

**Preliminary study on the opportunity, scope,  
rationale and added value of a standard-setting  
instrument for the protection and promotion of  
museums and collections**

**(Museum aspects)**

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## 0. Summary

190 EX/Decision 11 adopted during the 190<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board of UNESCO requested that the UNESCO Director-General prepare “[...] an independent preliminary study of the opportunity, the technical and legal aspects as well as the scope, rationale, added value and administrative and financial implications of a standard-setting instrument on the protection and promotion of museums and collections, for examination by the Executive Board at its 191<sup>st</sup> session, with a view to inscribing this item on the agenda of the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference”. This is the purpose of the present study, purposefully limited to museological aspects and complemented by a separate study covering legal aspects.

The first section of the present study provides definitions of terms and focuses on the evolution of museums in recent decades. Subsequently, the instruments implemented by UNESCO as well as other national and international bodies are analysed in the light of these transformations. Lastly, the analysis of a new instrument to be implemented is provided, in order to determine the added value that may result and the areas that such an instrument might cover.

### Opportunity and motives for a new instrument

1. The concept of museum must be expanded beyond that of collection (museum or heritage); reflection on the creation of an instrument essentially based on the concept of museum, which incorporates heritage and museum collections, is recommended.
  - a. Based on the ICOM definition (2007), a museum is presented as “a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.”
  - b. In the wake of the 2005 Convention, the concept of museum protection is defined as the adoption of measures aimed at the preservation, safeguarding and enhancement of heritage and museum collections. In the same convention, promotion is defined as creation, dissemination and access to museums.
2. The set of instruments that have been elaborated and implemented by UNESCO since 1954 present a relatively simplistic view of museums, conditioned by tangible heritage and the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. Most of these instruments were not specifically developed to address the question of museums, but to respond to other needs more or less directly impacting them (trafficking, heritage protection). This implicit vision of museums must now be completed, notably in terms of new forms that may arise around the world, as well as the concept of intangible heritage. The concept of cultural diversity, at the heart of the 2005 Convention, encourages the consideration of various aspects of the museum phenomenon and its numerous activities as they are developed around the world.
3. While appearing in their full diversity, museums are presented here as bodies defined according to three essential functions – preservation, research and communication – and whose functioning requires staff, collections (tangible or intangible), information, financial means and of course, publics. This latter entity appears increasingly central to the museum mechanism, in contrast to the position of collections.

4. A sharp evolution in the role of museums has been observed in recent decades. Their numbers have more than doubled, while their functions have also seen considerable modifications, as have their relations with the public. This transformation is notably due to the major political and economic changes that have occurred over this period. Of particular pertinence in this respect is the social role of museums, as well as their economic role.
  - a. The social role of museums enjoys a long tradition, to which the Declaration of Santiago de Chile (1972) adheres. Museums nowadays are increasingly presented in all countries as actors within the social system and a factor for societal integration. As an agent of social inclusion, the museum also represents a space for questioning and debate on issues of contemporary society, taking the form of a specific medium. This distinctive role played by museums contributes to the development and cohesion of society itself.
  - b. The economic role of museums also enjoys a long tradition, which has gained renewed interest through the creation of certain major contemporary establishments which draw a great deal of visitors. The museum's participation in the tourism industry, and more globally in the economic development of the region where it is located, represents an element increasingly presented as being of prevailing importance. Just as much as the role of museums within society, the participative dynamics of visitors place the institution at the heart of the creative economy.
  - c. These roles played by the museum come on top of the institution's cultural functions, related to education and heritage preservation. It is important to highlight the need for the harmonious development of these different roles, which may prove partially contradictory, in order to ensure that the economic (or social) role does not take priority over the institution's basic functions: the broad development of knowledge and its dissemination within society.

#### **The added value of a new instrument**

5. The added value of an instrument introduced by UNESCO is essentially derived from its international character. This aspect can be important on two levels: (1) if containing restrictive powers, it allows for the establishment of rules common to all parties; (2) the adoption of the instrument by many countries grants it extremely high visibility. The numerous references by the museum world to several UNESCO conventions and recommendations (including the 1954, 1970 and UNIDROIT Conventions) demonstrate the true added value of such instruments on an international level. The absence of references to other such instruments (the 1960 Recommendation) encourages better understanding of the motives for this lesser interest, as well as the rigorous development of the instrument's characteristics that should be elaborated. In this sense, the added value of an instrument depends on the way in which it is used and the pertinence of this use for a large number of countries.
6. The question of the most appropriate type of instrument – convention or recommendation – has been extensively treated in the analysis of the legal aspects of this question undertaken by Patrick O'Keefe. We adhere to his point of view in support of the implementation of a recommendation.

#### **The scope of a new instrument**

7. It thus seems advisable to create a new standard-setting instrument pertaining to the protection and promotion of museums, in order to present the complete spectrum of

museum characteristics. This instrument must necessarily be devised based on the conventions and recommendations already implemented by UNESCO, some of which could be subject to greater promotion.

- a. In this respect, it is necessary to emphasise (despite its weak reputation) the importance of the principles of the 1960 Recommendation Concerning the most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone. It would be suitable to complement and once again highlight this important recommendation, incorporating new contemporary issues, and notably focusing on the central position of publics – community members and tourists – and the need for greater awareness on their modes of museum appropriation and visitation. Light should also be shed on their relationship to the museum and the role of full-fledged actor that they may play in collaboration with professionals.
  - b. It furthermore seems that the new instrument to be developed should more specifically be an extension of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005 – the only instrument that jointly presents the notions of protection and promotion. In this respect, the museum seems to be one of the most effective instruments for the protection and promotion of cultural diversity.
8. Based on the general context of conventions and recommendations pertaining to museums and heritage, and by particularly emphasising those specified in the previous point, the new standard-setting instrument could thus address the various elements analysed in the present report. In this respect, it is advisable to reflect more specifically on three aspects of extreme importance:
- a. The museum's functions and role within society and community:
    - The museum's global role within society, its social role (social inclusion or mediation) and economic role (creative economy), the need to take into account these latter two roles, according to their harmonious integration with the museum's cultural role;
    - The various foundations upon which the museum's functioning is based, including the functions of preservation (acquisition, collections management, conservation), research and communication (exhibition, education, mediation, publication);
    - The museum's position in terms of heritage, collections and objects, and more specifically, collections management;
    - Respect for the non-profit principle of the museum, even when commercial transactions are undertaken;
    - The importance of staff and staff training
    - The importance of publics – in keeping with the 1960 Recommendation.
  - b. The importance of museum ethics, as instituted and disseminated by ICOM, notably via the *Code of Ethics for Museums*, in order to develop the museum's functions and its influence on society in balanced fashion. Rather than establishing definitive standards, it is advised to refer to such a code, conceived to evolve with society;
  - c. The creation of an international museum observatory, in order to strengthen the circulation of information on museums and their various work methods around the world, thus improving their functioning. In practical terms, the role of such an international observatory – which could be organised by ICOM in partnership with UNESCO – would encompass:

- Gathering together all information pertaining to international cooperation on a museum level set out by institutions other than UNESCO and ICOM.
- Collecting, organising, summarizing and disseminating on an international level information providing awareness of publics, museum organisation, museography and staff training.

# 1. Defining museums: an institution, collections, professionals

190 EX/Decision 11 concerns the protection and promotion of museums and collections. Prior to any analysis, it is vital to address and define these terms according to their use here.

The terms contained in this study were selected with regard to the most widely recognised international definitions (conventions, recommendations, international texts), or national legislation or reports for terms have never been defined in the former context.

## 1.1. Museum

It seems logical that an international instrument be based on a definition of museum that is as widely accepted as possible.

A number of definitions of museum exist, notably in national legislation (in France and Brazil, for example) and in national associations (the American Alliance of Museums and the Museums Association). The definition used here is that put forth by ICOM, of which eight versions have existed since 1946. The latest version dates from 2007 and has adapted to museum evolutions, notably via the incorporation of the concept of intangible heritage. This definition is recognised by the 30,000 ICOM members, representing 137 countries. Within this context, the ICOM definition is the most widespread around the world. The definition of museum professional was also established by ICOM during the development of its *Code of Ethics* in 2006. This definition was used once again in the conclusions at the expert meeting held in Rio de Janeiro in July 2012.

**Museum.** A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment<sup>1</sup>.

**Museum professionals:** Museum professionals include all the personnel of museums, or institutions qualifying as museums<sup>2</sup> and training and research institutions which are beneficial to museum activities, having received specialised training, or possessing an equivalent practical experience, in any field relevant to the management and activities of a museum, as well as independent persons respecting the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* and working for and with museums, but not involved in promoting or dealing with any commercial products and equipment required for museums and their services.

The notion of **permanence** as found in the ICOM definition must be clarified here. In a certain way, the term is redundant, as the concept of institution already implies permanent character<sup>3</sup>: the museum appears as a stable form established by society to carry out or guarantee certain designated functions – in this case, the preservation and transmission of heritage alongside work pertaining to the development of sense-based knowledge. However, the term permanence does not imply fossilisation: the form that the museum takes may shift and be reinvented from one generation to the next – although “permanent” stands in contrast

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<sup>1</sup> ICOM Statutes, 2007, Article 3. Available online: <http://archives.icom.museum/statutes.html#3>

<sup>2</sup> in accordance with the definition in Article 3, Section 1 & 2 [of ICOM Statutes]

<sup>3</sup> DELOCHE B., “Institution”, in DESVALLEES A., MAIRESSE F. (dir.), *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011, pp. 201-214.

to “ephemeral” (of limited duration). The museum as an institution is based on an intergenerational contract; this does not rule out a *given* museum, as an establishment (rather than the institution at large), having a shorter lifespan (a few years). Nonetheless, the function of the museum is for the most part based on the long term.

## 1.2. Collections

The scope of 190 EX/Decision 11 encompasses museums and collections. The two terms are addressed separately. The definition of museum, offered by ICOM, does not directly address the principle of collections: the museum “acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity”, rather than collections. Three reasons for jointly addressing the terms “museums” and “collections” may be considered: (1) A museum could not have collections; (2) Collections other than those of museums must also be protected and promoted; (3) museums and collections are presented as synonyms.

