



Network of European
Museum Organisations

Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe

Findings and Recommendations

Culture gains importance in uncertain times of crises, it brings us together. We are seeing an unprecedented creative digital use and engagement with and through culture in the world.

The majority of museums in Europe and around the globe are closed. Closing doors to the public results in a drastic loss of income for many museums. While some museums have found their budget minimally impacted as of yet, some museums, especially the larger museums and the museums in touristic areas, have reported a **loss of income of 75-80%, with weekly losses adding up to hundreds of thousands of Euros.**¹

There is no fast track back to normal - rather than making a return to normal our goal, we must learn from this crisis in order to effectively respond, mitigate, adapt and integrate. **We urge governments to invest in Europe's cultural heritage in the future, to support what binds us together, while so many other things drive us apart.** Museums might not change the world, but museums at their best can show what humanity can do at its best.

NEMO asks for adequate support provided by European, national, regional and local bodies to mitigate losses of museums all over Europe, to guarantee salaries of staff members, and to continue the investment in large-scale projects in museums across Europe.

Museums have been quick and pro-active in their response to the pandemic. They have shifted their focus to addressing needs within their communities in this situation. From donating masks and gloves to hospitals, to collecting objects and stories of people to preserve and learn from this moment, increasing digital services, sharing collections, offering digital tools, and increasing digital services to engage and comfort people staying at home.

In these times, digital cultural heritage is contributing to people's enjoyment and creativity more than ever. NEMO wants museums and stakeholders to acknowledge that the digital museum is not a distant promise or a source of untapped potential, **rather that digital cultural heritage and digital engagement has demonstrated its value in the past weeks by bringing people together, encouraging creativity, sharing experiences, and offering a virtual space to build ideas together.**

NEMO asks stakeholders to increase their digital efforts in the future, following this period of extreme measures with unprecedented digital activity. **Budgets and strategies should respond to these findings, take advantage of current efforts and allow for investments in digital offers, services and infrastructures in the future.** Allowing digital services and activities of museums and the engagement of digital audiences as factors of success in assessment frameworks is proving more important every day.

Museums and society at large are obliged to work for **stronger crisis awareness,** preparedness, control and response methods in the future, including emergency plans for both the public and internal work processes. New working methods in museums that have been sparked by this crisis should be considered for future, **more flexible work methods in the museums in general.**

¹ Museums are impacted in different ways by COVID-19: In rural areas, museums are afflicted by the lack of access to resources related to transport, next to visitors, and a complete shut-down of outreach programmes.

SURVEY RESULTS

How many museums have responded?

650 Museums until 3 April 2020

From how many countries?

- 41 countries in total
- Museums from all 27 EU member states, from 9 member states of the Council of Europe, plus feedback from museums in the USA, Philippines, Malaysia, French Polynesia, Iran

Survey Response by Region

- Council of Europe
- EU
- Other



How are Museums affected?

Museums are closed

- **Most museums are closed (92%),** with some exemptions in Sweden, Albania and Austria. ²
- For many of them, a **date for re-opening** is not yet defined. Responding museums are anticipating to re-open from mid-April to as late as September 2020 (Romania) due to the pandemic. However, re-opening correlates directly with the developing situation in each of the countries. ³

Income loss

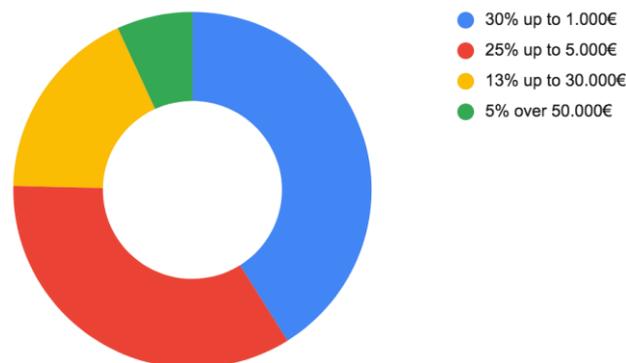
- Most of the museums: **income loss results from lost revenue for tickets, shops, café and other services.** After 2 weeks of closure not all museums were able to provide data about their losses.
- From the museums providing data, 30% are losing up to 1000 Euro/week. 25% of the museums lose up to 5.000 Euro a week, 13% lose up to 30.000 Euro/week, and 5% lose over 50.000/week.

