tourism development and the creative economy in general, but also the social role of museums. The crisis has profoundly disrupted the economy, but reaffirmed the importance of these issues as well. It has revealed the digital divide within the museum network and the fragility of the sector in a number of regions of the world. The role of the public authorities in supporting, guiding and financing museums is crucial: a large number of States have clearly understood that, in times of crisis, far from being a burden, museums are essential common assets, sources of resilience that contribute to the development of solutions, and that their subsidies should therefore be increased in order to make up for the shortfalls in the budgets caused by the drop in attendance. Such practices should be encouraged.

In this context, UNESCO makes the following recommendations, which are structured around three priority areas:

1) **There is a need to provide platforms for the museum sector to continue the dialogue on the impacts of COVID-19 and to ensure cooperation between museums at an international level.** UNESCO will support Member States and museum institutions in their reflections on the challenges and the future of museums by providing a common framework of reference and by fostering international cooperation. As for the activities implemented these last months, UNESCO will continue to animate the global conversation through the organization of debates, awareness-raising activities, high visibility projects in the form of sponsorship or co-design of emblematic exhibitions on themes that are at the heart of UNESCO's mandate. Such work will be coordinated and carried out in close collaboration with the two UNESCO Chairs on Museums[IV], National Commissions for UNESCO, Field Offices and our network of partner organizations, such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Network of European Museum Organizations or the American Alliance of Museums.

2) **Public authorities must act to financially support museums in this difficult period and prepare for the future.** UNESCO calls for funding for museums within the framework of ambitious cultural policies, in the name of the protection of heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions. One year into the pandemic, the situation facing museums around the world is worrying. Access to culture and museums is a key element for the future of humanity. As common goods and sources of resilience, museums are essential for the functioning of our societies.

3) **Member States should be accompanied in the development of the most appropriate measures** in favor of the museum sector, particularly in terms of **capacity development, the consideration of the social role of museums and digital development**, targeting all regions of the world, and especially those where the museum network is still fragile.

IV UNESCO Chair on Inclusive Museums and Sustainable Heritage Development Anant National University, India ; UNESCO Chair for the study of museum diversity and its evolution, University Paris Sorbonne Nouvelle, France

Museums have a strong interest in developing extensive digital projects integrating a diverse range of activities, in the field of education, research, training, and also with a view to establish and increase inventories, which are still too limited at present. With the support of its technical partners, UNESCO could coordinate such an effort at the global level with a priority for museums in Africa and Small Island Developing States. Such an ambition would make it possible to respond to several urgent challenges, in the field of education, the social sphere, the fight against the digital divide and the combat against illicit trafficking of cultural property. The pandemic has made it difficult to maintain numerous measures related to the security and preservation of collections, raising concerns from Member States. Such a project would offer a concrete response to the concerns of Member States while promoting access to culture for all and cultural diversity.

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6 The statistical mean is 57%. This statistic is, however, only a very relative estimate, assuming that the budgetary reductions are identical within the museum network of each State (local, regional or national museums) and not taking into account the differences in the density of the museum network between the Member States. The weighted average (based on the number of museums per State) shows a 20% drop in attendance, as a number of States with a large number of museums (such as Brazil or France) reported limited decreases. It is important to understand, in any case, that there are significant disparities in this respect between the States

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ANNEX 1: DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

This report is based on data collected by UNESCO and more specifically its Culture Sector from UNESCO Member States in the framework of the follow-up of the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections*. The questionnaire was launched on February 26, 2021, the last responses were integrated until March 29.

The online questionnaire was sent to the Member States and is attached in Annex 2.

Three additional questions were also relayed by UNESCO Field Offices:

- How has COVID-19 affected museums in the implementation of their activities, especially in the educational field?
- Have any museum associations published specific documents related to these issues (online symposia, training sessions, reports), especially on the future of museums?
- Have any museums developed good practices during the COVID-19 period that other museums could learn from?