### 1.2.1. Museums and collections

While common sense may lead to believe that museums and collections could be presented as synonyms (3), no rigorous definition incorporates this principle. However, a number of definitions of museum place collections at the heart of museum activity (for example, the definition of the UK Museums Association<sup>4</sup>). This characteristic seems to comply with the classical form of museum (the Louvre, the British Museum), as defined starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and whose activity centred on a collection of material objects. This conception has conveyed to certain curators the viewpoint that a museum without a material collection is not a museum. Such reactions notably emerged in the 1970s, with the creation of new forms of sites of remembrance, such as ecomuseums, designed around a given area and population rather than collections<sup>5</sup>. This discussion was subsequently greatly influenced by the development of the concept of intangible heritage, as well as that of cybermuseums<sup>6</sup>, and the wealth of network forms found in Latin America. In this light, it is important to clearly distinguish tangible and intangible collections. The theoretical definition of museum in the broad sense<sup>7</sup> encompasses Renaissance cabinets of curiosity, classical museums, paper museums, ecomuseums, neighborhood museums and cybermuseums. This definition is based on the idea of a collection not necessarily made up of material elements. Classical collections of material objects may in fact be replaced by databases, or by collective memory shared by a group. Nonetheless, museum work differentiates from that of cultural centres in its relationship to the collection and the forms of knowledge (scientific, identity-based, etc.) that may be gained. The quest for knowledge emerging from a collection represents the focus of museum work, just as in scientific or genealogical research. However, these collections do not necessarily have to be material.

In this light, it may be concluded that (3) museums and collections are not synonymous, but (1) that a museum without a collections is not a museum: an ecomuseum or an online database also contains a collection. However, it is important to know (2) whether the instrument is to encompass collections other than those of museums. Indeed, we may refer to certain collections belonging to public institutions or individuals, which do not have museum characteristics in the strict sense of the term: they are not recognised as museums but as collections (for example, they are not open to the public, no research is undertaken, no conservation policies are implemented, cf. 1.5.).

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<sup>4</sup> “**Museums** enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society”. Available online: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=15717>

<sup>5</sup> RIVIERE G.H. et alii., *La muséologie selon Georges Henri Rivière*, Paris, Dunod, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> DELOCHE B., *Le musée virtuel*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> DAVIS A., MAIRESSE F., DESVALLÉES A., (ed.) *What is a Museum?*, Munich, Verlag D.C. Müller-Straten, 2010.

A discussion on the opportunity – or not – to incorporate collections into the instrument for the protection and promotion of museums is presented in 4.2.1. It is firstly important to provide a definition of the term collection.

### 1.2.2. Defining collections

There is currently no international or ICOM definition of the term collection. The Museums Association (UK) has established such a definition essentially based on its material character<sup>8</sup>. It is suggested that reflection on the museum be expanded to encompass other types of collections – intangible, for example – notably taking into account other views of the museum such as those developed in Latin America. The definition decided upon is based on the one provided by French law (Decree of 29 January, 1993), which clearly demonstrates the difference between a collection and a set of objects, and the definition from *Key Concepts of Museology*, established by the International Committee for Museology<sup>9</sup> (2010). The concept of cultural property is defined according to the meaning provided by the Hague Convention (1954)<sup>10</sup>.

The concept of collection as it appears in Resolution 46 of the 36<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO is extremely vast, incorporating both public and private collections of all types: museum and library collections, archives, archaeological deposits, as well as collections of matchboxes or commercial samples, collections developed for commercial objectives, biobanks, computer data, etc. The concept of collection is extremely vast, and difficult to be used in this way for an international instrument. It is advisable to clarify the notion of collection with the help of two adjectives, each of which carries a relatively restricted meaning: museum collection and heritage collection. Museum collections are connected to the definition of museum provided earlier. In this light, it is better to highlight the characteristic of registration in the museum's inventory rather than referring to museum property or ownership, as the title deed may belong to another legal entity or individual. A heritage collection may be held by a museum or private hands, but is potentially subject to

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<sup>8</sup> "A **collection** is an organised assemblage of selected material evidence of human activity or the natural environment, accompanied by associated information. As well as objects, scientific specimens or works of art held within a museum building, a collection may include buildings or sites." See the *Code of Ethics* of the Museums Association: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=15717>

<sup>9</sup> *Key Concepts of Museology*, 2010. <http://icom.museum/professional-standards/key-concepts-of-museology/>  
**Collection.** A set of material or intangible objects (works, artefacts, mentefacts, specimens, archive documents, testimonies etc.) which an individual or an establishment has assembled, classified, selected, and preserved in a safe setting and usually displays to a smaller or larger audience, according to whether the collection is public or private.

**Collection:** A set of objects, works and documents whose different elements may not be separated without harming their coherence, and whose value is superior to the sum of the individual values of the elements composing them. The value and coherence of the collection is assessed based on its relevance in terms of history or art history, civilisations, sciences and techniques. (Decree of 29 January, 1993 on cultural objects subject to certain circulation restrictions, Légifrance).

<sup>10</sup> **Cultural property.** a. movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above; b. buildings whose main and effective purpose is to preserve or exhibit the movable cultural property defined in sub-paragraph (a) such as museums, large libraries and depositories of archives, and refuges intended to shelter, in the event of armed conflict, the movable cultural property defined in subparagraph (a); c. centers containing a large amount of cultural property as defined in sub-paragraphs (a) and (b), to be known as "centres containing monuments" (Hague Convention of 1954).

**Movable cultural property:** all movable objects which are the expression and testimony of human creation or of the evolution of nature and which are of archaeological, historical, artistic, scientific or technical value and interest, including items in the following categories (Recommendation for the Protection of Moveable Cultural Property of 28 November, 1978).

particular measures. This latter definition is connected to the definition of heritage provided in 1.3.

**Collection:** A set of cultural objects, tangible or intangible, whose different elements may not be separated without harming the coherence of this set, and whose value is superior to the sum of the individual values of the elements composing it.

**Museum collection:** Collection registered in a museum inventory

**Heritage collection:** Collection made up of cultural objects incorporating tangible or intangible heritage which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, deserving of protection, enhancement and transmission to future generations.

### 1.3. Tangible and intangible heritage

ICOM's definition of museum refers to the concept of tangible and intangible heritage. In the framework of museums, this concept remained undefined. The definition proposed here takes into account cultural and natural heritage as defined by the ICOM *Code of Ethics* (2006), alongside definitions of cultural heritage presented by the Council of Europe<sup>11</sup> and in a Québec report on defining heritage<sup>12</sup>, as well as definitions presented in the 1972 and 2003 Conventions on cultural, natural and intangible world heritage.

**Tangible and intangible heritage:** a group of tangible and intangible resources that people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, deserving of protection, enhancement and transmission to future generations.

### 1.4. Protection and promotion of museums and collections

The terms protection and promotion are connected in the title to museums and collections. The term “protection” was used in the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, in the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and in the 1978 Recommendation for the Protection of Moveable Cultural Property. This latter recommendation thoroughly defines what is meant by protection: a set of measures ensuring actions for safeguarding, security and guarantee of indemnification. These measures essentially encompass classic security measures intended to prevent damages, both during peacetime and in the event of armed conflict.

However, these two terms – protection and promotion – are used more broadly in the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and it is in this sense that they are jointly used here. The term “protection” is specifically defined on its own in Article 4 of the 2005 Convention. Based on this definition and the measures for promotion addressed in Article 7, the following definition of the two terms may be offered:

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<sup>11</sup> **Cultural heritage** is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time. Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005. Available online: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/199.htm>

<sup>12</sup> **Tangible and intangible heritage:** any object or set of objects, tangible or intangible, collectively recognised and appropriated for their testimonial and historical memory values and deserving of protection, conservation and enhancement. Arpin R. (dir.), *Notre patrimoine, un présent du passé*, November 2000, p. 33. Available online (in French): [http://www.ahlp.qc.ca/documentation/Groupeconseil\\_Notrepatrimoineunpresentdupasse.pdf](http://www.ahlp.qc.ca/documentation/Groupeconseil_Notrepatrimoineunpresentdupasse.pdf)

**Protection:** the adoption of measures aimed at the preservation, safeguarding and enhancement of museums.

**Promotion:** creation and dissemination of an access to museums.

This latter concept partially refers to the Recommendation Concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone, adopted 11 December 1960 during the 30<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Plenary Session.

It must be noted that the notion of “safeguarding” as presented in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage includes “the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.” The term “safeguarding” nonetheless contains a connotation associating it much more closely with the concept of protection than that of promotion. In this context, it is preferable to use the two terms jointly.

## 1.5. Functions and functioning of museums

The concept of museum has greatly evolved over time, and notably during the past four decades. Before addressing the changes in the following point, it is important to briefly clarify the general functioning of museums, identifying the points for which an international instrument would be relevant.

The definition of museum, provided by ICOM, lists five museum functions: to acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit. This principle diverges only slightly from the functions set out by Joseph Veach Noble in 1970<sup>13</sup>: to collect, conserve, study, interpret and display.

### 1.5.1 Museum functions

Drawing up a precise list of museum functions could feed extensive debate. The model used here presumes three main functions: Preservation, Research and Communication<sup>14</sup>.

**Preservation** encompasses all activities of acquisition, collections management, collections security and conservation, both preventive and remedial.

**Research** encompasses all museum research activities, including those connected to collections as well as, increasingly, those pertaining to visitors and society (cf. 2.4.2).

**Communication** encompasses all exhibition-related activities, both temporary and permanent, interpretive and educative, pertaining to mediation and social inclusion as well as museum publications.

It is important to add a fourth field of activities, secondary but of ever-growing importance: management.

**Management** encompasses all activities connected to the general administration of the establishment, the management of finances as well as staff, and management activities geared toward visitors (marketing).

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<sup>13</sup> VEACH NOBLE J., “Museum Manifesto [1970]”, *Museum News*, Feb. 1984, pp. 51-56.

<sup>14</sup> This model served as the basis for the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie* and Key Concepts of Museology. See MENSCH P. van (Ed.), *Professionalising the Muses*. Amsterdam, AHA Books, 1989; DESVALLÉES A., MAIRESSE F. (dir.), *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de muséologie*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2011.

### 1.5.2. Logics of museum functioning

This series of activities is found to varying degrees in all museums, whatever their type. Certain activities, from research to collections management and temporary exhibitions, may nevertheless be concentrated and shared among several establishments. In countries with a strong tradition of public administration, management issues are at times taken care of by a central organisation (ministry, central administration). In countries where the market economy dominates, management is largely controlled by the museum. Museums function according to three different mechanisms or modes of management<sup>15</sup>:

- *Public logic* remains essential in most countries. Public intervention is high, nearing 85% to 100% in many cases. It remains significant in countries with a framework of market logic, although the percentage of public intervention nevertheless proves markedly lower. Establishments that can do without public intervention are few and far between.
- *Market logic*, with the objective of museums generating revenue via admission fees, product sales, space rentals, etc., has over the past thirty years grown to represent an increasingly common mode (cf. 2.4.2). Establishments that can fund their activities by these means alone are extremely rare and generally not accepted as museums by professional associations (for ICOM, museums are non-profit organisations).
- *Logic of giving*, encompassing the giving of objects, patronage and volunteering efforts, represents the third mode of museum functioning. Numerous small establishments function largely based on this principle, which proves all the more influential in countries where the tradition of public aid is less developed.