² In Austria, some museums reported to be open in general only a certain period over the year, opening for the summer season in May.

³ In countries where museums are still open, museums noted a visitor increase during the Corona Crisis.

- **The big museums, such as the Rijksmuseum, The Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, the Stedelijk Museum lose between 100.000 Euro and 600.000 Euro per week!**

Weekly Income Loss



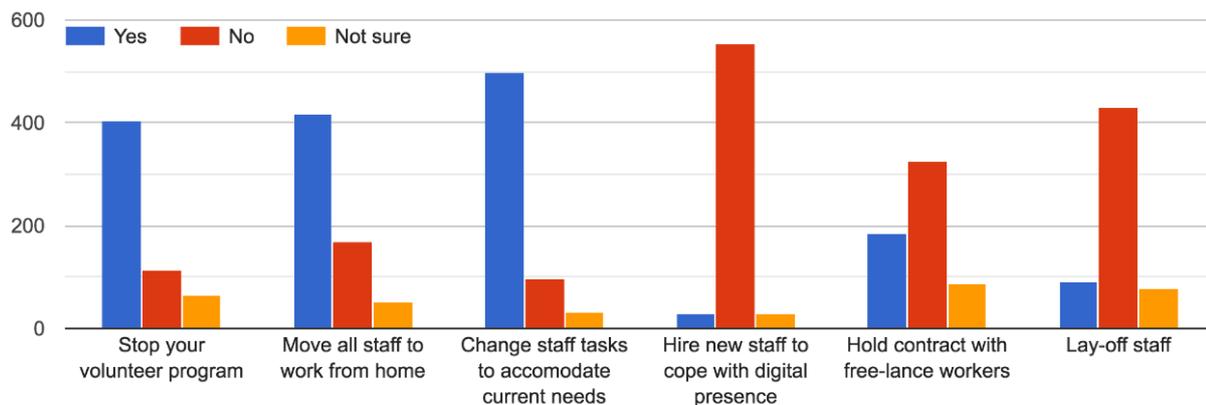
- This picture is less accurate for **private museums** that typically draw the biggest part of their revenue from sales. Some of those museums indicated that their **entire budget for the period over which the museum is closed is lost**. Some of the most impacted museums fear that they will eventually have to close permanently.
- **Museums in touristic regions are looking at an exceptional income loss of 75-80%** due to the complete halt of tourism and the potential continuation of restrictions into the summer period.
- In general, public museums are more concerned about the continuation of additional programmes or specific activities, and the continuation of contracts with free-lancers.
- **Lending and borrowing** are affected: most international exhibitions in 2020 are postponed, since international transports and loans cannot be planned for the next months (lack of transport services availability, partially closed borders, lack of human resources to handle loans).
- Many museums have reported that projects which have been placed on hold are chiefly **future long-term infrastructure projects**, which will be wholly re-considered due to possible crisis-related budget rearrangements.

How are Museums reacting to the Situation?

Staff and Budget

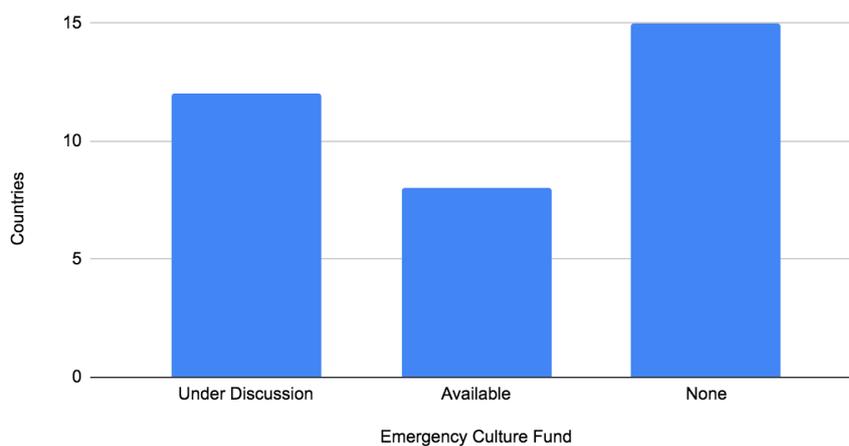
- The good news is that the **majority of museum have not had to lay-off staff** yet. Around 70% of the museums report that they have changed staff tasks to accommodate current needs.
- However, a substantial number of museums have put their contracts with freelancers on hold, and most of the museums have stopped their volunteer programmes entirely.