Responses submitted by questionnaire

In total, the collective work has made it possible to gather information on 87 Member States, i.e. 45% of all 193 Member States of UNESCO (to which estimates on Israel and the United States have been added, as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector). Taking into account the size of the museum network in the Member States which replied to the survey, the replies concern 52,362 museums (according to the statistics presented in Annex 3), compared with 70,515 museums in the 193 Member States (excluding the United States of America and Israel), i.e. almost 75% of the museum network in all the Member States.

Member States that replied to the questionnaire by region

Region	Number of countries	States
I. Western Europe and Others	14	Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Germany, Iceland, Malta, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.
II. Eastern Europe	15	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Russian Federation, Serbia, Ukraine
III. Latin America and the Caribbean	11	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay
IV. Asia and Pacific	14	China, Cook Islands, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, Uzbekistan
Va. Africa	26	Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.
Vb. Arab States	7	Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic
193 Member States	87	87 member states

Additional Responses from UNESCO Field Offices

The responses relayed by the Field Offices to the three additional questions provided information for the following Member States:

Member States for which information has been collected by Field Offices

Region	Number of countries	States
I. Western Europe and Others		/
II. Eastern Europe		/
III. Latin America and the Caribbean	3	Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay
IV. Asia and Pacific	2	Nepal, Uzbekistan
Va. Africa	12	Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal.
Vb. Arab States		/
193 Member States	17	17 Member States

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO MEMBER STATES

IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MUSEUMS

Updating of the UNESCO Report
"Museums Around the World in the Face of COVID-19"

Questionnaire for the attention of the Member States

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on museums all around the world, which is likely to last. The full and partial closure of museums, in particular, has had serious financial, cultural and socio-economic consequences: it has led to a reduction in the maintenance and conservation of collections, but also to an increase in threats from illicit trafficking.

The extent of these consequences for museums still needs to be assessed. This survey therefore aims to gain a better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on museums. Once all answers have been collected and analyzed, the results will allow UNESCO to update its Report on "Museums around the world in the face of COVID-19", and formulate an appropriate response to this exceptional crisis.

To this end, we would appreciate if you could fill in the questionnaire by **15 March 2021** and send it back to the following address: sec.mus@unesco.org.

Should you require any further information or technical support to complete the survey, the UNESCO Secretariat is at your disposal: sec.mus@unesco.org.

We thank you in advance for your support.

The UNESCO Section of Movable Heritage and Museums.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

[A1] Mr./Ms./Other
[A2] First Name
[A3] Last Name
[A4] Job Title
[A5] Institution / Organization
(A6) Prefer not to disclose personal information ◯ Yes ◯ No
[A7] Country Please choose **only one** of the following (list)

SECTION B: INFORMATION ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NATIONAL MUSEUMS

[B1] What is the number of museums in your country?

[B2] Were national museums forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?
◯ Yes If yes: was this closure partial yes /no [please specify]
◯ No
If yes, can you estimate the number of days of closure? _____ days
Comments

[B3] Did museums that are not national museums generally follow the same

closure policy?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Comments

[B4] What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on visits to national museums in 2020 compared to 2019?
Comments

[B5] What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on revenues of national museums compared to 2019?
Comments

[B6] Do national museums benefit from local/regional/national subsidies?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Comments
If yes, what percentage of the museum's expenditure is covered by these subsidies?
Comments
If subsidies are granted, do they cover:
- ○ Staff (salaries, etc.)
- ○ Equipment
- ○ Maintenance
- ○ Conservation
- ○ Education (exhibition, publications, etc.)
- ○ Communication and new technologies (e.g. website)
- ○ Other (specify): ……

[B7] Did the COVID-19 pandemic have an impact on these subsidies in 2021?
- ○ Subsidies increased
- ○ Subsidies remained stable
- ○ Subsidies decreased

What was the percentage of increase/decrease of these subsidies in 2021?
Comments

In 2021, were national museums again forced to close?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Comments

[B8] Has the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in specific threats to museums?
- ○ Yes (please specify)
- ○ No