The texts of previous conventions and recommendations reveal little about museum functions beyond those aiming to protect cultural objects in the event of conflict or during peacetime. The concept of protection, however, is essentially understood as all measures for security and inventory (cf. 3.1.).

### 1.5.3. Flows necessary to the functioning of the museum

Such organisation is based on a certain number of flows: objects, capital, information, staff and public. The texts of international conventions and recommendations focus extensively on these flows, which, for the most part, escape national vigilance, rendering it appropriate to organise them on a supranational level.

The flows of **objects** and **collections** have been treated by most international conventions and recommendations (1954, 1956, 1964, 1976, 1978, 2001) notably aiming to stop illicit trafficking during wartime and peacetime.

**Financial** flows in favour of museums have not been subject to particular recommendations. They are extensively referred to in the *ICOM Code of Ethics*, however.

Flows of **professionals**, or the exchange of ideas, were the basis of the motivations leading to the establishment of the International Museums Office in 1926, and the International Council of Museums in 1946 – museums being presented as among the best tools for intellectual cooperation. In contrast, exchanges between professionals are largely absent (cf. 4.4.5).

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<sup>15</sup> MAIRESSE F., *Le musée hybride*, Paris, La Documentation française, 2010.

Finally, flows of **visitors**, either locals or tourists, were subject to a Recommendation Concerning the most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone in 1960.

**Information** flows should also be addressed, through publications but especially Internet, increasingly widely dematerialised literary and visual objects, at times gathered together in the form of cybermuseums. While the *ICOM Code of Ethics* addresses the questions of sharing and processing information, these flows have not been subject to any particular recommendations.

This set may be presented in the following diagram (fig. 1). It is certainly possible to state that the three functions are interdependent and connected: here, the order of the activities of conservation, research and communication does not imply any specific priority.

All museums around the world - be they small or large, public or private, long-established or recent - are based on a similar diagram of functioning. However, the importance of these functions, as well as that of the flows, greatly differs from one establishment to the next, within as well as between countries. As such, museums that grew to become important centres of scientific research attracting a highly specific public over the 19<sup>th</sup> century have seen their research activities gradually shrink, while communication activities have risen; many museums nowadays carry out very little research.

The museum world has indeed witnessed a broad spectrum of transformations over the course of its history.

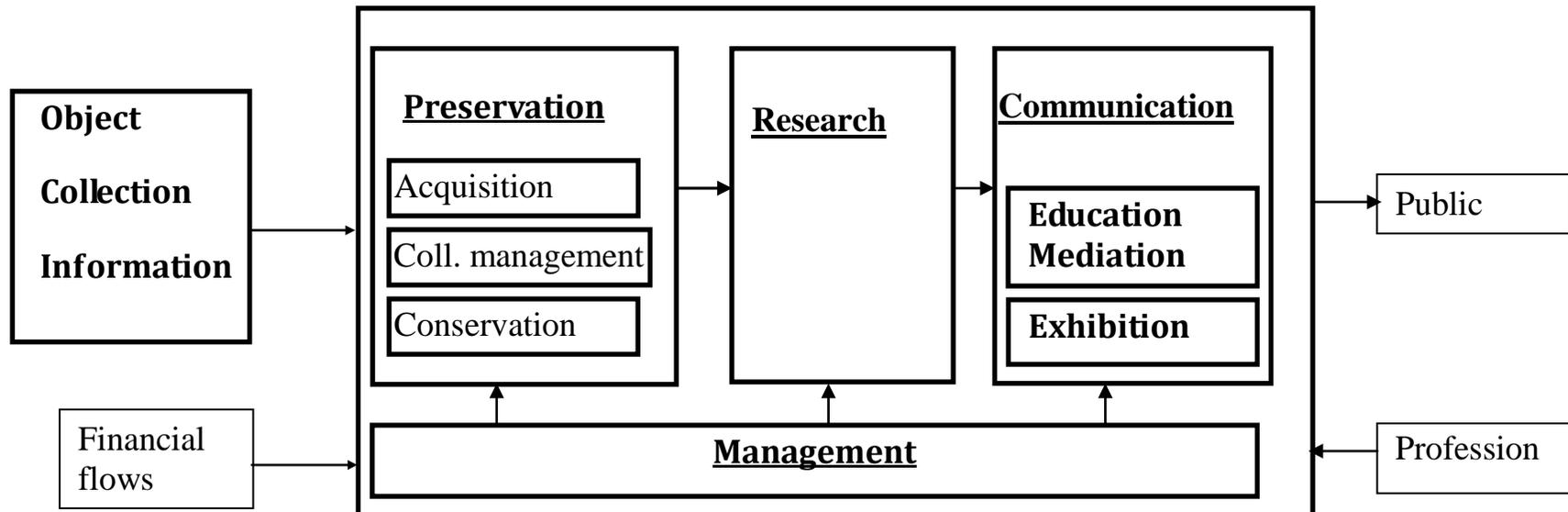


Fig. 1. Conservation – Research – Communication Museum Mod

## 2. Museums: multiple conceptions and advances

In the space of four decades, the number of museums has shot up, growing from 22,000 in 1975 to 49,000 in 2004, and 55,000 today<sup>16</sup>. Behind this figure lie disparate realities, but which convey only part of the museum world. For example, France counts some 1,200 officially labelled *musées de France*, which are listed in the Museums of the World directory, while another guide lists some 10,000 museums of various categories around the country<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, while a handful of museums welcome several million visitors annually, including a great many tourists hailing from around the globe, most are modestly sized, welcoming a few hundred or thousand visitors each year. The overarching economics of these establishments, as well as their functions and objectives, diverge considerably. The museum landscape, in this sense, cannot only be represented by the Louvre or British Museum, but is highly complex, covering extremely different realities. However, it goes without saying that these major establishments symbolise the world of museums for the public at large.

### 2.1. Radical changes over forty years

Nowadays, it is difficult to recall the often extremely relative interest displayed for the museum sector in the 1960s. The first major statistical studies, notably those by Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, at the time revealed the fundamentally elitist nature of the institution, which, at the decade's end, entered into crisis<sup>18</sup>. The 1970s began against a backdrop of debate on the utility of museums, in an economic and political context marked by resolutely opposed visions, a climate of Cold War, the fall of colonial empires and the rise of developing countries.

#### 2.1.1. The crisis of museums, the new museology and scientific museology

Since World War II, the institution of museum had nevertheless developed substantially, putting a great deal of effort into education; however, the fact remains that by the early 1970s, it was widely disparaged. The museum, funded by the State, "consistently distinguished itself as an instrument of the system"<sup>19</sup>. Elitism, authoritarianism and the dictatorship of western aesthetics were criticised all around, from contemporary European artists to America and Africa, where Stanislas Adotevi denounced the neo-colonialist intentions of cultural institutions<sup>20</sup>.

A certain number of solutions were offered in the face of this crisis. In the Eastern Socialist Republics, the scientific development of museology was viewed as the most efficient path to ensuring quality museum activity<sup>21</sup>. This path notably led to the establishment of the International Committee for Museology within ICOM in 1977.

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<sup>16</sup> HUDSON K., NICHOLLS A., *The Directory of World Museums*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1975; SAUER, *Museums of the World*, München, KG Sauer Verlag, 2004 (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). The most recent De Gruyter (19<sup>th</sup> edition) was released in 2012.

<sup>17</sup> MORELY A., LEVASSEUR G., *Guide Dexia des 10.000 musées et collections en France*, Paris, Le cherche midi, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> BOURDIEU P. DARBEL A., *L'amour de l'art. Les musées d'art européens et leur public*, Paris, Ed. de Minuit, 1969 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.); O' DOHERTY B., (Ed.), *Museums in Crisis*, New York, Braziller, 1972.

<sup>19</sup> GAUDIBERT P., HULTEN P., KUSTOW M., LEYMARIE J., MATHEY F., RIVIERE G.H., SZEEMANN H., DE WILDE E., "Problèmes du musée d'art contemporain en Occident", *Museum*, XXIV, 1, 1972, pp. 5-32.

<sup>20</sup> ADOTEVI S., "Le musée dans les systèmes éducatifs et culturels contemporains", in *Actes de la neuvième conférence générale de l'Icom*, Grenoble, 1971, pp.19-30.

<sup>21</sup> SCHNEIDER E., "La voie du musée", *Museum*, XXIX, 4, 1977, pp. 182-191.

In parallel, other newly-formed museums represented inspiring models for others: from the National Museum of Niger in Niamey to the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum in Washington, D.C., the Casa del Museo project in Mexico and the Ecomuseum of Le Creusot, France, all of these initiatives shared a community- and identity-based approach, first and foremost, presenting the museum as a tool at the service of the population, and intended for the latter's development. In this context, priorities were reversed: the relationship to collections was upended, eclipsed by users (much more than mere visitors) who came to represent the true centre of the museum project.

The Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972, in the wake of a UNESCO round table on the social role of museums, represented a key moment for this exceptional raising of awareness on the social role of museums. The associated concept of the *integrated museum* emphasises the role of museums in terms of reflection on societal issues and their development via a multidisciplinary approach. This declaration was followed by a series of others, notably those of Québec (1984), Oaxtapec (1984), Molinos (1986), Guwahati (1988), Oaxtapec II (1991), Caracas (1992), etc.

In Latin America, this movement led to the creation of particularly dynamic Latin American museology networks, while in France, the ecomuseum movement, centred on the same objectives, was federated in 1982 (*Muséologie nouvelle et expérimentation sociale* - MNES). In 1984, the International Movement for a New Museology was founded on an international level. Critical reflection emerged as fundamental everywhere, presented as an instrument for popular and permanent education. To play their role, these establishments also had to take into account all of the problems and questions arising within the community, in order to deal with them “in analytical and critical fashion, calling on the consciousness and creative initiative of the population itself”<sup>22</sup>.

### 2.1.2. The commercial turn of museums

In parallel, the “classical” museum sector, whose demise was demanded by some, met with an unprecedented resurgence in interest during the 1980s. New museum prototypes also emerged, such as the Centre Pompidou (1977) in Paris, or the San Francisco Exploratorium (1969). With a contemporary focus, they presented a new image of both the museum sector and scientific and artistic heritage in the making. The immediate success of the Centre Pompidou, with its avant-garde architecture, demonstrated the unique role that the structure, the building itself, could play for visitors. This success heralded the construction of a large number of new buildings that made their mark on the western landscape, as well as part of Asia and notably Japan, starting in the 1980s.