What changes have you made/ expect to make in the short-term?



- Regarding alternative income sources, many museums report current or future access to **national corona emergency funding schemes**. These schemes mostly include the coverage of salaries and/or lost income.
- Museums from 12 countries report that discussions for an emergency culture fund are underway, museums from 8 countries report that the emergency fund is already in place. Museums from 15 countries state that there is no emergency funding scheme available in their country.
- Funding schemes differ from country to country: some cover publicly funded organisations only, some apply only to freelancers.

Museums reporting option of an Emergency Fund for Culture

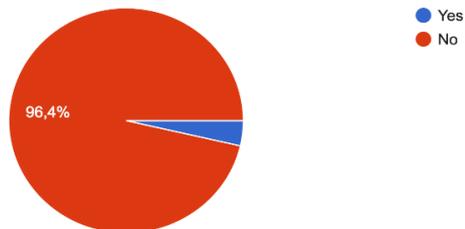


Museum Communication and Online Presence

More than **60% of the museums have increased their online presence** since they were closed due to social distancing measures, while only 13,4 % have increased their budget for online activities.

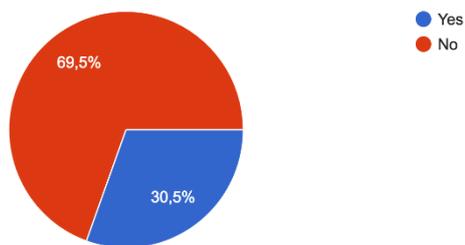
Have you hired new staff to manage the increased online presence?

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Have you changed staff responsibility so that someone who usually doesn't work with communication is managing the online presence (website, social media, newsletters etc.)?

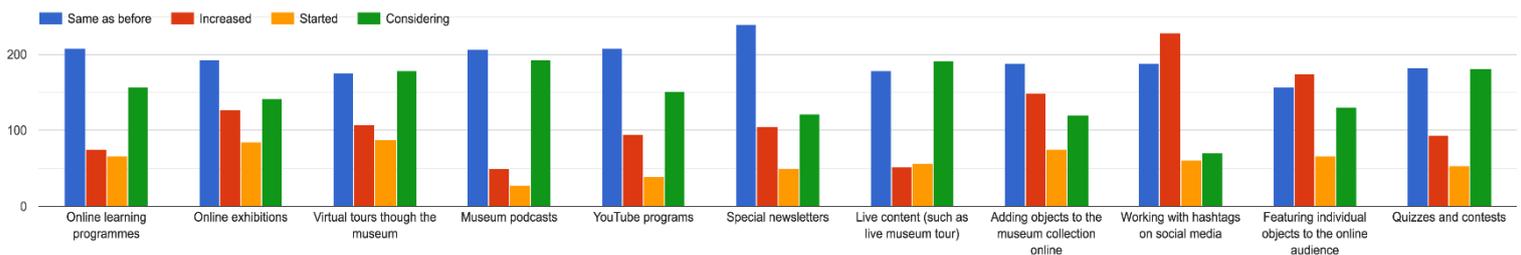
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Tools and Channels

- Most museums are using **social media more than before, working with hashtags and featuring individual objects to their audiences. In addition, virtual tours and online exhibitions have increased.**
- A decent number of museums are considering **becoming more active in podcasts, live content and game creation.** This points in the direction of museums looking for feedback and engagement of the online audiences they are reaching out to.

