museum watch

governance management project

Title: **Museum Watch Governance Management Project**

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Foreword by INTERCOM Chair **GORANKA HORJAN**

MAPPING
THE AUTONOMY
OF MUSEUMS

The Museum Watch Governance Management Project was jointly drafted by ICOM International Committee for Museum Management (INTERCOM) and the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) as an ICOM Special Project to help the museum community address management challenges more efficiently. The idea emerged out of the existing Museum Watch Programme, introduced by CIMAM with the aim 'to assist modern and contemporary art museum professionals in dealing with critical situations that undermine their ability to undertake their professional practice and effect a museum's ability to operate to international standards of best practice' (CIMAM, n.d.).

In the joint project supported by ICOM, the focus was directed towards the reported practices from several European countries about the increasing interference of politics in museum management, thus reducing the autonomy of museums in making professional decisions. INTERCOM and CIMAM initiated the project with partners in South-East and Central Europe — ICOM SEE and ICOM Poland — to follow the trends and see how the professional community can respond to increasing risks. To conduct

the research, an expert team, including the researchers Ian King and Annick Schramme, was engaged to conduct the survey and interviews.

The first part of the project helped to map the constraints, on a national and regional level, that harness the creative potential of museums. The survey identified areas where governmental policies need to be aligned with good governance practices to enable museums to fulfil their mission. A more thorough insight was provided by interviewing the focus group of selected museum directors in South-East and Central Europe. This assisted experts in the analysis of the data and understand how universal concepts can be used in mapping the processes in the museum field. It also revealed how much the sector is regulated by politics and what influence the museum leaders have on this process. The basic question for directors is whether less interference from politics could benefit their institutions.

Several areas of importance have been detected in the relationship between museums and politics: from morale and ethics, economic support and maintenance of resources to crisis management. Crucially, the interaction goes both ways. There is a strong political bias in the museum's narrative and museum leaders that often connect meddling of politics with professional morale and ethics. Both reside in their value system. Ideally, when museum leadership and politics share the same values, there is a reduced chance for conflict. When the current museum leadership is perceived as supporting the political opposition, then it is more likely that those in power will take certain steps that they have at their disposal; namely, trying to exert influence over the museum's narrative to serve their political purposes. The recent changes of directors after elections in many countries of South-East and Central Europe revealed such a practice.[1] This is also linked to a tendency to award political allies and supporters by giving them prominent positions in cultural institutions, museums included. The management of

[1] A huge change occurred in Slovenia in 2020/2021 when the six directors of the main museums in the capital were not re-elected, as confirmed by the project partner ICOM SEE.

change does not necessarily happen because the director is a political opponent, but simply because there is an ambition to install a person who is a supporter of the ruling authority. As long as the professional quality is kept as a standard, then it is difficult to object to management change. In some cases, however, the appointments of people who are inexperienced in the museum sector can open a public debate.[2]

The economy of museum support can also be related to politics. The research shows that some museum directors think that being on good terms with politicians may be beneficial for their museums. Being close to the political elite may result in different advantages, so it is no surprise that museum management may see building political relationships as a good opportunity. When funding is scarce, such support can be decisive for museum work, and it can range from annual programme funding and appointment of directors to cultural councils of the founder or large-scale projects when authorities choose strategic projects for investments.[3] Museums have been struggling with insufficient resources for years. The recent impact of global pandemics made the situation much worse, because additional burdens were added to already existing challenges. Understaffed, with buildings that are falling apart, and with regular maintenance reduced to the minimum, many museums in South-East and Central Europe are at the brink of their operational capacity. Their regular employees' costs amount to 70 or 80 per cent of the annual budget (Horjan, 2020), which means there is little funding left for upkeep, programmes or investments (Horjan, 2020). In 2020 and 2021, many museums in Croatia's capital experienced the drama of simply not

[2] This was an argument of the employees of the Zagreb City Museum in November 2021 when the newly appointed board chose a supporter of the municipal ruling party, without any professional experience in a museum institution, for the museum director. The appointment sparked the public debate in the media. Večernji list https://www.vecernji.hr/kultura/djelatnici-protiv-prijedloga-upravnog-vijeca-da-za-ravnateljicu-bude-i-menovana-ana-kutlesa-iz-bloka-1536616 (Accessed: 4 November 2021). The public competition was annulled.

[3] Good examples are ITU investments in urban areas, in which only one or two investment projects in culture can be selected and the authorities have to give their consent.

receiving the contracted money from their founder due to solvency issues. Programmes were supported with contracts, but in reality, no money was transferred to the museums. As a consequence, numerous suppliers and outsourced experts were waiting for months to be paid for their goods and services. This situation demonstrates the power authorities have and how museums can become hostages to various political and economic circumstances.

Recent global changes have had a considerable impact on how people see cultural institutions. Social truth today is mostly communicated on social networks, and cultural debates have left professional circles. Museum directors and curators have been less active in public discussions, partly due to the restrictions imposed on them or considering that silence will bring them no harm.[4] Public debates do not exist scientifically and professionally in a vacuum, and when used by media, these debates are often linked to politics. The excessive sensation of people can lead to manipulation and misinformation, thus having a harmful impact on museums. Individual rationality is a slippery slope, so challenges need to be communicated with arguments, and museum professionals should communicate their institutional logic to establish trust and open dialogue among stakeholders. How to secure a broader support and defend professional standards for the benefit of the whole of society is a key issue for any leader. In periods of crisis, there is an additional challenge: how to reshape the business and adapt attitudes towards new priorities. For good governance, trust, honesty and respect have to be established in both directions, together with transparency and credibility. Project partners will further explore this path of the governance principle.

The huge difference in autonomy noticed in museums worldwide gave additional impulse to INTERCOM and

[4] Museums may even receive the instruction from the founder that forbids them to communicate with the media unless allowed by the founder; this happened, for example, in Croatia in June 2021. This silence of profession was mentioned in the article by a well-known Croatian journalist who follows culture in the national newspaper *Večernji list*: https://www.vecernji.hr/premium/za-spas-projekta-hrvatskog-prirodoslovnog-muzeja-nitko-se-ne-usudi-podici-glas-1520935 (Accessed: 31 August 2021).

partners to conduct this research on governance and to map practices in the European regions where an alarming lack of autonomy has been reported. The partners are looking forward to initiating international housekeeping rules for museum and establishing codes for external stakeholders to assist museums survive this unprecedented crisis, and this has certainly increased again recently with the war in Ukraine. The project aims to boost the potential and integrity of museums and reduce vulnerabilities by enhancing resilience. A proper response to the socio-economic challenges is directly connected with good governance and management practices. The first phase of the project revealed the complexity of the process and regional differences. In the next stage, INTERCOM and partners will open additional chapters related to good governance, supported by ICOM, as a global professional organisation whose main mission is to 'establish professional and ethical standards for museum activities' (ICOM, n.d.), through the Special Project Grant in 2022.

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Foreword by CIMAM Board Member **BART DE BAERE**

ON THE QUESTION OF GOVERNANCE:

FOCUSING ON THE RELATION BETWEEN DIRECTORS AND THE BODIES GOVERNING THEM

Modern and contemporary art museums are a special sphere within the immense museum field. They integrally share the essential codes and practices of all their colleagues in that field, but, at the same time, are also caught by the radicality and rigor of the artists they work with and commit to; artists that tend to focus on emerging societal urgencies and that are inclined to act polemically and antagonistically. Therefore, this kind of museum becomes even more often an arena for conflicting viewpoints on the present and the past than other museums in different sectors. Developments affecting all kinds of museums are frequently more intensely visible in contemporary art museums, because they are so transformational, acutely connected to transformations within contemporaneity and are thereby themselves a more intensely and highly visible disputed territory. CIMAM, the organisation uniting modern and contemporary art museums, is affiliated with ICOM and a subsidiary from it. CIMAM considers it important to contribute to ICOM and to join forces with it whenever possible. That is often an obvious and rewarding thing to do. For this research project, this was obviously the case.