However, this development occurred in a strikingly different economic context. The two oil crises (1973 and 1979) were a blow to Keynesian and neo-Keynesian economic policies. The strategies implemented in the early 1980s by the United States and British governments, of neoliberal influence, had considerable influence on the museum development model. British museums were likely among the first to go down the commercial path, which a large number of institutions, originally mainly funded by public authorities, were subsequently forced to follow. The development of their own resources led many establishments to strengthen their management and marketing departments. Gradually, commercial spaces (shops, restaurants), admissions policies, rental programmes and the organisation of blockbuster exhibitions proliferated<sup>23</sup>. Western audiences took a liking to the activities of these new or renovated spaces, for which the transformation of the Louvre, as well as the Prado and the National Galleries of London and Washington, D.C., came to be the symbols.

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<sup>22</sup> VARINE H. de., *L'écomusée*, in *La Gazette* (Canadian Museums Association), 11, 1978, pp. 28-40.

<sup>23</sup> BAYART D., BENGHOZI P.-J., *Le tournant commercial des musées en France et à l'étranger*, Paris, Ministère de la culture and La documentation française, 1993.

The fall of the Soviet system in the late 1980s also marked the end of a certain Socialist conception of museum culture, as expressed in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, as well as of many experiments focused on the social role of museums. During the 1990s and early 2000s, a museum concept rooted in a strong commercial logic and with an image often tied to the building's architecture seemed to prevail, at least judging by major museum attractions worldwide, and in particular, the success story of the Bilbao Guggenheim, which perfectly exemplifies the role a museum can play in the development of a city<sup>24</sup>.

### 2.1.3. The museum in an age of the globalisation of flows

The museum mechanism operates based on various flows, as discussed in section 1.5.: objects, capital, staff, information and visitors. Digital technologies, alongside overarching technological development, have considerably revolutionised the speed and volume of these flows.

Two such flows are more specifically addressed below: that of **capital** (2.2) and the question of **objects** (2.4.1). The museum sector, like the trade sector (with the World Trade Organisation and the large markets that have been established, such as the European Union, Mercosur, ASEAN, ECOWAS and COMESA), takes part in globalisation. Museum flows are increasingly emerging on a global scale, involving anything from international public funding to international philanthropy or the attraction of international tourism, addressed further on in this report. This dynamic of globalisation has brought about considerable changes. In terms of objects, the official art market and art trafficking have witnessed both major developments and gradual transformations. The growing importance of the Asian continent for the world economy, for example, is in the process of shifting the international art market as well as the flows connected with its activities. In terms of trafficking, wars and invasions – in Afghanistan and Iraq and on the African continent, alongside the radical transformations in the political systems of the East – have led to an increase in trafficking, attested to by the ICOM Red Lists, which inventory the most frequently looted objects in these countries<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the rise in international exhibitions has also enhanced mobility for collections, at times criticised due to the lack of scientific objectives involved and the risks that these transfers entail for the conservation of the objects<sup>26</sup>.

Museum **staff** have also witnessed gradual transformations, at least in the most industrialised countries, notably thanks to increased exchange between staff, the organisation of international conferences (via ICOM and its international committees) and the development of professional training. Nonetheless, staff mobility, at least on the international level, appears much weaker than that of objects; this gap is all the wider for less economically developed countries. Only a handful of major museums – the superstar museums discussed below (2.2.1) – have launched staff recruitment programmes on a global scale; in most cases, staff hiring is carried out on a national level, and staff careers continue at this same level. Development of the quality of museum work nevertheless largely depends on factors related to staff training, and if information does not arrive via specific recruitment, it may do so via the exchange of information. Information may stem from university training – the development of academic programmes in museology or museum studies – or continuing education undertaken over the course of a professional career. Certain countries such as France have developed programmes to welcome foreign functionaries, in order to present aspects of national cultural policies. Some major research

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<sup>24</sup> KEA, *Study on the economy of culture in Europe*, Brussels, 2006, Study conducted for the European Commission. Available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc873\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc873_en.htm) (consulted in December 2012).

<sup>25</sup> See ICOM site: <http://icom.museum/programmes/fighting-illicit-traffic/red-list/>

<sup>26</sup> HASKELL F. *The Ephemeral Museum. Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

and education institutions including the Getty Centre and the Ecole du Louvre have also created international programmes geared for students or established researchers, as have most of the major museums worldwide (3.3.4). Online learning opportunities have also been launched, either by universities – notably the University of Leicester’s pioneering museum studies programme – or by foundations, such as the ILAM Foundation in Costa Rica, which recently set up a distance-learning programme in partnership with UNESCO. But training opportunities remain limited, and the main learning method is still that of informal information exchange, either between colleagues (via the organisation of conferences) or in published form (books, journals or Internet). On this level, national and international conferences, notably organised at the initiative of ICOM (and numerous other international organisations), represent key moments for the circulation of knowledge. Similarly, the online publication and distribution of works pertaining to museum training – such as *Running a Museum* and *Key Concepts of Museology* – have contributed to the dissemination of shared standards for quality and methods of reflection. UNESCO’s publication policy in favour of museums and monuments, which was very strong in the 1960s and 1970s, has slowed down somewhat in recent decades<sup>27</sup>.

The circulation of **information** has been influenced to a great extent by the development of the Internet, and particularly in recent years, by social networks. The creation of information databases using platforms ranging from collaborative (Wikipedia)<sup>28</sup> to private (Google Books) to public (Europeana) represents a considerable change for museums, facing new modes of disseminating knowledge. Certain establishments, such as the Brooklyn Museum, the San José Tech Museum, the San Francisco Exploratorium and the Tate Modern in London, have strongly embraced these new modes of communication, developing innovative programmes that interact with new audiences. Several cybermuseums have also emerged, presenting the whole of the collections from one or more countries, as is the case for the Virtual Museum of Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>29</sup>.

Lastly, digital technologies have led to the creation of a new **public**, which has adopted new visiting behaviour online, increasingly participative at times (2.4.3.), and often much more rushed as well. The most important factor, on the other hand, lies in the evolution of cultural tourism. In the space of three decades, tourism has developed considerably: 277m international tourists in 1980, 435m in 1990, and 940m in 2010<sup>30</sup>. While intercontinental flows have most likely multiplied due to the transformation of the airline sector and the low cost business model, on a global scale, tourism flows have also increased as new economic superpowers have emerged. On this level, the world’s major museums and monuments are the ones benefitting from this development, in keeping with the superstar economic model<sup>31</sup>. In this way, the biggest museums in the main western capitals, alongside all UNESCO-listed World Heritage Sites, have seen their visitors grow exponentially.

#### 2.1.4. Changes to come

The consequences of the 2007 crisis are difficult to ascertain for museums and their evolution, although the shuttering of quite a few heritage establishments around the world merits mention, and this process may accelerate in the coming years.

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<sup>27</sup> BOYLAN P. (coord.), *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook*, Paris, ICOM/UNESCO, 2006. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141067e.pdf>. The Museums and Monuments series, published by UNESCO from the 1950s-1970s, includes fifteen or so publications, notably: *The Organisation of Museums: Practical Advice* (1959), *Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions* (1965), *Field Manual for Museums* (1970), *Museums, Imagination and Education* (1973).

<sup>28</sup> See examples provided by MENSCH P. VAN, “Annotating the environment. Heritage and new technologies”, *Nordisk Museologi*, 2005 (2), pp. 17-27.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.museovirtualdeamericalatinayelcaribe.org/>

<sup>30</sup> UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), *Tourism Highlights, 2012 Edition*, Available online, <http://mkt.unwto.org/en/publication/unwto-tourism-highlights-2012-edition>

<sup>31</sup> ROSEN S. “The economics of superstars”, *American Economic Review*, 71, 1981, pp. 845-858.

While the world in the 1990s had little in common with that of the 1970s, the world in 2010 proved to be of an entirely different nature as well. Gradually, a new world configuration took hold, with political and economic balances radically transforming the social, economic and cultural landscape. While at the start of the 1990s, the countries of the “Triad” (United States, Europe, Japan) appeared as the main economic and scientific powers, new emerging powers began affirming their importance on the world stage year after year. Increasingly common references to the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the countries of ASEAN are only the tip of far vaster changes, given the importance of countries like Mexico, Argentina, South Korea and Turkey.

These changes also led to important changes in terms of heritage. What is most likely the most important transformation in recent years emerged in Asia: the directive adopted by UNESCO in 1993 on living human treasures, endorsed by South Korea, represented one of the founding acts in the process leading up to the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage in 2003. It is apparent that sensitivity in terms of heritage varies according to geographical region; but while the concept of heritage has long been influenced by Europe, over the past two centuries, it is hardly impossible to imagine profound shifts in the concept in the years to come, mirroring the changes now being felt on an economic level.

## **2.2. The economic role of museums**

The economic role of museums largely predates the commercial turn that many establishments, mainly in western countries, have witnessed in recent years. This role, which was addressed by German philosopher Leibniz in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, has notably allowed for the creation of industrial museums more or less worldwide, as well as commercial museums<sup>32</sup>.

While the assumption that museum activity indirectly contributes to the economic development of its region may be commonly held, the fact remains that in recent years, the relationship between economics and museums has taken on substantial importance, to the point of becoming the principle motivator for the creation of some museums.

### **2.2.1. Tourism and economic development**

Tourism and museums have always gone hand and hand, to the point of often emerging in the same places (originally in Italy, and later in spa towns, etc.). From the start, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museum promoters used the tourism argument – stopping travellers in their tracks – to gain collections or loans. The commercial turn of museums in the 1980s and 90s drastically influenced this principle. While neoliberal public authorities sought to restrict State influence on the market, it was necessary for selected institutions to demonstrate the relevance of being granted public funding. Thus, in its 1991 report examining museums, the UK Audit Commission specified that these establishments received funding for the following reasons, which were subject to performance indicators: 1. the area’s quality of living, 2. promotion of tourism, 3. aid in terms of economic development, 4. support for research and education, 5. heritage preservation<sup>33</sup>. This list suggests a certain conception of museums, with priorities opposed to the classical priorities focused on heritage preservation.

The logic behind the museum’s role in favour of the promotion of tourism or economic development is based on an identical principle: economic evaluation of the museum. Studies

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<sup>32</sup> MAIRESSE F., *Le musée hybride*, *op.cit.*

<sup>33</sup> AUDIT COMMISSION, *The Road to Wigan Pier? Managing Local Authority Museums and Art Galleries*, London, HMSO, 1991, appendix B.

of this type (on economic impact) emerged over this same period, in order to demonstrate the importance of funding museums (or operas, festivals, etc.) for the economic development of a region<sup>34</sup>. The principles were simple: an estimation of the number of foreign visitors and their spending in a given region allowed for an evaluation of potential revenues generated by the visit's motivator. The "Bilbao effect", subject of numerous articles<sup>35</sup>, to a certain extent represents an ideal type in terms of this process, reviving a region through tourism and new creative industries to the point where the authorities that funded the project were able to recover their investment via the ensuing economic development. Numerous establishments, including branches of major museums such as the Guggenheim, the Centre Pompidou and the Louvre, alongside a wealth of new projects, were thus created with the goal of reviving the economic potential of a city by improving cultural and tourism options, and in doing so, aligning with one of UNESCO's current major focuses: enhancing the role of culture in development. Of the many projects launched in the aftermath of Bilbao's, some – overly optimistic – ended in failure<sup>36</sup>.