[B9] Has COVID-19 had an impact on communities living around museums (for example, job losses)?
- ○ Yes (pleases specify)
- ○ No

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

ANNEX 3: NUMBER OF MUSEUMS IN THE WORLD

The estimate of the number of museums is based on the data used (1) in the *Report on the implementation of the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Museums and Collections* (figures collected by the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center), based on the *Museums of the World* directory published by Saur, and figures from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in Washington, D.C., for American museums). (2) These statistics have been amended from those provided by the 56 Member States for the monitoring of the Recommendation (in 2019), (3) by data provided in the first UNESCO survey of museums and COVID, conducted in April 2020 by 45 UNESCO field offices, and (4) by the present survey of Member States in March 2021.

The current estimate[I] of the number of museums in the world is **at aournd 104,000**.

Estimated number of museums in the world, 2021

Region	Estimated number of museums	% world
I. Western Europe and Others	30,628	29.5 %
II. Eastern Europe	11,366	11.0 %
III. Latin America and the Caribbean	8,716	8.4%
IV. Asia and Pacific	18,180	17.5 %
Va. Africa	868	0.8 %
Vb. Arab States	757	0.7 %
Israël	226	0.2%
United States of America	33,082	31.9%
Total Non-Members	33,308	32.1%
Total	**103,823**	100%

It should be emphasized that this is only an estimate, based on statistics drawn up according to sometimes varying criteria by Member States. As long as different counting methods are used, the number of museums cannot be accurately calculated.

I *This estimate includes the United States of America and Israel as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector.*

The museum network differs greatly between Member States (Fig. 6), some states have several thousand museums throughout the country (Germany, Brazil, the Russian Federation, France, Japan, etc.), others have no museums at all; almost half of the States have an estimated number of museums of less than fifty institutions and only about fifteen States, i.e. less than 8% of the 193 Member States, have a network of more than 1000 museums.

Number of museums by country

Number of museums	Number of countries	States*
More than 5,000	5	China, Federation of Russia, Germany, Japan, United States of America
2,001 to 5,000	5	Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, United Kingdom
1,001 to 2,000	8	Argentina, Mexico, Poland, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Thailand
501 to 1,000	10	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Georgia, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Ukraine
201 to 500	23	Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Greece, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Peru, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, Uruguay, Israel
101 to 200	17	Armenia, Bolivia, Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Latvia, Lithuania, Myanmar, Paraguay, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Uzbekistan, Vietnam
51 to 100	10	Albania, Cambodia, Cameroon, Egypt, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
26 to 50	20	Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Jordan, Libya, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Northern Macedonia, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic

* *This estimate includes the United States of America and Israel as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector..*

Number of museums by country

Number of museums	Number of countries	States*
11 to 25	29	Andorra, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Montenegro, Mozambique, Oman, Panama, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, San Marino, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Zimbabwe
1 to 10	60	Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Eswatini, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Niger, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia
No museum	9	Djibouti, Dominica, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Sudan, Tuvalu

This first observation immediately highlights two of UNESCO's priorities: Africa and the Small Island Developping States. Most of the States from these regions have a very limited number of museums (about 10), or even none at all; 30% of the Member States have a network of 1 to 10 museums, or no museums at all.

This is even more striking when the number of museums is related to the population of the States. The following table shows the number of museums per million inhabitants for each Member State. This statistic favors certain very small States (a State of 10,000 inhabitants with a single museum has a coefficient of 100; a State of 20 million inhabitants with 1,000 museums has a coefficient of 50), which led to a distinction being made initially between States with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants and other States.