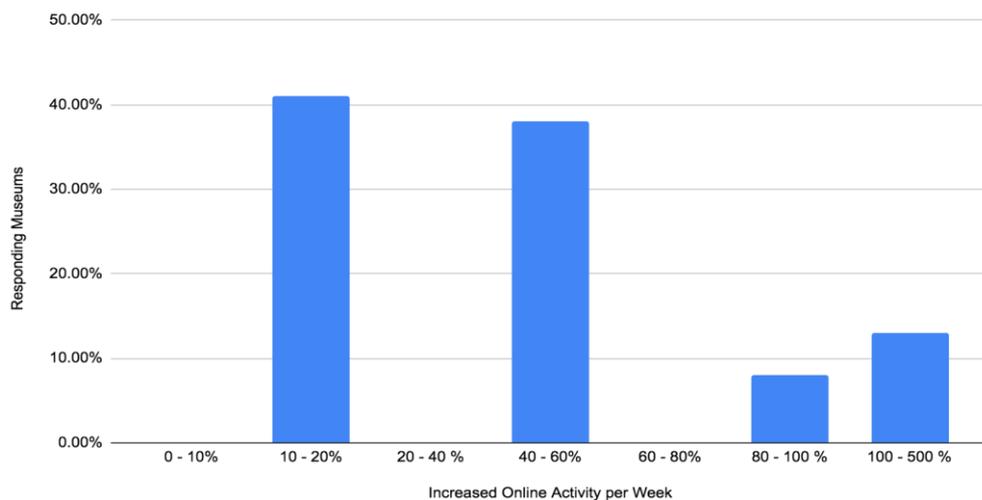
What online services does your museum provide?



Increased online visits

- **40% of the museums that responded to the survey have noticed increased online visits** since they have been closed.
- Of those, **41% note an increase of visits up to 20% per week on their website, 38% note an increase up to 50%, 8% note an increase up to 100%, while 13% of the museums have noted an increase of up to 500% per week.**

How Many Museums Have Seen an Increase in Online Activity?

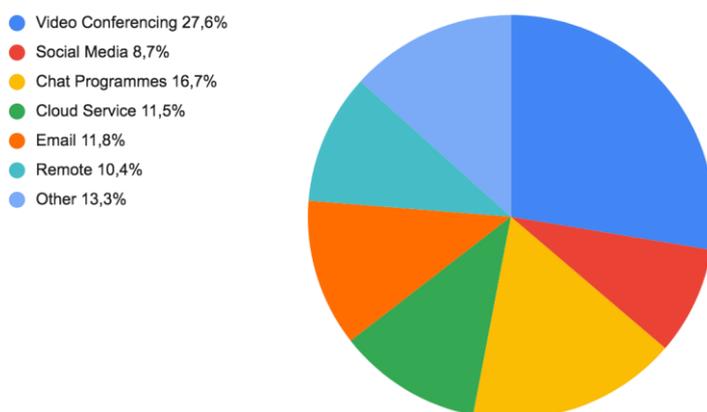


- Over **70% of the museums have increased their social media activities**, almost 80% of them using mostly Facebook and almost 20% using Instagram as platforms for their activities.

Work Processes at the Museums

- Around 50% of the museums stated that more than 80% of the staff currently works from home.
- While most museums are using multiple tools and platforms to communicate internally, some tools are preferred over others. Video Conferencing (such as Zoom or Skype) and Chat programmes (such as Microsoft Teams or Whatsapp) have proven the most popular among museum professionals working from home.

Preferred Home Office Tools



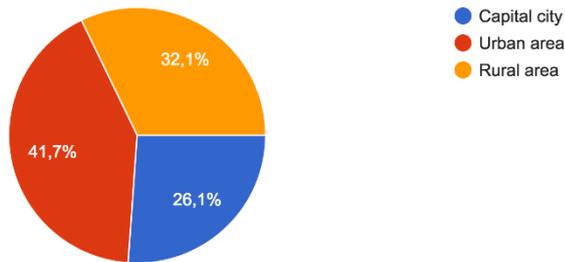
About the responding Museums

Location of the museums

- Around 40% of the responding museums are located in an urban area.
- More than 30% are located in a rural area.
- More than 25% are located in an urban area.

In what kind of area is the museum located?

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Size of the museum (by staff)

- More than 45% of the responding museums have less than 10 staff members.
- On the other hand around 12 % of the responding museums have more than 100 staff members.
- In general, we consider this as a quite accurate representation of museum sizes in Europe.

Size of staff

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