Following the same logic as that of the superstar system, the most important museums – the oldest, in possession of the most prestigious collections, as well as some housed in spectacular new buildings – have seen visits multiply as tourism has developed, while many medium-sized establishments have seen visits stagnate. Economists evoke the principle of the superstar museum to describe the sixty or so "millionaire" establishments in terms of visitor figures, generating considerable income, in the manner of the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, the Guggenheim Museum and the Louvre<sup>37</sup>.

Visits to heritage sites and notably museums are thus among the most important activities of international cultural tourism. Against this background, certain establishments in emerging countries may be visited mainly by foreign tourists. The desire to welcome tourists, and in doing so, develop an economic sector, is one of the driving forces behind the creation of new museums in a number of countries. Such choices run the risk of partially clashing with other museum-related considerations, further developed later in this report (2.3.). They may furthermore bring about harmful consequences for the heritage itself – for example, when the tourism industry attempts to develop "ethnic tourism" via the creation of ad hoc museums which may resemble theme parks. The use of heritage in such contexts may prove to be strictly for economic or political motivations, with the risk of bringing about the marginalisation and subjugation of communities.

This investment logic also pertains to the concept of creative economy, currently being circulated on a wide scale by international organisations such as the European Union and UNCTAD<sup>38</sup>. Previously industrialised countries in this way view creativity and intangibility as the motor of a new economy, notably based in culture and allowing for the development of new sectors with high added value. Using its heritage – a sort of database of human and natural creativity – as well as its functions, the museum is able to present itself as a site contributing to a context of creativity, which is proving to be a determining factor for societal, cultural and economic development. As such, investment in networks of creative cities (in the UK, Germany, Australia, Canada and beyond) aims to create environments conducive – in economic, logistical and cultural terms – to allowing creators to develop their potential,

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<sup>34</sup> MAIRESSE F., *Missions et évaluation des musées – Une enquête à Bruxelles et en Wallonie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> See website *Scholars on Bilbao*, which lists dozens of scholarly articles on the subject. <http://www.scholars-on-bilbao.info/list.php?var=list>. It is noteworthy that Basque investment covered more than the museum's construction alone.

<sup>36</sup> TOBELEM J.-M., *Le nouvel âge des musées*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2010 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

<sup>37</sup> FREY BRUNO, MEIER Stephan, "The Economics of Museums", in GINSBURGH V., THROSBY D., *Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture*, Amsterdam, Elsevier, vol. 1, 2006, pp. 1017-1050.

<sup>38</sup> KEA, *The Impact of culture on creativity*, 2009. Study conducted for the European Commission. Available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/study\\_impact\\_cult\\_creativity\\_06\\_09.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/study_impact_cult_creativity_06_09.pdf); UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), *Creative Economy. Report 2008*, United Nations, 2008.

notably when it comes to new technologies. Contemporary art museums and new museums are particularly crucial to the dynamic interplay defining this situation.

### 2.2.2. Architecture and urban planning: quality of living, economic development

Many of the aforementioned tourism projects are based far more on the architectural quality of the museum building than on the quality of the collections – at times inexistent. In the space of two decades, museums have become the new symbols of a certain form of revival for cities and regions. In the west, where there is no longer extensive construction of churches, temples or palaces, and parliaments or other major structures housing institutions of justice and peace were built in previous decades, museums are among the main structures holding strong added symbolic value. But these buildings also bring about the urban revival of their neighborhoods, attracting new residents and potential investors.

A museum's location within a city represents a particularly significant choice, whether it is presented as close to sites of power downtown, or, as is the case for the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, near the working class neighborhoods and populations it was intended to attract (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Similarly, the Anacostia Museum and the Casa del Museo were established in working class neighborhoods far from their respective city centres. This type of reasoning leads decision makers nowadays to embark on the revival of neighborhoods, oftentimes formerly industrial zones, by building architecturally spectacular museums – which are thus at the heart of an overarching urban planning project, as seen from Bilbao to Lyon and from London (with the Tate Modern) to Abu Dhabi.

The concept of quality of living, which entails the use of museums by the local population, evokes the museum's social role, addressed later in this report, as well as the general framework in which the population may evolve. These establishments thus strengthen the quality of the urban planning for the concerned neighborhoods. The stakes are high, with the aim of attracting new taxpayers, both individuals and companies, and stimulating creativity – in short, infusing the project initiator region with new economic vibrancy.

### 2.3. The social role of museums: education, inclusion, mediation

The concept of quality of living certainly implies the possibility of planning new neighborhoods geared for middle or upper class populations likely to actively participate in the area's economy, but nothing precludes such a process from targeting working class populations, striving to improve the living environment for all.

The principle of the museum's social role long predates the Declaration of Santiago de Chile (1972). It first emerged in recurring fashion in the Anglo-Saxon countries, over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Extensive discourse on the role of museums developed in Victorian England, in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. The new public space of the museum was intended to promote learning for working class populations – a model embodied by the Victoria & Albert Museum, designed by Henry Cole<sup>39</sup>. Among the pioneers of this thought were the Scotsman Patrick Geddes, the Frenchman Edmond Groult and the American John Cotton Dana, author of a number of books on the tie between museums and their community<sup>40</sup> – and indeed, it seems that the United States is where the tie between museum and community<sup>41</sup> strengthened most quickly: a museum could only develop if its community

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<sup>39</sup> BENNET T., *The Birth of the Museum*, London, Routledge, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> DANA J.C. (PENNISTON W.A. Ed.), *The New Museum. Selected Writings by John Cotton Dana*, Washington, American Association of Museums, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> In the United States, community refers to all members that may be tied in one way or another to the functioning of a museum: visitors, specialists, educators, artistic groups, other organisations with connections to museum activity, etc. AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS [EdCOM Committee on Education] 2002. *Excellence in practice*.

found it relevant, thus, if the museum was working for its benefit. This logic implies the creation of education departments, the preparation of exhibitions directly tied to the needs of residents, etc. The principles of the social role of museums have been clarified with the help of a number of concepts, notably including popular education and social inclusion.

### 2.3.1. Popular and permanent education

The Declaration of Santiago de Chile in 1972 represented a decisive moment for the museums of Latin America, while joining a vaster context reinforced by an array of experiences in terms of education, popular education and permanent education<sup>42</sup>.

Through the concepts of cultural action and cultural development, these movements spread considerably, circulating on a national level in the framework of expanding cultural policies, and on an international level via UNESCO. Cultural action aimed to prolong citizen learning over the course of whole lives, with the help of strong and education-oriented cultural policies, targeting the participation – and integration – of as many people as possible. This activity nevertheless dipped in the 1980s, as the resources for these policies were largely dependent on public authorities, which saw their means of action challenged. In other cases, notably in France, where the budget of the Ministry of Culture grew considerably, popular education policies were only partially incorporated into cultural budgets, which prioritised creative or heritage-oriented aspects<sup>43</sup>.

### 2.3.2. Social inclusion and mediation, society museums

The second wind seemingly breathed into both the social role of museums and the new museology in the 1980s was not necessarily compromised by the commercial turn occurring at the same time. The aforementioned concept of “quality of living”, highlighted for example by the UK Audit Commission, is at least partially based on the founding principles of the social role of museums: the museum’s use by local residents. This perspective implies actions geared for all types of visitors, including the most underprivileged, and particularly, non-users of museums. The concept of social inclusion that emerged at the end of the 1990s in the UK was quickly adopted by museums, which reaffirmed their social role via actions geared for vulnerable populations<sup>44</sup>. In Francophone countries, the term mediation – broader than that of education – came to embody the idea of cultural action, incorporating this into new methods of museum approach<sup>45</sup>.

The concepts of cultural mediation and social inclusion – alongside that of the inclusive museum<sup>46</sup>, all of which figure on the museum agenda nowadays – have thus been developed over the past fifteen years or so.

The term society museum has also gained strength in French on different scales – used by the Musée Dauphinois in Grenoble or the Musée de la Civilisation in Québec – in presenting a view of the museum as more directly rooted in societal problems, with exhibitions centred

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*Museum education principles and standards*, Washington, American Association of Museums. Available online: <http://www.edcom.org/Files/Admin/EdComBookletFinalApril805.pdf> (consulted November 2012).

<sup>42</sup> UNESCO (Collective), *Museums, Imagination and Education*, Paris, UNESCO, 1973.

<sup>43</sup> CAUNE J., *La culture en action. De Vilar à Lang: le sens perdu*, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> SANDELL, R., “Museums as agents of social inclusion”, *Museum Management and curatorship*, 17, 4, 1998, pp. 401-418.; SANDELL, R. (ed.). - *Museums, society, inequality*, London, Routledge, 2002.

<sup>45</sup> CAILLET E., LEHALLE E., *A l’approche du musée, la médiation culturelle*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1995; SAADA S., *Et si on partageait la culture? Essai sur la médiation culturelle et le potentiel du spectateur*, Toulouse, Edition de l’attribut, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> See website of the International Institute for the Inclusive Museum, <http://inclusivemuseum.org/>

on contemporary issues ranging from migrations to hunger or mad cow disease<sup>47</sup>. This type of reflection is a logical continuation of the ideas put forth by Duncan Cameron some thirty years beforehand, presenting museums as a forum, a space for discussion and debate<sup>48</sup>.

### 2.3.3. The museum's social role around the world today

While superstar museums or media-grabbing, architecturally spectacular new museums appear as the symbols of the economic situation for museums, other, more discreet establishments are growing into a force on a social level, with the help of their commitment to community as well as the types of exhibitions they organise. In their activities reports, museums such as the Louvre and the British Museum certainly also feature actions based on principles of social inclusion for specific population groups – prisoners, illiterate or vision-impaired individuals, immigrants and more. Against this backdrop, the concept of the inclusive museum aims to bring together different types of actions, undertaken both by long-established institutions housing prestigious collections as well as more recent and activist creations. The fact remains that the institutions best embodying this other view of the museum have profiles starkly contrasting with the traditional museum canon.