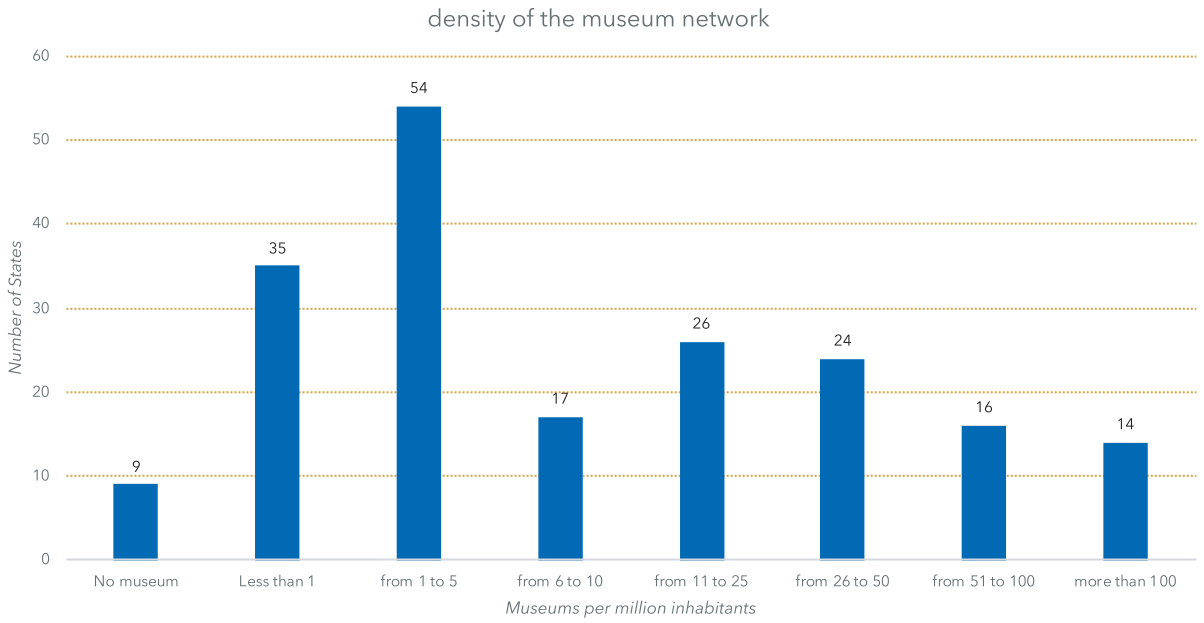

Fig.4. *Number of museums per million inhabitants*

The inequalities between States in terms of the density of the museum network are even more pronounced. The density of the museum network varies from one to one hundredfold. The densest networks (more than 50 museums per million inhabitants) are almost exclusively in Western Europe (it concerns 24 States). Half of the States (89) have a network of less than 1 to 5 museums per million inhabitants, while 9 States have no museum. At this level, we find most of the African countries, Small Island Developping States, but also a large number of Latin American and Asian states (heavily populated).

Density of the museum network

Museums per million inhabitants	Number of countries	States*
More than 100 (states with under 100,000 inhabitants)	6	Andorra, Cook Islands, Monaco, Niue, Palau, San Marino
More than 100 (States with over 100,000 inhabitants)	8	Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland, Mongolia, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America
51 to 100	16	Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Uruguay
26 to 50	24	Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belize, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Greece, Japan, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Tonga, United Kingdom
11 to 25	26	Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Ecuador, Israel Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Namibia, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Thailand, Ukraine, Vanuatu,
6 to 10	17	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Grenada, Iran, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Palestine, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey
1 to 5	54	Algeria, Bahrain, Belarus, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Congo, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eswatini , Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Solomon Islands, South Africa , Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor Leste, Togo, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

* *This estimate includes the United States of America and Israel as the objective of the study was to have a global view of the museum sector.*

Density of the museum network

Museums per million inhabitants	Number of countries	States*
Less than 1	35	Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia
No museums	9	Djibouti, Dominica, Kiribati, Micronesia, Nauru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Sudan, Tuvalu