The initial question, that of governance specifically expressed in the relation between directors and the bodies governing them, was launched by the Museum Watch Committee (MWC). Through the support of best practice, this CIMAM committee wants to be a tool to assist modern and contemporary art museum professionals in dealing with critical situations that affect the museum's ability to maintain codes of practices and individuals' ability to work diligently within those. The MWC aims to stimulate reflection by looking at cases with a group of colleagues with a variety of experiences, some of them directors leading major museums. Each time, the group endeavors to assess the importance of the case it is looking at, the understanding it can get from it, and finally, also consider how to address the issue(s). It is an observatory of sorts, not a study centre or a think tank; it doesn't have the capacity or ambitions of a research centre. If a case is considered clear and relevant, sometimes further action is taken. The approach then varies depending on the case: it can privately correspond with the professionals involved, react with a public action that consists of official letters to the persons and organisations that hold responsibility or issue public statements to inform and express concern to the global professional community.

The MWC noticed that, in recent years, many of the cases discussed were related to frictions or outright ruptures in the relation between senior staff in institutions and the boards, administrations and political representatives governing them. Over the past several years, the balance in the relation overall shifted to the latter, sometimes to the detriment of institutional necessities and relevant artistic impulses. Founding bodies obviously are entitled to a profound impact, but this impact should be embedded in codes and guidelines to be reflective, qualified and even legitimate. Good governance can only be upheld by clear agreements.

Counter to that, the gradual upgrading of governing bodies' aspirations, which could be noticed over the past few decades, now seems to be breaking down in some cases. Qualified directors are fired overnight on unclear grounds. Positions

are left vacant. New nominations remain uncontested; procedures are abolished; criterion fades away. The epoch in which professionalisation was an effective catchphrase seems to be over. It is as if governing bodies sometimes feel that expectations about expertise have become too complex or that tensions have been running too high. Recent brutal political interventions in museums are often explained along clear ideological lines, but they are in reality often murky, not replacing one perspective with another, or one expert with a different one, but rather simply transpiring from smaller incidents.

In such circumstances, one may attempt to outline and impose international standards, but that won't help on their own. Accordingly, we need a more rigorous response that provides colleagues support and guidance. Perhaps a code similar to the ICOM code of ethics?

The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums is a major source of reference and support for the museum field, a somewhat uncontested frame of reference. It outlines principles underlying best practices in many different fields of museum activities. The MWC felt that it might help to formulate such principles concerning the relation between directors and their governing bodies, on the foundation of the ICOM Code of Ethics. These principles could also serve as a reference and inspiration to develop local codes of governance and corresponding practices, on an institutional or more broadly at a government level.

Governance principles and governance deficits are not specific to contemporary art museums. Here, the response of CIMAM in considering itself part of the ICOM ecosystem came into play. It seemed logical for the MWC to contact ICOM, and for this particular question then to contact INTERCOM, in particular, for the ICOM committee to start to focus on ideas, issues and practices relating to management and leadership within the context of museums.

The question fell on fertile ground. It led to a joint reflection concerning the governance of museums today, especially

the relation between politics and governing bodies and between directors and governing bodies. The reflection also included the phenomenon of mandate functions and that of acting directors, as is recently ever more often the case. The ambition was, from the onset, to afterwards involve other bodies within ICOM, such as the Legal Affairs Committee and the Ethics Committee. INTERCOM proposed to also include a workshop during the ICOM annual conference.

A COURAGEOUS ACTION BY THE STAFF OF MODERNA GALERIJA, LJUBLJANA

At the start of 2022, the CIMAM Museum Watch Committee expressed its deep concern about the actions of the Slovenian government in relation to the governance of MG + MSUM. The Museum Watch Committee shared with CIMAM this courageous letter sent by the staff of the Museum to their government and media.

MG+MSUM staff 2022 /// Ljubljana, 10 March 2022

The scope and complexity of the question was obviously beyond the research capacity of both CIMAM and INTERCOM. The key ambition, however, was some form of research all the same, as a support system to allow museum directors to formulate and share insights relating to the question and that may become widely supported. The initial partners therefore brought together researchers that had already been dealing with museum governance in diverse international settings and top museum professionals that can be considered privileged witnesses or experts by experience.

To enhance the effectiveness of discussions within the focus groups, it was further decided to limit the origins of the participating museum professionals, so as to secure the intelligibility of remarks without needing too much explanation or context. A lot of the governance cases dealt with by the MWC in recent times had been situated in South-East and Central Europe, and it was therefore decided to focus on these zones during the first phase. ICOM SEE and ICOM Poland were invited to join as partners in this undertaking. Both of these regional bodies and CIMAM solicited and obtained active participation of the museum directors that, as we know, otherwise often don't respond to such inquiries anymore. The whole plan then became an ICOM Special Project.

The outcome of this first phase is presented here. It is a report by the researchers of this encounter between academic and organic thinkers, between a quest for outlines and the experience of practitioners. It doesn't conclude; it prepares the ground for a further discussion. What may we all believe to be basic principles of governance that we can convince everyone (including politicians) that it is essential for professional and sustainable development for museum staff so that they can effectively contribute to some of the most amazing institutions in the world.

REPORT

museum watch governance management project

cultural governance for the
museum sector in central
and south-east europe

January 2022

ICOM international council of museums   MINTERCOM ICOM International committee for museum management   CIMAM   ICOM International council of museums South East Europe   ICOM International council of museums Poland

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INTRODUCTION

Museums globally are engaged in a process of reflection and transformation regarding their own 'role' and 'being'. Definitions as to what constitutes a museum (and thereby its contribution) has led to many internal and external conversations. The wide-ranging (and sometime passionate) discussion during the ICOM General Assembly in Kyoto (2019) predicted some of the issues and societal challenges that museums currently experience. In addition, museums also face local stakeholder interference, which add further difficulties. In this report, we explore some of these issues, and in response, we present arguments that an explicit governance code can protect and support museums and their staff.

PREMISE OF
THIS STUDY

The International Committee for Museum Management (INTERCOM) and the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) initiated this project with museum partners in South-East and Central Europe—represented by South East Europe Regional Alliance (ICOM SEE) and ICOM Poland — to explore how the professional community can respond to an increasing volatile and risky environment, including incongruous interference that challenges museums' neutrality in their knowledge-sharing role. In response to these and other means of interference, we argue that a strong core response is the introduction of an explicit code of governance, and this report presents evidence from a pilot study to support this premise.

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WHY IS 'CULTURAL GOVERNANCE' IMPORTANT?

The importance of good governance has already been widely acknowledged in many sections of societal domains, such as in healthcare and education. This premise, however, originally emerged from the commercial sector. The founding literature predominantly emerges from Anglo-Saxon origins, and increasingly in recent years, its evolution has continually looked towards developing and identifying good governance practices across different locations, especially (for our purposes) a guise that is both useful for not-for-profit cultural organisations and also that takes into account their local context (King and Schramme, 2019a and 2019b; Cornforth, 2014; Rentschler, 2015).

In the commercial sector, there is often a separation between the owners and the shareholders of the company, on the one hand, and the board of directors and the management, on the other. There is also an explicit set of rules (or an objective benchmark) to assess the other party in order to generate the practice of 'good' governance. Depending on the interpretation of the term 'corporate governance', it normally consists of a clear division of tasks, profit maximisation and stakeholder management as essential (see Schrauwen and Schramme, 2012). In summary, Zingales (2008: p. 250) offers a definition

of corporate governance that is useful for this opening introduction; he writes: 'corporate governance is synonymous with the exercise of authority, direction and control'. Other definitions also speak of monitoring, setting a direction and accountability as important factors in governance.