In this context, certain museums have gained particular renown – from the four corners of the globe – for the quality of their messages, expressed more through temporary and permanent exhibitions than visitor numbers or the wealth of the collections that they conserve (often ethnological or scientific). The exhibitions of the Neuchâtel Museum of Ethnography (Switzerland), for example, investigate contemporary societal phenomena ranging from museums to ecology, pornography and the intangible, provoking the curiosity of visitors and at times playing on their bewilderment. In an activist tradition, other museums undertake the development of alternative or revised versions of supposedly objective histories, demonstrating just how political museum ambitions may be. The objective of presenting another reality of the world was the driving force behind the Anacostia Museum and the Casa del Museo; this same activist ambition is shared by projects ranging from Rio de Janeiro's Museu de Favela<sup>49</sup> to the Lwandle Migrant Labour Museum in a South African township, furthering understanding of apartheid, and the Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca (Mexico), established to enhance community and ecomuseums<sup>50</sup>. Other museums, such as Ireland's Museum of Free Derry and Afghanistan's Jihad Museum or Victim Museum, evoke the still-healing wounds of a recent past<sup>51</sup>.

More generally speaking, many of these establishments emerge first and foremost from a community- and identity-based project, rather than material heritage of varying degrees of prestige. They are in this way consistent with the pioneering experiments in new museology undertaken in the 1970s, notably the Ecomuseum of Le Creusot. An enquiry into the collective memory of cities or poorly inhabited areas (forests, countryside, mountains) and participative activities are at the heart of the ambitions of these new establishments, alongside the use of tools aiming for their liberation. In this respect, this type of museology – social museology or sociomuseology, ecomuseology or new museology – has emerged mainly in the Latin countries (French-, Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking). MINON gathers together a number of these initiatives on an international level, while specialised journals and

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<sup>47</sup> BARROSO E. and VAILLANT E. (dirs.), *Musées et Sociétés*, Mulhouse-Ungersheim conference proceedings, DMF, Ministère de la Culture, 1993.

<sup>48</sup> CAMERON D., "Museum, a temple or a forum", in *Curator*, 14, March 1971, pp. 11-24.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.museudefavela.org/>

<sup>50</sup> KARP ET AL., *Museum Frictions*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006. For further examples, see KNELL S.J., MACLEOD S. AND WATSON S. (Ed.), *Museum Revolutions. How museums change and are changed*, London, Routledge, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> MUSEUMS ETC., *Museums of Ideas. Commitment and Conflict. A collection of Essays*, Edinburgh, MuseumEtc., 2011.

blogs, such as that of Hugues de Varine, provide regular information on their activities<sup>52</sup>. In this perspective, highlighted in Santiago in 1972, museums represent a political tool in every sense of the term, connected to the life of the city or community and deeply involved in the issues that it faces.

## 2.4. The role of museums in the light of new issues

The museum's most immediate role largely transcends its social or economic influence: "Culture is what responds to man when he asks himself what he is doing on the earth"<sup>53</sup>, as Malraux proclaimed. Museums address life, birth and death, our past and future. Before being a space for pleasure or recreation, they are an introspective lesson on the best and worst of our humanity. Heritage is in this way presented as the common thread of a message offered to all, perceived by some and transmitted by others. But this position, like that of other spaces intended for reflection on our origins – temples, mosques or churches – is inevitably influenced by the contemporary developments of our society.

The emergence – or rather, development – of new roles for the museum, inherent to the institution, thus has an inevitable influence on the development of its classical functions. Is it to the extent of radically transforming museums in the years to come? For now, it is difficult to respond to that question, but it is undeniable that the commercial turn of museums, as much as their social role and digital technologies, are impacting the future functioning of museums.

### 2.4.1. The position of heritage and collections

The question of the preservation of collections – their acquisition, management and conservation – has witnessed considerable changes in recent years, sure to continue in the future. The importance of preservation remains substantial, and it is telling that the largest ICOM international committee is ICOM-CC, devoted to conservation. But questions of the deaccessioning or management of collections are increasingly the focus of attention. In more or less direct fashion, the position of objects within the museum is gradually being reconsidered.

The concept of heritage has itself substantially expanded, particularly through the incorporation of the intangible component, as well as the development of digital archives. In terms of collections, the consequences of this broadening have notably included the multiplication of objects to preserve, as well as the necessary enlarging of museum reserves. In this context, collections management (and the role of registrars) is taking on increasing importance within the museum. One consequence of these developments concerns the potential shrinking of the size of collections: given the continually rising cost of preservation methods and reserve creation, the question lingers as to whether it is better to restrict the number of objects to preserve. Collections expertise and active management lie at the heart of museum concerns. Contemporary heritage, despite being more recent, often proves more fragile, while the development of digital reproduction methods does not necessarily entail true savings in this respect, given the often extremely steep management costs required for the maintenance of this specific heritage. In other words, might there be "too much stuff"<sup>54</sup>? The question of deaccessioning is addressed in varying ways by museums. Certain countries

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<sup>52</sup> The Cadernos de Sociomuseologia are available on the website <http://revistas.ulusofona.pt/index.php/cadernosociomuseologia/issue/archive>; Hugues de Varine's blog is available at <http://www.world-interactions.eu/>

<sup>53</sup> MALRAUX A. 1966, "Discours prononcé à l'occasion de l'inauguration de la Maison de la culture d'Amiens, le 19 mars 1966", in *La politique, la culture*, Paris, Gallimard, 1996, pp. 320-330.

<sup>54</sup> NATIONAL MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE, *Too much Stuff?*, October 2003, available online: [http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/media/documents/publications/too\\_much\\_stuff.pdf](http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/media/documents/publications/too_much_stuff.pdf) (consulted in November 2012).

– notably the Latin countries – traditionally uphold the principle of the inalienability of collections and their position in the public domain. Anglo-Saxon museums, on the other hand, possess relatively flexible systems allowing for the removal of objects from the inventory<sup>55</sup>. The Netherlands, for its part, has developed particular expertise in this domain, with the strategic management of collections entailing simultaneous reflection on acquisitions as well as disposal policies. Certain bills seeking to deviate from the rule of inalienability have provoked general outcry from the museum sectors in France and Belgium, on the other hand<sup>56</sup>. Further reflection, endorsed notably by the European Union, aims for enhanced use of reserve collections and the development of collections mobility, specifically via lending policies<sup>57</sup>.

Be that as it may, the position of collections, formerly at the centre of concerns in the museum ecosystem, is increasingly relegated to the margins. This logic, characterising the perspective of the social role of museums, now seems increasingly widespread. In western countries, the position of visitors, hardly addressed in the past, now appears as a crucial issue for the development of museums, given an economy increasingly based on participation (cf. 2.4.4). The museum of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is constructed with the help of its public, and some prospective reports evoke the possibility of devoting less space to permanent exhibitions and more space to multipurpose areas (for activities and temporary exhibitions)<sup>58</sup>. This proposition has a strikingly similar echo in Asian countries, with certain divergences. The concept of heritage, more intangible, is based in the preservation of ideas and forms much more than materials. In this sense, while it has existed since the beginnings of humanity, the concept of collection is based in a different sort of relationship with objects, both in terms of their number and in the way of creating exhibitions. The possibility of creating museums without collections, in Japan – while welcoming exhibitions<sup>59</sup> – represents a particularly enlightening example of a different attitude in dealing with heritage and its preservation.

#### 2.4.2. Research

Research has long stood at the heart of museum activity and is crucial to the creation of collections, as the profession of curator largely involves the inventory, classification and study of collections. This type of research, which has greatly contributed to the development of the natural sciences, ethnology and art history over the past two centuries, has gradually declined – just as the influence of museum researchers has diminished as compared to that of university and laboratory researchers. The decline of university museums attests to this gradually widening gap, perhaps in the same way as their gradual transformation starting at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a role increasingly defined as that of a centre for heritage (preservation of scientific heritage) and learning rather than a site for research. Nevertheless, major establishments worldwide, be they specialised in natural history, art or ethnography, continue to play an important role through their research centres, although these are often disconnected from the museum's everyday activities.

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<sup>55</sup> CORNU Marie, FROMAGEAU Jérôme, POLI Jean-François, TAYLOR Anne-Christine, *L'inaliénabilité des collections, performances et limites?*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> MAIRESSE F., *L'inaliénabilité des collections de musée en question*, Proceedings of conference held at the Musée Royal de Mariemont, 28 April, 2009, Morlanwelz, Musée Royal de Mariemont, 2009,

<sup>57</sup> PETERSSON S. et al. (Ed.), *Encouraging collections mobility – A way Forward for Museums in Europe*, Helsinki, Finnish National Gallery, Amsterdam, Erfgoed Nederland and Berlin, Staatliche Museen.

<sup>58</sup> BLACK Graham, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century*, London, Routledge, 2012; MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION, *Museums 2020 Discussion Paper*, London, Museums Association, 2012. Available online: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=806530> (Consulted in November 2012). CONN S. *Do Museums still Need Objects?*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

<sup>59</sup> MORISHITA M., *The Empty Museum. Western Cultures and the Artistic Field in Modern Japan*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010. There are of course many museums housing collections in Japan.

It is more or less undeniable that in this context, the importance and power of researchers and curators within museums is diminishing as compared to that of other functions, from educators to collection managers – but especially museum managers themselves, charged with marketing, financial and strategic matters. In France, for example, curators are upset by the fact that their positions are less frequently refilled, or are filled by different profiles<sup>60</sup>.

The evolution of research in museums is more complex, however. It is undeniable that its role remains important in the largest national establishments, and that it has rarely played a central role in smaller museums or those founded with educational objectives. The transformation of museum funding models in western countries has most likely in turn heralded the transformation of research programmes, more often and directly developed for specific and applied objectives, notably the organisation of temporary exhibitions. In this sense, and given the overarching development of scientific production, it is possible that in quantitative terms, research has in fact increased within museums, despite the fact that its position in a scientific system dominated by the logic of academic research is most likely weaker than before.

Again, nuance is called for in this respect: while “classical” research on objects and collections may be presented in this manner, it seems important to highlight the rise of studies on another aspect, that of visitors. Since the end of the 1960s, the field of visitor studies has been particularly well developed, both within and beyond museums. Since the end of the 1980s, the related bibliography has grown to exceed one thousand articles and studies<sup>61</sup>. Most major museums now include a visitors observatory or department, or at the very least, a staff member in charge of this area; and while many museums subcontract such operations, certain pioneering establishments, such as the Natural History Museum in London, the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in Paris, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and the Musée de la Civilisation in Québec, have had permanent teams for twenty years or so. Given a context in which the public seems to lie at the heart of museum concerns, it seems likely that this type of research is set to considerably expand in the coming years. Here, however, the objective is to provide a relatively specific view of research in the museum world, connected with visitors and non-visitors alike.

Generally speaking, the question also lingers as to whether museum research, in this same context, is increasingly shifting its focus to programmes connected to contemporary society. There has been a marked rise in the number of exhibitions on issues in contemporary society, notably in society museums, science centres and museums, as well as contemporary art museums. This tendency, initiated by the establishments themselves or in partnership with outside centres or universities, positions the museum as research site or laboratory on society and societal issues.