Source of Information

1. Reported by Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Global Library Statistics, which lists libraries and museums (https://www.oclc.org), based on the following sources: Sauer compilation, Museums of the World, München, KG Sauer Verlag/ De Gruyter, 2016 (23rd ed.). Except for the United States (Institute of Museums and Libraries Services, Museums data files https://www.imls.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/museum-data-files
2. Statistics provided by Member States responding to the questionnaire concerning the implementation of the *2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections* (published in 2019).
3. Statistics provided by UNESCO Field Offices responding to 2020 COVID survey.
4. Data provided by the Member States in the 2021 survey
5. Data from source 1; the number of "Musées de France" museums in France is 1220.
6. Population data: World Bank 2018 data (except Niue and Palestine), https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/SP.POP.TOTL

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Andorra	I	4	**19**	0,077	246,8
Austria	I	4	**776**	8,847	87,7
Belgium	I	1	**912**	11,422	79,8
Canada	I	4	**2245**	37,058	60,6
Cyprus	I	4	**180**	1,189	151,4
Denmark	I	1	**359**	5,797	61,9
Finland	I	2	**326**	5,518	59,1
France	I	1	**4811**	66,987	71,8
Germany	I	4	**6741**	82,927	81,3
Greece	I	1	**487**	10,727	45,4
Iceland	I	4	**50**	0,353	141,6
Ireland	I	1	**319**	4,853	65,7
Italy	I	1	**3195**	60,431	52,9
Luxembourg	I	1	**42**	0,608	69,1
Malta	I	4	**27**	0,484	55,8
Monaco	I	1	**10**	0,039	256,4
Netherlands	I	2	**688**	17,231	39,9
Norway	I	1	**609**	5,314	114,6
Portugal	I	4	**662**	10,281	64,4
San Marino	I	1	**11**	0,034	323,5
Spain	I	2	**1732**	46,723	37,1
Sweden	I	4	**1600**	10,183	157,1
Switzerland	I	4	**1129**	8,517	132,6
Turkey	I	4	**515**	82,32	6,3
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	I	1	**3183**	66,489	47,9
Total Group I	**I**		**30628**	**544,409**	**56,3**

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Albania	II	2	**82**	2,866	28,6
Armenia	II	4	**120**	2,952	40,7
Azerbaijan	II	4	**222**	9,942	22,3
Belarus	II	1	**12**	9,485	1,3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	II	3	**32**	3,324	9,6
Bulgaria	II	2	**232**	7,024	33
Croatia	II	4	**162**	4,089	39,6
Czechia	II	4	**481**	10,626	45,3
Estonia	II	4	**180**	1,321	136,3
Georgia	II	4	**323**	3,731	86,6
Hungary	II	4	**813**	9,769	83,2
Latvia	II	4	**156**	1,926	81
Lithuania	II	4	**106**	2,79	38
Montenegro	II	4	**24**	0,622	38,6
North Macedonia	II	4	**35**	2,083	16,8
Poland	II	2	**1233**	37,979	32,5
Republic of Moldova	II	2	**125**	3,546	35,3
Romania	II	3	**440**	19,474	22,6
Russian Federation	II	2	**5415**	144,478	37,5
Serbia	II	4	**149**	6,982	21,3
Slovakia	II	1	**213**	5,447	39,1
Slovenia	II	3	**93**	2,067	45
Tajikistan	II	3	**71**	9,101	7,8
Ukraine	II	4	**647**	44,623	14,5
Total Group II	II		11366	346,247	32,8

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Antigua and Barbuda	III	4	2	0,096	20,8
Argentina	III	4	**1183**	44,495	26,6
Bahamas	III	1	**9**	0,386	23,3
Barbados	III	1	**7**	0,287	24,4
Belize	III	1	**10**	0,383	26,1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	III	3	**120**	11,353	10,6
Brazil	III	4	**3906**	209,469	18,6
Chile	III	4	**322**	18,729	17,2
Colombia	III	4	**468**	49,649	9,4
Costa Rica	III	4	**47**	4,999	9,4
Cuba	III	3	**338**	11,338	29,8
Dominica	III	1	**0**	0,071	0
Dominican Republic	III	4	**14**	10,627	1,3
Ecuador	III	4	**183**	17,084	10,7
El Salvador	III	1	**12**	6,42	1,9
Grenada	III	1	**1**	0,111	9
Guatemala	III	1	**19**	17,247	1,1
Guyana	III	1	**1**	0,779	1,3
Haiti	III	3	**8**	11,124	0,7
Honduras	III	4	**20**	9,588	2,1
Jamaica	III	1	**16**	2,935	5,5
Mexico	III	2	**1320**	126,191	10,5
Nicaragua	III	1	**38**	6,466	5,9
Panama	III	2	**19**	4,177	4,5
Paraguay	III	4	**147**	6,956	21,1
Peru	III	1	**227**	31,989	7,1