For the cultural sector, the needs are different, but certainly there is still a need for effective management and control. There is an additional need for greater transparency, entrepreneurship, collaboration and, importantly, better effective dialogue with the funding governing bodies that support the cultural and creative sectors. As a result, the cultural sector now appreciates that good governance is not simply a luxury but is in fact increasingly a necessity to commit itself towards current and future professionalisation and thereby enable museums' development as efficient and effective institutions both nationally and internationally. Currently, we see evidence globally of cultural governance codes being designed to meet the needs of cultural institutions. Primarily, this design falls into three core areas: transparency, accountability and probity.

Recent movements to a context of greater ethical awareness within society (for example, issues regarding restitution, decolonisation and sponsor reputation) have made the need for governance and ethical codes even more urgent. Governance, however, is not simply a set of rules or principles; rather:

• it is a process, responding to the needs related to the age and phase within the life cycle of the museum;

• a practice, dealing with the principles on a daily basis and being aware of the different roles of the governance bodies;

• and a state of mind, providing confidence, safety and security for all related parties and stakeholders (both internal and external) that formally and informally engage with cultural organisations and museums.

Our view is that the introduction of an appropriate governance code should protect and support the museum and its mission

and provide greater confidence for cross-museum cooperation and coordination, both at national and international levels. Thus, an international governance code sponsored and administered by ICOM, with the support of INTERCOM and CIMAM, should create greater strength and solidarity, whereas its absence exposes individual museums to arbitrary influences from outside. Of course, there will be difficulties and resistance, as this report will reveal, and readers should not read this report as evidence of an instant positive response, but rather as a concept that is beginning to evolve.

ℳ BELGRADE: LEADING INSTITUTION DAMAGED BY LOCAL POLITICS

CIMAM expressed its concern by what appeared to be an abandonment of good practices in the acquisition of competent leadership, and the favoring of improvised solutions destabilizing an institution fundamental to the cultural identity of the country.

Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCAB) /// Belgrade, 18 March 2020

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A GOVERNANCE CODE FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR?

In our international comparative research from 2017 to 2019, we tested six governance principles around the globe (five continents and nine countries) (for further detail see King and Schramme, 2019a). These seemed to be valuable for each location, but we found also that there were differences regarding familiarity with the concept of governance, maturity of the organisation and location, the broader cultural context and the relationship with the politics.

PRINCIPLE 1 ///
Mission and vision

The role and powers of the governance bodies should support the museum mission and serve to fulfil the objectives and the purpose of the museum. Each person, section and department possesses clearly defined responsibilities and is answerable for their activities and achievements.

PRINCIPLE 2 ///
Checks and balances

The governance bodies should be accountable to each other in order to fulfil the overall objectives and purpose of the

museum: the principle of checks and balances plays a central role in this regard.

PRINCIPLE 3 ///
Transparency

Governance bodies should operate in a transparent manner and keep each other sufficiently informed about their activities and decisions (and any potential conflicts that may arise).

PRINCIPLE 4 ///
Composition and role of the board

Is there a board or an equivalent? How is it constituted? Does the composition of the board reflect the diversity of the stakeholders? Do members understand and appreciate their role on the board? Do they receive appropriate training? What kind of competences do the board members possess? How well does the board reflect the present and future needs of the museum?

PRINCIPLE 5 ///
Relationships with stakeholders

The value and contribution of stakeholders (internal and external—including community, politicians, volunteers, the audiences and international collaborations) should be taken into consideration and defined.

PRINCIPLE 6 ///
Ethics

Is there evidence of consistent ethical behaviour? This is related to ICOM's Code of Ethics and how it is implemented.

Respondents from our empirical research recognised these principles of governance, but in their countries or locations, there was often little evidence of an explicit code in place. There was, however, a shared agreement that the principles of accountability, transparency and probity should be in place. In discussions with colleagues from this current study, museum respondents often recounted many issues that mirrored our 2019 publication. Respondents were familiar with the above principles; however, what emerged is that many of these principles were embedded (and often informally) within other aspects of the working and management practice of the museum. Some respondents in elaborating their recognition of these principles added that these were derived from specific governmental guidelines and regulations and were then often translated into the internal rules relevant for the specific museum.

The absence of a valid and shared governance code seems to allow both the museum staff and the governing bodies and founders to see the principles of governance as 'optional' rather than an explicit prescribed rule for practice. Accordingly, this absence can often be a weakness in that it allows external interferences to occupy and influence this space. In politically sensitive contexts, an open space that has the potential to influence audiences needs to be controlled (or even removed). That is, in this situation, the museum must protect itself; otherwise, this potential can be employed (through the influence of others) for circumstances other than its primary role. Therefore, we see the implementation of an explicit code as a possible significant protector for professionals in the museum sector to resist inappropriate interference. Not least, employing the code as a formalisation of practices concurrently fulfils the principles of transparency, accountability and probity and reduces the opportunity for external parties to utilise this space for their own agendas.

CULTURAL GOVERNANCE FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: HOW ARE BOARDS TAKING DECISIONS?

Based on previous research, we noted that when boards are taking decisions, it is essential to appreciate that these are made up of both formal and informal processes in addition to a focus on the external and internal (see Figure 1). The formal being a process that includes formal statutes, legal regulations and bylaws, whereas; the informal refers to the deeper culture and habits that exist within a certain location and allows for local interpretation. Interpretations allow for other factors to emerge, such as social norms, habits, customs of that specific location and informal relations within the organisation or with external stakeholders (for example, with politicians at different levels). Finding a balance between both formal and informal is essential for good governance: external rules can be adapted from other locations, but the way they are interpreted and thereby implemented needs also to reflect the impact of the local habits and culture. Of course, this can't be seen simply as an opportunity to adapt the rules for specific interests. Rather, governance codes need to reflect specific museum needs and respond with carefully considered responses

that professionally reflect the purpose of the museum. We suggest that, to reduce any inappropriate interference, the communication process be sufficiently formalised for it to be transparent, and this formalisation will fall under the remit of the explicit governance code.

Taking into account that governance is not only a set of principles but also a practice and a process, in some locations that are not yet used to any governance rules, there is a greater need to formalise things as part of the institutions' professionalisation or maturing process. This is because it is suggested that when the roles between the organisation, the board and the government and other stakeholders are well defined, this is better for the health and the sustainable working and growth of the organisations (see King and Schramme, 2019a and 2019b for further explanation).

Figure 1. Informal/Formal and Internal/External Governance mechanisms
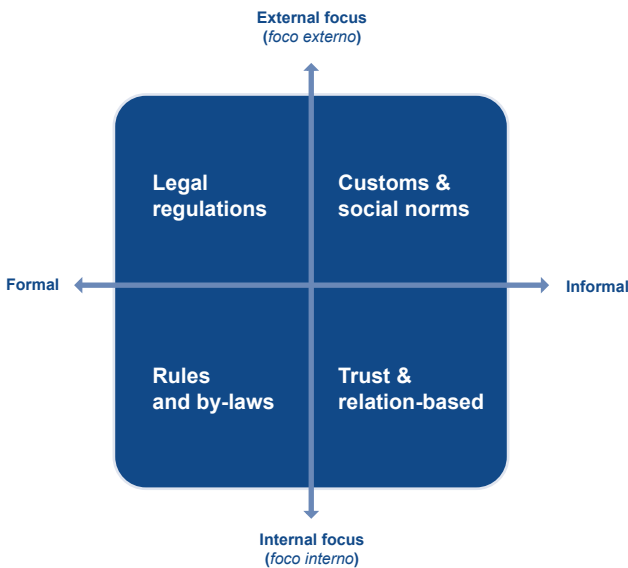
Adapted from Verhezen P., Riyana E.R., and Notowidigdo, P. , 2012: 22.