#### **2.4.3. The museum as an increasingly participative communication system**

The third museum function, communication, is in the process of transformation. Museums have always presented themselves as exhibition and (at times) publication spaces, with teaching and education activities largely developing after World War II; but the museum was not perceived and analysed as a communication system until the 1960s<sup>62</sup> – while having already donned the role of propaganda centre, either in voluntary or involuntary fashion. The idea of the museum as a communication system is nevertheless telling of changes

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<sup>60</sup> VITAL, C., “Le Livre blanc des musées de France”, *Musées et collections publiques de France*, special issue, 260, 3, 2010, pp. 1-127.

<sup>61</sup> SAMSON D., SCHIELE B., *L'évaluation muséale, publics et expositions. Bibliographie raisonnée*. Paris, Expo-Media, 1989.

<sup>62</sup> CAMERON D., “A viewpoint: the Museum as a communication system and implications for museum education”, in *Curator*, 11, 1968, pp. 33-40; McLuhan M., PARKER H., BARZUN J., *Exploration of the ways, means, and values of museum communication with the viewing public*, New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1969.

overtaking the whole of the field of museology, which, at the century's start, was based in the object, gradually shifting its focus – notably in science and ethnography museums – to ideas and knowledge. In the 1980s, Jean Davallon analysed the evolution of museums as a transformation in the communication system itself, using the term viewpoint museology to evoke the more directly subjective biases involved in organising exhibitions, often conceived as essays signed by exhibition curators (Jean Clair, Umberto Eco, Bruno Latour, Fred Wilson or Peter Greenaway), at times presenting differing or opposed conceptions in a single exhibition, allowing visitors to develop their own viewpoint. Exhibition systems themselves are also being transformed, presenting large, often immersive installations which incorporate visitors into the exhibition<sup>63</sup>. The position of objects in this context has also changed, moving from the centre of attention – where they still lie in classical art museums – to one of many potential forms of knowledge media, encompassing a number of substitutes, manipulations, texts and multimedia products.

The construction of large, architecturally spectacular museum complexes has certainly brought about further changes in museum communication systems. The term arcades museology may be used to evoke the system – greatly influenced by economic objectives – of this new type of establishment in which the object takes on a lesser importance and the visitor's journey seems reduced to a stroll with a selection of vistas of the building, between the entry, shop and restaurant. In such cases, the visitor's position is central, but tends to be influenced by marketing objectives.

While one logic of the museum as a communication system lies in mainly economic aims, other establishments have nevertheless developed a communicative logic based on the social role of the museum, with the objectives of education and visitor interaction. The question of the social role's incorporation has already been extensively addressed (2.3.); here, it is also important to highlight the changes that have occurred in terms of visitor interaction. For a long time, the museum communication system proved chiefly unidirectional, with curators and researchers communicating the results of their research through publications or exhibitions. The construction of knowledge in this context seemed reserved for the scientific world, to which museums belonged. The logic of the new museology, in contrast, rooted in the participation and accompaniment of players, based itself in a more directly interactive and participative approach, co-producer of exhibitions. A similar principle once again shifted to the forefront of the agenda with the development of social networks and the web 2.0 logic, with amateurs unrecognised by the scientific community positioning themselves as producers of knowledge, at least in popularised or abridged form, as seen in the example of the encyclopaedia Wikipedia<sup>64</sup>. A similar logic is found in many museums, either through social networks and online interactive possibilities – notably including Second Life, as used by the San José Tech Museum – or by collectively working as a network connecting professionals and amateurs, particularly in the domain of natural sciences (inventorying animal or plant species, stars, etc.)<sup>65</sup>.

The principle of the participative museum, evoked as one potential trend in the museum world<sup>66</sup>, represents a drastic change from a certain conception of the museum. Certainly, a large number of community museums rooted in volunteer initiative and a logic of giving have been functioning in this way for decades. In contrast, national museums or long-established museums, organised in professional manner and subsidised or run by public authorities, may view this approach as challenging their current functioning, and in particular, the implicit hierarchies (expert professionals and ignorant visitors) that prevail within the institution. Information sharing and expertise are indeed what lie at the heart of these changes, which

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<sup>63</sup> DAVALLON J., « Le musée est-il un média ? » in *Public & Musées*, 2, December 1992, pp. 99-123.

<sup>64</sup> ANDERSON C., *Free! Entrez dans l'économie du gratuit*, Paris, Pearson, 2009; FLICHY P., *Le sacre de l'amateur*, Paris, Seuil, 2010.

<sup>65</sup> SIMON Nina, *The participatory museum*, Museum 2.0, 2010.

<sup>66</sup> MENSCH P & L. VAN, *New Trends in Museology*, Celsje, Museum of Recent History, 2011.

may be painful for many professionals and decision makers. However, this participative logic is perfectly adapted to the principles highlighted for the development of creativity, as witnessed in the projects of creative cities and regions, and of the creative economy (2.2.1.).

### 3. Protection and promotion measures in place

The concept of the protection and promotion of museums and collections addressed in Decision 190/EX 11 refers to previously formulated concepts of protection, as defined in the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The dual concept of protection and promotion more explicitly refers to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. As specified previously (1.4.), protection and promotion here refer to the adoption of measures intended for the preservation, safeguarding and enhancement of collection and museums, as well as their dissemination and access.

A number of measures have been taken in favour of these objectives. It is essential to present them and to evaluate their results from a museum perspective.

#### 3.1. International measures (role of UNESCO)

Since its creation, UNESCO has developed a number of instruments in the form of conventions and recommendations connected to museum activity. A list of these was referred to and extensively discussed during the Experts Meeting held in Rio in July 2012, containing 15 instruments.

- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (C 1954), and 1954 and 1999 Protocols
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (C 1970)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (C 1972)
- UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (C 1995)
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (C 2001)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (C 2003)
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (C 2005)
- Recommendation on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavations (R 1956)
- Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone (R 1960)
- Recommendation on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of ownership of Cultural Property (R 1964)
- Recommendation concerning the Protection, at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage (R 1972)
- Recommendation concerning the International Exchange of Cultural Property (R 1976)
- Recommendation for the Protection of Movable Cultural Property (R 1978)
- Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (R 1989)
- Blue Shield Seoul Declaration on the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Emergency Situation (D 2011)

To this list may be added two elements from international law pertaining to the question of heritage protection in the event of armed conflict:

- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977: Art. 53 and 85(4)(d).
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998): Art. 8(2)(b)(IX) and 8(2)(e)(IV)

##### 3.1.1. Measures in favour of protection vs measures in favour of promotion

Nearly all of the instruments prepared by UNESCO pertain to measures for the protection of cultural objects, and by extension, of museums and heritage collections. This series of instruments is indeed the most widespread within the museum sector. The Convention of

1954, and especially those of 1970 and 1995 (UNIDROIT), are of particular weight in the museum context, as their application (following ratification by the country) incurs restrictive choices in terms of procedures for the acquisition of objects for museum collections (the *ICOM Code of Ethics* notably makes explicit reference to this).

Conventions and Recommendations	Protection measures for museums	Promotion measures for museums
C 1954, C 1970, C 1995, C 2001, R 1956, R 1964, R 1976, R 1978, D 2011	+++	-
R 1960	-	+++
C 1972, C 2003, R 1972, R 1989	+	+
C 2005	+	+

In contrast, the instruments developed in favour of the promotion of museums and heritage collections are much less extensive. Only one recommendation, the 1960 Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone, clearly addresses the subject of museum accessibility and promotion in favour of the public. In relatively explicit fashion, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions addresses this dual context, but its scope remains extremely general for the museum sector. Similarly, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage evokes in general fashion all of the structures that need to be implemented in order to ensure the development of this heritage, but these concepts first and foremost relate to immovable heritage. The 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage also addresses actions for protection as well as promotion, via the term safeguarding. Actions related to inventories, research (scientific studies), education and awareness building are clearly specified as elements of an overarching whole. Here again, in the same way as world cultural and natural heritage, intangible heritage cannot be understood without the help of interpretation centres and museums housing tangible testimonies to these practices. However, undeniably once again, the principle of safeguarding is associated with that of protection, taking precedence over promotion, while intangible heritage does not represent the entirety of collections, despite being an important element in the museum context.

### 3.1.2. The distribution of measures according to museum functions and flows

The four groups formed by the distribution of measures undertaken by UNESCO may also be analysed in the light of museum functions. The emphasis is essentially placed on preservation measures, encompassing acquisition, collections management, security and conservation. The research function of museums is largely absent, and that of communication (education, exhibitions, receiving publics) only slightly less so. However, the function of museum management is only addressed very superficially, if at all, in the 1972 and 2003 Conventions for example, in referring to the establishment by public authorities of bodies to ensure the protection of cultural objects. Doubtlessly, these latter activities are less in need of conventions than of the means necessary to be launched, which explains why such tools have yet to really be implemented. However, in removing these issues, existing instruments run the risk of propagating only a partial view of the museum, imperfectly corresponding to reality.

Conventions and Recommendations	Preservation (acquisition, collections management, security, conservation)	Research	Communication (exhibition, publications, education, mediation)

C 1954, C 1970, C 1995, C 2001, R 1956, R 1964, R 1976, R 1978, D 2011	+++	-	-
R 1960	-	-	+++
C 1972, C 2003, R 1972, R 1989	+	+	+
C 2005	+	-	+

In terms of flows, however, it is noteworthy that the majority of instruments implemented largely focus on the flows of objects or collections. This characteristic is undeniably important for the context of tangible heritage.

Conventions and Recommendations	Objects	Capital	Staff	Information	Publics
C 1954, C 1970, C 1995, C 2001, R 1956, R 1964, R 1976, R 1978, D 2011	+++	-	-	-	-
R 1960	-	-	-	-	+++
C 1972, C 2003, R 1972, R 1989	+++	+	+	+	-
C 2005	+	+	+	+	+

In contrast, issues of funding, staff training, information circulation and the reception of publics are only very slightly, if at all, addressed. Based on the corpus of instruments prepared by UNESCO, a view of the museum focused on the protection of collections thus emerges – a fundamental task if ever there were one, albeit somewhat obsolete, given current evolutions. While issues of funding or the circulation of capital may understandably be treated on a different, largely national level or by other international authorities, it is nevertheless curious that the economic role of the museum, and more globally speaking, its function as a motor of development (economic and social), is not addressed. The virtual absence of any mention of issues pertaining to museum staff training and the circulation of information, in the age of the Internet and the global circulation of ideas, as well as ever-increasing staff mobility, appears paradoxical, to say the least. It is even more surprising to remark that apart from a 1960 recommendation, the public seems practically absent from discussions on the role of the museum. Extremely current questions of the economic and social role of the museum are thus absent from the instruments related to museum functioning, once again presenting a portrait of the institution somewhat detached from contemporary issues. In contrast, the 2005 Convention represents a general framework which, while only superficially addressing the context of museums, thoroughly evokes the flows characterising the museum sector's functioning.