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Saint Kitts and Nevis	III	1	**0**	0,052	0
Saint Lucia	III	1	**1**	0,182	5,5
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	III	1	**0**	0,11	0
Suriname	III	1	**3**	0,576	5,2
Trinidad and Tobago	III	1	**1**	1,39	0,7
Uruguay	III	4	**217**	3,449	62,9
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	III	3	**57**	28,87	2
Total Group III	III		**8716**	637,578	13,7
Afghanistan	IV	2	**4**	37,172	0,1
Australia	IV	1	**919**	24,992	36,8
Bangladesh	IV	1	**23**	161,356	0,1
Bhutan	IV	1	**4**	0,754	5,3
Brunei Darussalam	IV	3	**6**	0,429	14
Cambodia	IV	3	**60**	16,25	3,7
China	IV	4	**5535**	1392,73	4
Cook Islands	IV	4	**5**	0,022	227,3
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	IV	1	**11**	25,55	0,4
Fiji	IV	1	**1**	0,883	1,1
India	IV	3	**500**	1352,617	0,4
Indonesia	IV	1	**163**	267,663	0,6
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	IV	2	**628**	81,8	7,7
Japan	IV	4	**5738**	126,529	45,3
Kazakhstan	IV	3	**245**	18,277	13,4
Kiribati	IV	1	**0**	0,116	0

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Kyrgyzstan	IV	3	**67**	6,316	10,6
Lao People's Democratic Republic	IV	1	**12**	7,062	1,7
Malaysia	IV	4	**236**	31,529	7,5
Maldives	IV	4	**5**	0,516	9,7
Marshall Islands	IV	4	**1**	0,058	17,2
Micronesia (Federated States of)	IV	1	**0**	0,113	0
Mongolia	IV	3	**342**	3,17	107,9
Myanmar	IV	2	**104**	53,708	1,9
Nauru	IV	1	**0**	0,013	0
Nepal	IV	4	**35**	28,088	1,2
New Zealand	IV	1	**236**	4,886	48,3
Niue	IV	1	**1**	0,0016	625
Pakistan	IV	4	**46**	212,215	0,2
Palau	IV	4	**3**	0,017	176,5
Papua New Guinea	IV	1	**8**	8,606	0,9
Philippines	IV	1	**192**	106,652	1,8
Republic of Korea	IV	2	**1102**	51,635	21,3
Samoa	IV	4	**3**	0,196	15,3
Singapore	IV	4	**63**	5,78	10,9
Solomon Islands	IV	1	**3**	0,653	4,6
Sri Lanka	IV	3	**40**	21,67	1,8
Thailand	IV	4	**1526**	69,429	22
Timor-Leste	IV	3	**4**	1,268	3,2
Tonga	IV	4	**4**	0,103	38,8
Turkmenistan	IV	1	**16**	5,851	2,7