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METHODOLOGY

The remit of this study was to set up a pilot examination that explores the value of the introduction of a governance code for certain key parts of South-East and Central Europe and to assess its value for the future development of the museum sector in these regions.

Our methodology followed a rather simple research design, consisting of a questionnaire to gather information about the organisational structure and governance model of key institutions.

We successfully collected data from eight countries, and this study thereby provides a valuable overview of certain major museums in South-East and Central Europe. In Appendix 1, we provide a full list of participants, and we take this formal opportunity to thank them for their openness and cooperation.

We then organised, at the end of June 2021/beginning of July 2021, two focus groups, each constituted by a mixed group of people. One group consisted mainly of directors and representatives from history museums, and the second group's membership was mainly directors from modern and contemporary art museums (see Appendix 2).

In addition to these professionals, we also invited some politicians, who were responsible for cultural policy at a local, regional or national level. Finally, some of the respondents were experts (without specific institutional links), thus offering knowledge about critical issues and relevant factors. Through these focus groups, we wanted to gain greater and deeper understanding of their perception, attitude and practice of key governance principles, including transparency, accountability and probity for the museum sector. In addition, if they had a separate board, then we also wanted to know more about the role and working of the board.

First, we confronted participants with the following working definition on cultural governance, based on international research and an understanding of the term in different areas:

> " Cultural governance provides different stakeholders with the confidence that all participants are acting in the best interests of the institution by fulfilling its mission and thereby from the board down to all other institutional members (both paid and unpaid) cause them to act in a transparent, accountable, equitable and professional way.
>
> (a working definition from King and Schramme, 2021)

The additional qualitative information from the focus groups and interviews helped us to interpret data from the questionnaire and to understand the local context and situation of the museums.

After the focus groups, we also held final in-depth interviews with key respondents; most of these respondents were not connected to any institution so that we could check or validate our understandings and elaborate any outstanding issues. For confidentiality reasons, all of the quotes are anonymised.

We presented the results of the study to a group of peers and experts from ICOM and CIMAM on 8 November 2021. We also discussed the development of a possible grid that can help museum leaders to check the balance of vital points of museum governance and political interference.

The next phase of this study will be to design a set of core principles for the South-East and Central European museum sector that follows international guidelines and also reflects local needs, thus producing an explicit code of governance. A toolkit will be developed that assesses the above principles of governance in accordance with two key sections: first, core international values and second, local application. We see this toolkit becoming essential for all museum professionals (see Appendix 3).

ICOM SEE members meeting in Slovenija /// Brežice, 19 November 2022

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FINDINGS FROM
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The respondents in the questionnaire represent a rich collection of museums from different perspectives, not only from art and contemporary art but also from archaeology; art related to diseases, healing and the body's history; ethnographic, cultural artefacts (static and moveable); cultural heritage (both local and national); cultural tourism; natural history; storytelling, among others. This is a strength, as the variety of respondents reveals the breadth of interest and value of museums for contemporary society, but it also raises the question how comparative the results collected really are. In discussing our findings, we will therefore also focus on some of the differences (and sometimes contradictions) between the respondents' answers as well.

FUNCTIONS OF MUSEUMS

First, we asked all the respondents in the questionnaire what their museum's purpose ('reason for being') is and how they would define its mission.

For modern and contemporary art museums, most of the directors felt that they were there to popularise art within

society and to validate art from the immediate context of the institution. This group also indicated the importance of art as a communication tool, and they also want to represent that through the institution. Also, the educational part is important for many, as well as the role of the museum as a meeting place.

Some of these responses were the same for directors of history museums. Most of them indicated that collecting and safeguarding historical items is the most important function of the museum. Again, we see the educational and research functions as important functions as well. Notably, most of the directors defined themselves more as researchers rather than as managers.

> The purpose of the museum should **be education, research and profiling of the big collection**[5] of art works from the context of (the former) Yugoslav cultural space. This is albeit **neglected due to the strong influence of politics** and micromanagement of the institution by political oligarchies [...].
>
> (Quote 1)

MEASURING IMPACT

We also asked the questionnaire respondents how they measured their museum's impact. Below is a summative list of answers:

- it is a process, responding to the needs related to the age and phase within the life cycle of the museum;

- number of visitors / own revenue,

- number of activities,

---

[5] Some words in the respondents' quotes are bolded to emphasise key points.

- annual report,

- public audits,

- funding,

- art critics,

- prizes,

- number of collaborations (regional and international),

- scientific publications,

- (social) media monitoring and

- visitor surveys.

Not all of these items were indicated by all of the respondents, but most referred to the **annual report** for measuring impact. The larger museums also saw the **number of visitors** as an important indicator for measuring impact. These larger museums also referred to **(social) media monitoring** and **visitor surveys** as something that they do regularly.

REGULATIONS

In terms of regulations, we asked: 'What rules do the museum professionals have to follow? What is in place in their country in terms of legal regulations that they have to follow?' We are not sufficiently aware or knowledgeable in confident that we are able to list each of the relevant laws, statutes, etc. for each respondent. However, it is important to stress that these differ from location to location. For some rules or regulations, there are similarities, but in others, there are differences. We should also note that in some locations, there are additional local, regional, religious and customs that also have a direct influence on the specific museum.

Many of the respondents also referred to the ICOM Statutes and Code of Ethics as something that they support and follow.

More internally, of course, all of the respondents speak of the institution's statutes and sometimes also the regulations of parent organisations. Some museums are part of a bigger group of museums, so they have to conform to the regulations of one of the bigger museums that is also governing them.

Below is a quote from a director of a Polish museum with regards to this question and the problems the existing governmental practices present:

> " The museum is governed by the country's bill on museums. It gives a decisive role to the museum director and results in **struggles for nomination of candidates convenient for particular stakeholders, repeating every some years** (formal term of a director is five years long). It doesn't serve a creative leadership well. The stakeholders, specifically the public representatives of the government and of the municipality, repeatedly try to reduce a role of NGOs in decisive moments. […] It is not easy to harmonise all these factors.
>
> (Quote 2)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THE CONCEPT OF A BOARD

A key feature that emerged in the questionnaire was the different understandings of the concept of 'a board'. Some museums didn't have boards (or equivalents). Often in these circumstances, all decisions are taken by the director. This isn't necessarily seen as a problem. Other museum professionals said they don't have a board of directors, but they also indicated that they sometimes have more direct contact with politicians, which results in both advantages and disadvantages.

Furthermore, different countries use different terminology in terms of the 'board', such as programme committee, governing board, managing board, administrative board or steering group. We often understood these terms as interchangeable. When we examined these terms further, however, it became clear that they are not interchangeable. For example, in one dominant model, a governing board approves all relevant documents and finances, controls how the director works and manages the election of the director, among others.

In addition, many museums also have an expert board to advise the director and the museum.

The role of director varies in some countries; for example, in Croatia since 2018, the director is responsible for governing the museum (subject to programme and finances endorsed by the governing board). In other countries, such as the SEE countries, the governing board is responsible and the director only legally represents the museum.

In this report, we will discuss the need to find some sort of consistency in terminology if an international currency of governance can be achieved, because it's not always in the best interests of the museums to have such different interpretations. In this sense, a governance grid could also be useful in providing a glossary of international terms, which would therefore make them comparable and reduce issues regarding confusion or misunderstandings.

