



NEMO Statement: Museums under Pressure

Berlin, 20 November 2024: This year's NEMO, the Network of European Museum Organisations, European Museum Conference 'Can we talk? Museums facing polarisation' brought up for discussion the ever-increasing trend of polarisation across European societies and its impact on the museum sector. The conference highlighted the difficult position museums currently hold, which oftentimes results in unwarranted pressure on their operations. The conference discussions complement the findings of a survey carried out by NEMO in August 2024 underscoring the fact that political pressure, both direct and indirect, sometimes leads museums to apply self-censorship in their programming and communication particularly in the case of sensitive topics.

At this year's conference the European museum community debated how museums are reacting to such circumstances and in what ways they are striving to navigate today's increasingly polarised world while upholding values that contribute to just and more cohesive societies.

NEMO is concerned that the complex and ever-evolving trends of societal polarisation and mistrust in our current frameworks may lead to a critical erosion of European museums' standing as trusted institutions, undermining their ability to act impartially and operate independently. Museums have a unique obligation to their communities and to society at large to present fact-based, authentic, and independent information. NEMO is committed to upholding these principles in its work with museums and museum organisations in Europe.

As a network representing over 30,000 museums, NEMO will continue to serve as a reference point for museums navigating challenging circumstances by providing the space for exchange and the support in defense of the values and principles that make museums society's trusted institutions. NEMO shall continue to work with the European museum community to consolidate its role in fostering environments of open exchange, framed by the values of democracy and truthfulness.

NEMO remains firmly committed to stand for, with, and by its members in cultivating possible futures that are desirable and shared by many and navigating complex and challenging discussions without absolutes. It shall continue to foster open exchange that respects each museums' autonomy and unique role in society.

The NEMO Executive Board

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