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Uzbekistan	IV	4	**114**	32,955	3,5
Tuvalu	IV	1	**0**	0,012	0
Vanuatu	IV	2	**5**	0,293	17,1
Viet Nam	IV	3	**170**	95,54	1,8
Total Group IV	IV		**18180**	4255,4756	4,3
Angola	Va	4	**15**	30,81	0,5
Benin	Va	1	**8**	11,485	0,7
Botswana	Va	4	**8**	2,254	3,5
Burkina Faso	Va	4	**30**	19,752	1,5
Burundi	Va	1	**2**	11,175	0,2
Cabo Verde	Va	4	**26**	0,544	47,8
Cameroon	Va	4	**60**	25,216	2,4
Central African Republic	Va	3	**11**	4,666	2,4
Chad	Va	3	**4**	15,478	0,3
Comoros	Va	4	**3**	0,832	3,6
Congo	Va	3	**7**	5,244	1,3
Côte d'Ivoire	Va	4	**14**	25,069	0,6
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Va	3	**6**	84,069	0,1
Djibouti	Va	3	**0**	0,959	0
Equatorial Guinea	Va	1	**1**	1,309	0,8
Eritrea	Va	2	**2**	3,214	0,6
Eswatini	Va	1	**2**	1,136	1,8
Ethiopia	Va	3	**115**	109,225	1,1
Gabon	Va	3	**3**	2,119	1,4
Gambia	Va	4	**7**	2,28	3,1
Ghana	Va	4	**9**	29,767	0,3

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Guinea	Va	4	**7**	12,414	0,6
Guinea-Bissau	Va	4	**8**	1,874	4,3
Kenya	Va	4	**23**	51,393	0,4
Lesotho	Va	4	**3**	2,108	1,4
Liberia	Va	4	**4**	4,819	0,8
Madagascar	Va	4	**30**	26,262	1,1
Malawi	Va	4	**8**	18,143	0,4
Mali	Va	4	**21**	19,078	1,1
Mauritius	Va	4	**7**	1,265	5,5
Mozambique	Va	4	**22**	29,496	0,7
Namibia	Va	3	**31**	2,448	12,7
Niger	Va	3	**3**	2,448	1,2
Nigeria	Va	2	**48**	195,875	0,2
Rwanda	Va	4	**8**	12,302	0,7
Sao Tome and Principe	Va	4	**1**	0,211	4,7
Senegal	Va	4	**26**	15,854	1,6
Seychelles	Va	4	**2**	0,097	20,6
Sierra Leone	Va	1	**1**	7,65	0,1
Somalia	Va	1	**1**	15,008	0,1
South Africa	Va	1	**233**	57,78	4
South Sudan	Va	4	**0**	10,976	0
Togo	Va	4	**11**	7,889	1,4
Uganda	Va	4	**6**	42,723	0,1
United Republic of Tanzania	Va	4	**7**	56,318	0,1
Zambia	Va	4	**5**	17,352	0,3
Zimbabwe	Va	2	**19**	14,439	1,3

Number of museums per country

Country	UNESCO Electoral Group	Info. Source	N° of museums	Population (millions)	Museums/ mil. inhab.
Total Group Va	Va		**868**	1012,825	0,9
Algeria	Vb	4	**47**	42,228	1,1
Bahrain	Vb	4	**3**	1,569	1,9
Egypt	Vb	2	**86**	98,423	0,9
Iraq	Vb	4	**19**	38,434	0,5
Jordan	Vb	3	**46**	9,956	4,6
Kuwait	Vb	1	**4**	4,137	1
Lebanon	Vb	3	**21**	6,849	3,1
Libya	Vb	4	**27**	6,679	4
Mauritania	Vb	1	**2**	4,403	0,5
Morocco	Vb	1	**44**	36,029	1,2
Oman	Vb	1	**12**	4,829	2,5
Palestine	Vb	4	**33**	4,543	7,3
Qatar	Vb	1	**7**	2,782	2,5
Saudi Arabia	Vb	4	**261**	33,7	7,7
Sudan	Vb	3	**16**	41,802	0,4
Syrian Arab Republic	Vb	4	**26**	16,906	1,5
Tunisia	Vb	2	**80**	11,565	6,9
United Arab Emirates	Vb	1	**13**	9,631	1,3
Yemen	Vb	1	**10**	28,499	0,4
Total Group Vb	Vb		**757**	402,964	1,9
Israel		1	**226**	8,884	25,4
United States of America		1	**33082**	327,167	101,1
Total Non-Members			**33308**	336,051	99,1
TOTAL			**103823**	7535,5496	13,8