Some of the respondents also mentioned in the survey other governing bodies within their institutions, such as a board of curators, a programme board, a supervising board, a managing committee, a youth advisory board, a museum council (Poland) and committees for hiring new staff. Museums in South-East and Central Europe often have many different committees and governance bodies, and a board of curators, for example, is much more involved than a traditional governance board.

The directors are mainly responsible for the strategy of their museums, but often their power is limited because decisions

need to be approved by a steering committee or board. An effective board or committee provides the museum with appropriate guidance, control and encouragement for the future. However, it is important to appreciate that, for a board or committee to be effective in governance terms, it is essential that new members (and, where appropriate, existing members) are required to undertake suitable support/training in understanding and performing their roles and responsibilities to the museum. This increases the professionalism and effectiveness of governance for the museum.

BOARD COMPOSITION

Where boards were evident, there is a tendency to appoint two kind of board members: ones that advise about content and future directions (often including all the curators) and others that are external experts who are occasionally invited to give advice. Those museums with boards (or equivalents) had board members who were often politically appointed (by founders, ministers or mayors). Where there is insufficient balance between necessary skills and (political) representation, there is a direct causal relation on the effectiveness of the governance for the museum (see Cornforth and Brown, 2014 for more information). Occasionally, the directors or founders influence the appointments.

Most of the boards consist of three to 11 members, and each member has a mandate from three to five years.

POLITICAL INFLUENCE OR INTERFERENCE

Political interference was noted across several museums. Many respondents considered governance to be synonymous with politics or privileges for politicians.

The possible mediating power of the board therefore gets lost:

> One of the problems we have is because there is **no such body that mediates the political power between the authorities and the institution**. There is no such thing as a board of directors. We have the body that is named museum council. But the powers of this body are strongly limited.
>
> (Quote 3)

> But in fact, the last board expired five years ago, and since that time, no new board was appointed. It's against the law but the ministry is not acting. In fact, this advisory board has no influence for our activity.
>
> (Quote 4)

It was suggested that once politicians recognised the potential power of museums within communities, this revealed opportunities for politicians to monitor and control the museums' message. Respondents noted that this results in interference that rarely produces a positive outcome, as their respective agendas often conflict. Nevertheless, not all respondents were critical. Some felt politicians could be supportive and enabling as well.

Either way, the (historical) influence and interference via politicians seems evident and inevitable, and respondents often felt exposed and unprotected:

> The steering committee is a board of three members (one museum employee and two politically assigned by the ruling position in the Canton government). This way, politics directly affect the work of all directors. Usually, their background is not even from the sector of culture; sometimes you'll see people from the mining industry, education or even no qualifications at all.
>
> (Quote 5)

Finally, we asked about their use of an ethical code. All the respondents found ethics important and were familiar with the ICOM Code of Ethics, but an ethical code was often not formalised.

> " It is important, although it is not formalised. Consequently, it opens potential space for violation of ethical rules and conflict of interests.
>
> (Quote 6)
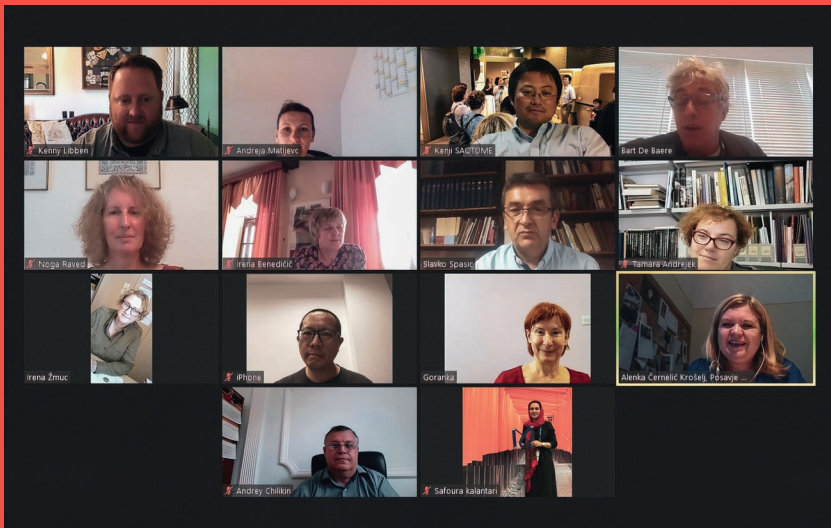
INTERCOM, ICOM SEE, ICR and CIMAM: COLLABORATIVE PARTHERSHIPS – AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY /// Online Webinar, 20 May 2021

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FINDINGS FROM
THE FOCUS GROUPS

As stated above, we set up two focus groups at the end of June/beginning July 2021, with a mix of museum professionals, politicians and experts (from academia). In this way, we wanted to explore and gain more insights regarding some of the findings of the questionnaire. These focus groups were also useful to understand better the local context of the museums and the nature of the interaction between the different stakeholders of museums. Local relevance in terms of practicality was a major feature for the focus groups regarding likelihood of implementation.

Because of the diverse background of the participants (different types of museums, different locations, different profiles), some paradoxes came to light during the conversations.

PARADOX 1 ///
Politicians should be excluded from governance versus the view that it is good to have direct contact with politicians

During the conversation, we noticed some confusion regarding what the role of politicians should be and what

this means in terms of governance. As we stated before, governance (for some respondents) was often interpreted as being the same as political interference and influence.

> So, I think that in our region the governance is somehow the privilege for the politicians. I think they don't like it if the institutions are acting independently following only their values and goals. So, governance is somehow competing with their power. That's why always in a situation or structure, to somehow put down the fracture and overrule the institutions. So, in this sense, in Hungary the cultural institutions, even the most important ones, don't have real governance.
>
> (Quote 7)

> I never considered this theoretical dimension of cultural governance, but I think from my point of view, this is something between practical policies of culture management and the political direction as a whole. I think that today in our part of Europe, at least in many countries of Eurasia, this political impact purely is quite important.
>
> (Quote 8)

This is partly due to the political tradition in Central and South-East European countries. We can distinguish two existing governance models in cultural policy. The first is the arm's length system, in which cultural institutions are held at a distance from politics and policy. In this model, they receive their budget from the government but have (relative) autonomy in terms of the management of the museum, although, of course, they remain accountable in political terms with regards to the way in which they employ the money. The second model is where there is direct control through the ministerial system; cultural institutions have no autonomous status but are governed directly by politicians or are even part of national or local administrations. With

this approach, the governance structure is not usually very transparent. According to empirical research by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies in 2009, only 1 per cent of countries worldwide have a pure arms-length system; 59 per cent have a ministerial system, and 40 per cent have a mixed system (Mangset, 2009). Most of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries have a tradition of an arms-length system while South-East, Central and Eastern European countries have a tradition of a ministerial or mixed system.

> I keep thinking independent, but of course I pay for it. Because financially you are totally dependent on the minister of culture and the local government. So, because we are not following the set of rules, you are financially marginalised.
>
> (Quote 9)

Nevertheless, despite this classification, there is indisputably greater scrutiny on public finances globally today, and this may cause a type of 'hybrid' model to emerge that incorporates elements from both systems. We suggest that the introduction of an explicit governance code will provide increased pressure for the introduction of such a hybrid model that importantly utilises greater participation (see Fischer, 2006) and therefore invests in greater (and wider) stakeholder involvement. Further evidence/research is required to confirm or further explore this claim.

As we stated in the beginning, good governance is not only a set of principles but also a process and a practice. Based on the literature, we can observe that there are different tensions present within a board. The first is between the principle of 'representation' and 'competences' (Cornforth, 2014): some board members represent stakeholders and others are selected for their competences that can serve the working of the museum. The principle of representation reflects the democratic idea that museums receive the main part of their finances from public authorities. As public authorities are the

main stakeholder, it is not exceptional in countries with the ministerial model that these authorities are also represented in the board (although how this representation is regulated varies). However, the (often compulsory) political delegation can sometimes lead to conflicts with the principles of good governance, certainly when they are not aware of their role. Political representation also creates often sizeable boards of directors on which people sit who are not necessarily in touch with the sector and the mission of the organisation.

> " As for the local, it's the city government with its own parliament and people in charge for sectors. Of course, they are also involved in politics and they don't have an understanding of what a museum is. Or what it should be. They are just there. Now it happens that some of those people have those understandings and they are happy to help you. But it doesn't have to be that way or usually is not.
>
> (Quote 10)

The term 'governance' in some parts of Eastern and Central Europe might therefore be interpreted differently—especially in operational interpretations between politics and policies. Regardless, we cannot avoid the observation that museums are seen as 'political institutions'. Suggesting that museums should only be seen from their primary function is naive, as museums have also a persuasive voice in storytelling to their own populations, and therefore politicians can use this opportunity to tell their version of the story.

> If we have a national museum, it is quite clear for me that somehow I have to **follow the so-called political waves**. If the left wing is in place, I serve it. If it's the right wing, I also serve it. That is the habit of the museum manager, I think. The real question is what is useful for the museum? What is the best to survive? To develop? "
>
> (Quote 11)

There was again a difference between history museums and modern and contemporary art museums. Each of these different types of museums have their own struggles, but each sector (perhaps most critically seen in history museums) is seen as a potential tool for politicians to employ these as an instrument to confirm their version of history and therefore as a means to influence cultural and international policy.

> First, when we are talking about money for which the government is responsible, they go to those **institutions that could be used as tools for developing cultural policy connected with the idea of national heritage and what is called in Poland 'historic policy'**. When you go a bit lower, on the level of the municipalities, the regional governments, you see that the money usually goes into those cultural sectors and institutions that could provide a great visibility in the media, popularity among societies.
>
> (Quote 12)

With modern and contemporary art museums, it is more about the role of arts in general and the position of the artist. For politicians, modern and contemporary art is often less comprehensible, more political and, in this sense, also more unpredictable. As a result, politicians are often more suspicious regarding modern and contemporary art museums because they can't control them.

> If we deal with contemporary art, we deal also with the artist. **And we are speaking about the critical approach and sometimes of the unpredictable. This is what every politician fears.**
>
> (Quote 13)

Another problem that was discussed is the financing of the museums. How are they financed? We noticed that the financial structures of the museums were very different, depending on the type of museums, the topics and the percentage of funding. Almost every museum had problems with financing and limited budgets. Since the end of communism, in combination with the global financial crisis of 2008, they must look more often to find private sponsors or other ways to increase their budgets. Therefore, some of these museums have already begun to look for different sources of financing and sponsoring; others are 100 per cent funded by governments.

" For me, I'm very disappointed from my experience that **we didn't have stable relationships with stakeholders**. We haven't had that in 30 years of democracy. I really think that the institutions are so [much a] part of the political system and there is not enough private stakeholders, private people, people who really love contemporary art who can support that.

(Quote 14)

Most cultural establishments here are on paper established by the government or local authorities. And then you have to take in consideration that local authorities were different before. The people who established the museum here in Pancho were like local scholars, enthusiasts and people with money who helped establish the museum in our town. And then 20 or 30 years later, you had a communist regime coming here and proclaiming everything to be owned by the people. In today's terms, this means everything is owned by the government. So now, we are 100 per cent funded by the local authorities, which is part of the government. So I'd say that's the base of the cultural governance here. You don't have companies and sponsors and stuff. "

(Quote 15)

> We are really **conscious of the past**. Subsidising institutions, coming from one source, that is danger. No matter if it is public power or a corporation. In Poland, it was always a problem with the fact that culture wasn't financed much. So in the '90s we started to work on some different sources of financing. That is what I'm trying to say. In spite of our bigger efforts, there are some circumstances that are a result from the history.
>
> (Quote 16)

There were different opinions regarding the involvement of private sponsors. Some were in favour of this more entrepreneurial approach (or saw it as inevitable), while others were more reluctant about the possible influence of these sponsors on the mission of their museum. It was suggested that, in some politically controlled environments, potential sponsors are also associated with politics, so looking for private sponsors may still only include politically approved funds. Therefore, interviewees found it difficult to assess what is the best political or private influence because indeed:

> …also private stakeholders can be just as threatening […] but in a different way.
>
> (Quote 17)

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THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOVERNANCE CODE FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR

Finally, we discussed the possibility of the introduction of a code of conduct for the cultural sector based on the six principles:

1 the importance of the mission,

2 a clear division of roles (who is responsible for what?),

3 checks and balances (the governance bodies need to offer equity and balance within and outside the organisation),

4 the composition of the board (diversity and reflection of the different stakeholders),

5 relationships with the stakeholders (and politics as the main stakeholder) and

6 ethical behaviour.

All of the respondents recognised these principles, but noted that these were often embedded within internal statutes or current practices, for example.

All respondents stated that the practice of cultural governance would likely be different locally to that understood in the West. This goes back to the governance culture (and the influence of communism) and how the sector was almost entirely supported by the government. Nevertheless, most of the participants were open to introducing and implementing a code of conduct for the cultural sector. But they also agreed that it is not only about the application of formal principles but also—even more importantly—about a change of attitude and mindset regarding governance.

Some were also sceptical about the implementation of such a code of governance. They don't believe that it is realistic, nor do they believe that politicians will change their attitude. As long as politicians appoint the board, they are not hopeful about the changes a code of conduct will bring.

> " The problem appears when institutions and powers are going in different directions. This is what we observe. There is no more consensus. **The question for this code is how to get these completely different mindsets to agree?**
>
> (Quote 18)

> We should also have at least **two boards**: one that checks the other that is checking the director. But that board is directly coming from the ministry. So it's the ministry and the board against the director. So in other words, the director doesn't have a lot of room to manoeuvre. "
>
> (Quote 19)

The influence and interference via politicians was evident and inevitable; therefore, what is needed is a governance tool that fulfils the basic premise of protecting the museum, although it may also fulfil other purposes. Therefore, while we acknowledge these major difficulties, we still suggest that the introduction of a code in the context of greater participation will provide a step forward (see Fischer, 2006).

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FUTURE

Finally, we asked the participants what they would change for the future if they had a free hand.

SLOWNESS OF THE SYSTEM

The most common complaint was 'slowness of the system'. Respondents want to change regulations that do not take into account priorities and that do not address museum challenges in a timely and efficient manner.

> " I would change the very complicated and slow administrative and bureaucratic system, which is paper-based and has 10 steps for each mission.
>
> (Quote 20)

> But coming back to bureaucracy, I would say that museum management are mostly professionals, except a few cases on the highest level. The museum directors, we mostly are professionals who don't really like very much bureaucracy. "
>
> (Quote 21)

EMPLOYEES

Another issue that was addressed was the employees. Permanent contracts and a lack of flexibility was seen as a big threshold for good HR management. On the other hand, some participants emphasised that the protection of the employees is also an important asset. Some of the employees are also employed thanks to political connections. Not having free hands in putting together a curatorial team, for example, often leads to problems in offering artistic excellence.

> " May I explain you the Hungarian situation. It has radically changed during the last 10 years. When I was in my position, that was the beginning of the new government. And I didn't feel any kind of direct pressure on me. Actually, I had literally no connection to the ministry because we had independency in financial terms. […] But this strategy from the politicians has completely changed since last year. The museum's employees are not civil servants anymore. Their protected status has disappeared. Right now, all the employees are normal employees, no[t] any kind of protection as a civil servant.
>
> (Quote 22)

> As a director in a public museum, I do not have [a] free hand in putting together the curatorial team, since most people have a permanent position. "
>
> (Quote 23)

BUDGET AND BUILDING

Museums have been struggling with the scarce resources for years. The global pandemic has made this situation worse of course: museums are understaffed, with buildings that are falling apart (for long time, there has been a lack of investment in infrastructure, as it is not seen as a priority) and regular maintenance has been reduced to a minimum.

Many museums in South-East and Central Europe are on the edge of operational capacity. This is also something that many directors would like to change if they had a free hand.

> " Our employees are underpaid and too few for the tasks they [need to] fulfil.
>
> (Quote 24)

ATTITUDE

Finally, several respondents regret that museums are not valued like they used to be. They are worried about their future, because if there is not enough support from society or from other stakeholders, their basis of existence will be eradicated (chicken-and-egg situation).

> People do not value the results and impact of the museums on society. Also the work of the museum workers is underestimated. "
>
> (Quote 25)

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TRENDS AND
KEY RESPONSES

TRENDS

Finally, what are the main trends that we can deduce from our empirical research? And which are the key responses that can contribute to the discussion?

1 Museums in Central and South-East European countries are increasingly seen as leverage for reinforcing national identity ('nation building') and as a way to promote the countries' culture abroad ('show the flag'). Political interference is therefore more present in museums that are related to history or national identity.

2 Museums themselves are seeking international recognition and support to strengthen their autonomy. This creates a tension with politicians who want to control what they are showing without being accused of censorship.

3 The international community should think carefully about how to respond to these issues. Giving assistance to museums in an indirect way, by

developing internationally supported outlines for a code of conduct, can be more helpful and effective. On the other hand, the international community needs to avoid allowing for politicians to use codes of conduct to reinforce their control.

These trends are persuasive: external assessments and internationally supported outlines for a code of conduct through governance principles, supported by a toolbox that is compelling, yet open to locally different solutions, can be a great strategy for tackling the issue of museums' lack of autonomy.

Of course, questions remain regarding the possible absence of international ambition, which makes the situation more difficult, but not impossible. However, the museum's definition, function and role in and for society being reviewed might also be an opportunity to implement a code for governance principles especially in a context that is demanding greater participation from a wider group of stakeholders. We see this step as a means of investment for the future and in ways that make external interference more difficult.

KEY RESPONSES

KEY RESPONSE 1 ///
The introduction of an explicit cultural governance code

The introduction of principles for an explicit cultural governance code should complement the ICOM Code of Ethics. The key responses of an explicit governance code, valuing the potential of stakeholders and also boards, will do much to support museums. It will also protect them from 'random/personal influences' (regardless of origin). Of course, the introduction of a cultural governance code

is indeed the introduction of further bureaucracy—but the notion of fight 'fire with fire' lies at the core of these proposals. In other words, we should use the system to our advantage, thus the need to introduce an explicit governance code.

The cultural governance code should

- employ the basic principles already provided, but most importantly, it should respond to the particular needs of that location;

- possess a common core of broadly shared principles, but in addition, it should be **subtle** (where necessary) **and flexible**, so as to allow it to be interpreted differently (at the edges) to reflect local needs;

- **protect** as well as **support** the evolution of the museum (both at local and international levels); and

- refine the 'process' of communication management between the organisation (the board and director, for example) and the stakeholders (in this case, politicians) and make the lines of communication less informal and more transparent, therefore reducing or avoiding inappropriate interference.

KEY RESPONSE 2 ///
Participatory governance

Recent legislation,[6] various research projects and reports encourage extending the role of the museum. The introduction of a governance code is an opportunity to extend the role and meaning of museums, as it will relate to the discussions regarding the definition of museums, open-up opportunities and extend and further invest in new and existing stakeholders; therefore, greater participation lies within this key response.

[6] For example, the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005); the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003); the Faro Convention (2005), and their definition of the 'heritage community'; and the ICOM Code of Ethics.

However, this should be proactive and not reactive. The new governance code should invest in new audiences, roles and relationships, and in this way, through wider 'real' participation, museums can shake off some of the stereotypical rules. But it is important to note that this process should only happen once the museum has already set up its own protections (see Fischer, 2006).

In preparing a participatory governance code, cultural institutions should first fully identify both present and future stakeholders and explore how best to include both existing and new directions towards new diverse stakeholders for the museum.

Participatory governance would include

• seeing stakeholders (including sponsors and core audiences) as ambassadors of the museum,

• exploring succession planning by training and developing new stakeholders to join boards and

• working with the community and bringing the community into the museum.

We see this key response as a really important area to concentrate on (and invest in) for museums (see Fischer, 2006) and in the next phase of the research we intend to explore this potential for we feel that (where appropriate) certain contexts (because of their historical influences) these may well greet greater participation as being a good fit for the future.

KEY RESPONSE 3 ///
The value of a board

In accompaniment with the introduction of an explicit governance code, the appropriate decision makers should think carefully about the value and contribution of the museum's board (or equivalent). An effective board (or equivalent) should be one of the most important resources for a museum:

it should not only be a device for making or endorsing decisions but also possess layers of knowledge that the museum needs to fully utilise in order to prosper in the future (which may require revision of statutes/internal rules). If the board is not this type of resource, then there should be an examination as to why this is not the case. Boards should possess a clear formal remit to provide advice, support and guidance as well as serve a sort of control function for the museum (advisory board and strategic board). The boards will be responsible for advice and ensuring the implementation of the governance code. Boards should meet quarterly and therefore sufficient time is provided for the director and their team to effectively provide information and manage the process for the board.

The optimal size for a board is eight to 12 people, with formal appointment procedures to identify issues early on, such as potential conflicts of interest and any others that might be detrimental to the museum. The length of tenure should also be clear, and rotational membership should reflect the current, tactical and strategic evolution of the museum. The composition of the board should be based on diversity and expertise. The board needs to reflect the diversity of the stakeholders of the organisation and the necessary competences that meet the needs of the organisation (related to the life cycle approach). The role of board should be to guide museum, and also protect the museum, in order for it to fulfil its mandate, so all external communication regarding non-everyday decisions must be conveyed through the appropriate channel and board rather than expecting an immediate response from the director.

Support for board members—potentially compulsory—should be introduced so that they can recognise their roles and learn their responsibilities towards the museum; if specific support or training is required, then this should be museum-specific and not delegated to wider responsibilities. Therefore, support can be organised by the museum itself: by informing new board members about the history, mission and essential tasks and needs of the museum—from collection management to HR and about finances, target groups and so on.

In accordance with the 360-degree principle, boards should also be regularly monitored and feedback provided to ensure reasonable balance and effectiveness. The responsibilities for monitoring are likely to differ across location, but should also likely include representatives from the museum itself. Organising an annual reflection on the working of the board (self-assessment based on a quick scan) can be helpful as well.

Finally, some museum directors might see the advancement of the board as threatening, yet with correct implementation, this structural change will also provide increased protection for the director. A good leader or director should be able to form a good workable relationship with the boards and likewise (once the code is introduced as protection) know how to deal with direct influece from outside parties by channelling this through rigid channels of communication. It is a more bureaucratic process – but here introduced for the benefit of the museum.

ICOM Kyoto 2019 conference opening ceremony /// Kyoto, 1 September 2019

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CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We have no doubt that the introduction of an explicit code is a key indicator to all stakeholders (both internal and external) that all activities must be fulfilled in an effective, transparent, accountable and equitable way. This is the future reality for all public-funded museums. Private museums might be able to resist this in the short term, but it is likely that these signals will become standard across all museums in the medium term (five years). For personnel, the existence of the code will provide a frame of reference that guides their role in the museum. Therefore, it will also protect them from inappropriate or 'informal' interference that occurs outside formal channels of communication. This proposed code will overlap with other aspects of organisational life, such as ethics, human relations and health and safety, and thus protect personnel across the breadth of their roles in the museum.

We propose that the introduction of an explicit code for the museum should be accompanied by the introduction by ICOM and CIMAM of a progressive badge of compliance to standards, which will reflect adherence to the values of an international code of core values (perhaps through a colour-coded system that therefore provides potential partners

instant recognition (and thereby comfort) of compliance to certain international standards. Increasingly, the future of museums is effective cooperation—not least, for the effective rotation of temporary exhibitions—and will significantly be enhanced with confidence in minimal standards of exchange.

To make optimal use of boards at the museum, contemporary understandings of the board should realise them as effective means of support rather simply bodies of control. This requires (1) carefully considered appointments, effective induction and a continuous development programme, (2) a formal commitment to the museum and its role and (3) finally, an exit policy at the appropriate time. A good board should be one of the most important resources for any museum. This requires effective management of boards that reflects the needs of the museum over its own life cycle of development.

The code should also include principles about the value and competences of the board—making the board 'work' for the museum rather than for external stakeholders. Boards should possess a clear formal remit to provide advice and guidance as well as serve as a control mechanism for the museum.

Regarding the future, the local role and purpose of the museum should be appropriately reassessed (especially if the museum has not carried out this review since the Faro Convention of 2005). Certainly, this reassessment fits within wider discussions regarding the identities of museums (see ICOM discussion, 2019). Although the definition of the museum has been a contentious discussion, the full potential of a museum is indisputably beyond traditional understandings. Here, we encourage museums to explore their potential—and this again reinforces the need for museums to be independent—to generate new audiences, for example. Museums should also be able to appreciate and pursue new values and opportunities—not only in realising the past (in terms of conservation, studying, exploring and searching) but also in distributing knowledge and storytelling, both in the present and as a vehicle for investing in the future—both nationally and also internationally. For the museum to prosper, it must find its

proper place and clarity of purpose. We envisage that these governance code principles will allow museums the freedom and autonomy to do so.

Finally, this study should be seen more as a preliminary study and indication for the route forwards for museums by focusing on reflections in Central and South-East Europe as key partners of discussion. Yet, museums are not static objects that remains locked in the past; rather, they reflect an ever-changing society, and certainly the imprint of history, together with the expectations of the present and future, make it essential that a museum builds into its frame - mechanisms for change. We suggest that the absence of an explicit governance code in these circumstances is an oversight and lends itself to many opportunities for others to exploit the power and presence of museums. It would naïve to suggest that museums should be above politics – it is clear, that some parties see the potential of museums as significant influencers. Therefore, in these circumstances, in order to protect staff, and in order them to fulfil their purpose, we need to introduce protectors that reduce their exposure and provides them with confidence for future growth. We hope this pilot study provides a starting point, it certainly is not at present sufficiently rigorous to defend in all areas. However, we do have enough content to move forward towards the next phase of the research.

Ian King & Annick Schramme

January 2022

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APPENDICES

NAME	COUNTRY	BACKGROUND	NATIONAL / REGIONAL / LOCAL	TYPE OF COLLECTION
Anonymous 1	Bulgaria	Ruse Art Gallery	national	modern /contemporary art
Anonymous 2	Serbia	Natural History Museum Belgrade	national	history museum
Anonymous 3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Museum of Herzegovina Trebinje	national	historical art, archeological, ethnological
Anonymous 4	Bulgaria	Regional Ethnographic Museum	regional	ethnographic
Anonymous 5	Croatia	Archaeological Museum of Istria	national	archeological
Anonymous 6	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Museum of Herzegovina Trebinje	regional	historical art, archeological, ethnological
Alenka Gregorič	Slovenia	ŠKUC Gallery	national	modern /contemporary art
Sarita Vujković	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Public Institution Museum of Contemporary Art of Republic of Srpska	regional	modern /contemporary art
Hanna Wróblewska	Poland	Zachęta – National Gallery of Art	national	modern /contemporary art
Branka Benčić	Croatia	Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka	local	modern /contemporary art

NAME	COUNTRY	BACKGROUND	NATIONAL / REGIONAL / LOCAL	TYPE OF COLLECTION
Flóra Gadó	Hungary	Budapest Gallery	national	modern /contemporary art
Snježana Pintarić	Croatia	Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb	national	modern /contemporary art
Igor Španjol	Slovenia	Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana	national	modern art
Joanna Mytkowska	Poland	Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw	national	modern art
Marek Wasilewski	Poland	Municipal Gallery Arsenał in Poznan	local	modern /contemporary art
Andreja Hribernik	Slovenia	The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Koroška	regional	modern /contemporary art
Jarosław Suchan	Poland	Muzeum Sztuki in Łodzi	local	modern /contemporary art
Zoran Eric	Serbia	Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade	national	modern /contemporary art
Zsuzsanna Renner	Hungary	Hungarian National Museum	national	historical
Miklós Cseri	Hungary	Hungarian Open Air Museum	national	ethnographical
Virgil Stefan Nitulescu	Romania	National Museum of the Romanian Peasant	national	ethnographical
Enikő Róka	Hungary	Budapest History Museum	national	historical
Jerzy Halbersztadt	Poland	Museum of the History of Polish Jews	national	historical
Joanna Wasilewska	Poland	Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw	national	oriental art
Neda Knežević	Serbia	Museum of Yugoslavia	national	historical
Lidija Milašinović	Serbia	National Museum of Kikinda	national	archeological, ethnological, historical, natural history, fine art
Dragan Velichkovski	North Macedonia	City Museum Kriva Palanka	local	historical
Xuxa Velkov	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Museum of East Bosnia	regional	archaeological, ethnological, historical, numizmatic, art and biological museum
Miroslav Birclin	Serbia	National Museum of Pančevo	national	historical art museum
Prometej Bosanski	Bosnia and Herzegovina	City Museum of Zenica	national	historical
Margarita Dorovska	Bulgaria	Museum House of Humour and Satire	local	contemporary art

GROUP 1

Enikő Róka ///
Hungary, works at Budapest history museum, in the art collection from 16th century to the present

Miroslav Birclin ///
Serbia, director of the Pančevo museum, in the archaeological, historical, art historical and ethnological department

Miklós Cseri ///
Hungary, general director of the Hungarian Open Air museum; previously, a state secretary

Ljubiša Veljković ///
Bosnia and Herzegovina, director of museum of East Bosnia in Tuzla; previously worked in the performing arts sector

Joanna Wasilewska ///
Poland, director of Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw, is focused on decolonisation

GROUP 2

Hanna Wróblewska ///
Poland, a director of Zachęta Gallery, the most important art institution in Poland, is very active in the field of cultural politics

Jarosław Suchan ///
Poland, a director of the legendary Muzeum Sztuki in Łodzi, is highly respected in his own country, former member of the CIMAM board

Snježana Pintarić ///
Croatia, a director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb

Barnabas Bencsik ///
Hungary, a key figure of Hungarian art scene after 1989, former director of the Ludwig Museum, Budapest

Project partners plan to continue the project and expect following future outcomes:

- stakeholder identification grid

- governance solutions grid

- value of governance code

Stakeholder management is vital for museums and their identification should be done properly.

The stakeholders can be internal and external and their impact on a museum may vary a lot.

Museums need to know how they can optimise the relationship between their institutions and their stakeholders.

	internal	external
high influence	board members	politicians media
medium influence	employees audiences	academia community
low influence	volunteers	private sector

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