### 3.2. International cooperation at the level of States

Beyond multilateral cooperation through UNESCO, it is extremely difficult to gain perspective on all of the actions for international cooperation undertaken by States themselves, be it bilateral or multilateral cooperation. There is no existing observatory that would allow for an inventory of exchanges in terms of staff, financial aid or information, on this level. The overview presented here must not, therefore, be perceived as exhaustive – far from it.

#### 3.2.1. Multilateral cooperation

The European Union has had common cultural policies for many years, aiming to subsidise or provide a framework for new initiatives, notably in terms of heritage<sup>67</sup>. The “culture programme” thus has the objective of promoting the transnational mobility of cultural actors, encouraging the transnational flow of artworks and of cultural and artistic products, as well as encouraging intercultural dialogue. Several dozen projects are thus funded every year, in particular, a number of temporary networks aiming to bring together initiatives in several E.U. countries. For example, Lending for Europe/Collections Mobility, a programme striving to remove legal obstacles, developing both practical and theoretical tools for collections mobility, recently received funding allowing it to mobilise museum players from ten or so European countries in order to develop practical tools (loan and risk coverage documents, theoretical handbooks, training programmes)<sup>68</sup>. Along the same lines, the **NEMO** Network of European Museum Organisations<sup>69</sup> is supported by the E.U. in order to connect national museum associations. Educational networks such as **LEM**, The Learning Museum<sup>70</sup>, are also subsidised by the E.U. as part of the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig. Globally, the Council has also adopted measures aiming to prevent the trafficking of cultural objects<sup>71</sup>.

Hispanophone and Lusophone countries recently developed the **Ibermuseos** network<sup>72</sup>, piloted by IBRAM (Brazilian Institute of Museums) in order to facilitate exchanges between museums. Created in 2007 following the Declaration of Salvador de Bahia, the network’s 22 countries have the collective ambition of promoting the institutionalisation of national museum-promoting policies, developing good practices in terms of museum education, creating an Ibero-American museum observatory, and in overarching fashion, promoting a more specifically Ibero-American view of museology as was notably presented in the 1972 Declaration of Santiago de Chile.

In more specific fashion, Venezuela is promoting the **Virtual Museum of Latin America and the Caribbean**, a digital platform encompassing tens of thousands of cultural objects placed online by several of the continent’s countries<sup>73</sup>.

A somewhat similar project rooted in cultural diversity, respect for an ethical code such as ICOM’s, the promotion of standards of excellence and the exchange of information has been implemented by **ASEMUS**, the Asia-Europe museum Network<sup>74</sup>. This network, established in 2000 and notably supported by the European Union and the Asia-Europe Foundation, gathers museums from over 45 countries, with a particular focus on collections of Asian origin and the promotion of information exchange, professional encounters and good practices.

Meanwhile, the **Commonwealth Association of Museums**<sup>75</sup>, established in 1974, brings together museums from the Anglophone world, formerly united around the British crown, following the Museums Association’s creation in 1889. A number of meetings are held in the organisation’s various associated countries, in order to connect museums and promote standards of excellence, the professionalisation of museums and their staff, information exchange and cooperation.

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<sup>67</sup> [http://europa.eu/pol/cult/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/pol/cult/index_en.htm)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.lending-for-europe.eu/index.php?id=157>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.ne-mo.org/index.php?id=93>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.lemproject.eu/the-project>

<sup>71</sup> Council Directive 93/7/EEC on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State is a measure in support of internal market policy, which was adopted when internal frontiers were abolished on 1 January 1993; Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 on the export of cultural goods; *Council conclusions on preventing and combating crime against cultural goods*, 13 December 2011, Available online: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/cultural-heritage\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/cultural-heritage_en.htm)

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.bermuseos.org/bermuseos-program-2/>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.museovirtualdeamericalatinayelcaribe.org/>

<sup>74</sup> <http://asemus.museum/>

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/about/history\\_of\\_cam.html](http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/about/history_of_cam.html)

On a smaller scale, the **Baltic museology school**<sup>76</sup> was established in order to promote exchanges and training for professionals from the three Baltic countries.

### 3.2.2. Bilateral cooperation

The concept of soft power has been greatly emphasised in recent years, seeking to present a country's culture as a particularly influential factor in the game of diplomatic relations. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many countries have developed networks of study and cultural centres aiming to promote a certain image of their culture abroad. This logic developed substantially in the aftermath of the decolonisation movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in order to perpetuate cooperative ties between the former colonising countries and their ex-colonies on a different basis. The branches of the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the French Research Institutes Abroad and the Alliance Française, the Cervantès Institute and more recently, the Confucius Institute, demonstrate the importance attached by numerous countries to the promotion of their culture – and through this, of a certain worldview.

Generally speaking, a number of countries, including Belgium, Spain, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Portugal, have preserved strong ties with their former colonies, cooperating on a number of heritage projects through expertise missions, the construction of museums, staff training<sup>77</sup> and more. These missions are often the fruit of joint efforts by ministries of foreign affairs or foreign relations (in the case of regional policies) and museum professionals (cf. 3.3.4.).

The bilateral exchange initiative undertaken by Sweden, whose colonial history is more limited, must be highlighted. The **SAMP** (Swedish African Museum Project) was launched in 1989, twinning Swedish museums with museums in ten or so African countries. A number of exchanges between partner museums were organised in this way, aiming to facilitate training, knowledge exchange and common projects. This initiative, which is on-going, has spread to other countries via the **ALAS** (Asia-Latin America-Africa-Sweden) museum network, launched in 2001 and encompassing some twenty museums<sup>78</sup>. Sweden also helped establish the **Balkan Museum Network**<sup>79</sup> in 2006, in order to promote the same logic of information and staff exchange. This project received the assistance of the Swedish organisation Cultural Heritage without Borders, which is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

## 3.3. International cooperation between professionals

Beyond agreements between States, relations are strongest at the level of professionals themselves. In this respect, light will be shed on the sector's organisation into five levels: ICOM; other international associations and international activity undertaken by national associations; the work of foundations; relations developed by museums themselves; and finally, the work of museum friends.

### 3.3.1. The International Council of Museums (ICOM)

The International Council of Museums was created in 1946, coming in the wake of the International Museums Office, established twenty years earlier at the initiative of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. From the start, ties between ICOM and

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<sup>76</sup> <http://www.bms.edu.lv/>

<sup>77</sup> For the example of France, see LANE P., *Présence française dans le monde. L'action culturelle et scientifique*, Paris, La documentation française, 2011; HAIZE D., *L'action culturelle et de coopération de la France à l'étranger: un réseau, des hommes*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.samp.org/samp.html>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.bmuseums.net/>

UNESCO were strong, with ICOM headquarters housed by UNESCO (although part of the office was recently moved elsewhere, still in Paris). The relationship between the two institutions is stable and fruitful through today, based on a number of partnerships and joint actions, notably in terms of education, training for museum professions, the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and heritage protection in emergency situations. ICOM also holds a consultative status within the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It is nevertheless a recognised public interest organisation made up of professionals from around the globe.

Today, ICOM is the main organisation of museum professionals worldwide, and the only one with a truly global scope. With nearly 30,000 members hailing from 137 different countries, it encompasses 117 national committees and 31 international committees, representing all different types of museums (art, history, city, etc.) and museum functions (conservation, education, documentation, marketing, management, training, museology, etc.)<sup>80</sup>. ICOM works in three official languages (English, French and Spanish). It also encompasses five regional alliances (Arab Countries, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean, South East Europe), and 18 affiliated organisations which do not have the status of international committee (notably the Commonwealth Association of Museums, the International Movement for a New Museology, the International Council of African Museums, etc.).

Among its responsibilities, ICOM is a founding member of the **Blue Shield** alongside the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Council of Archives (ICA) and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA); the ICOM Director General has presided over this body since 2009. In the manner of the Red Cross, the Blue Shield works for the protection of cultural heritage in countries stricken by war or natural disasters<sup>81</sup>. On an international level, the Blue Shield is made up of the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) – recognised in the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention, encompassing the aforementioned heritage organisations, and with the power to create and recognise national Blue Shield committees – and the Association of National Committees of the Blue Cross, which leads the national committees.

The activities of ICOM's 31 international committees are multifold; nevertheless, most of them aim to bring professionals together and create an international network, in order to share information and provide a common theoretical framework. One hundred or so meetings and international conventions and one general assembly are thus held every year within the network, while every three years, a general conference brings together ICOM members from around the globe.

Among the activities coordinated by ICOM, the **ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums**, which has been translated into some thirty languages, represents one of the most widespread documents in the field of international standards for museum functioning. All themes related to the museum field's activity are addressed:

1. Official statutes and modes of recognition, means necessary to ensure their functioning
2. Modes of acquisition, protection, documentation and disposal of collections
3. Modes of research and notably of collecting testimonies
4. The role of museums in terms of the public: presentations, exhibitions, publications, etc.
5. Functions in terms of services liable to generate financial resources
6. Cooperative efforts with the communities from which the collections come
7. Respect for national and international legislation
8. Rules of loyalty, confidentiality, management of conflicts of interest, cooperation and consultation within the profession

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<sup>80</sup> <http://icom.museum/>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.ancbs.org/>

Other documents, such as **Key Concepts of Museology**, as well as a number of online publications, represent a vital source of information for the field. Among its main activities, ICOM developed the Museums Emergency Programme (MEP) in 2003, and created the Disaster Relief Task Force (DRTF) in 2005, also striving for the protection of heritage via monitoring and the observation of emergency situations. ICOM's international public service missions also include its participation in the struggle against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects via actions for awareness building, on-going cooperation with various national institutions and the concerned international organisations (INTERPOL, WTO, UNESCO and UNIDROIT), training and the publication of **Red Lists** covering categories of cultural objects in danger or looted and liable to surface on the market. ICOM is to this effect behind the creation of an international observatory on the illicit trafficking of cultural objects, to be established in early 2013.

### 3.3.2. International and national associations

Other international centres or international associations play an essential role for museums. The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (**ICCROM**), founded in 1956 in the wake of a proposal submitted during the UNESCO General Conference, is headquartered in Rome. The scope of this intergovernmental organisation (more than 130 Member States) is more restricted than that of ICOM, and focuses on questions of protection. In this capacity, ICCROM holds numerous training sessions and expert meetings, runs a documentation centre and organises numerous joint actions in its fields of expertise on behalf of UNESCO.

Science centres, while recognised as museums by ICOM for many years, also have their own international organisation, the **Association of Science and Technology Centres**<sup>82</sup> (ASTC), which is also broken down into regional committees: the Asia Pacific Network of Science and Technology Centres (ASPAC)<sup>83</sup> and the European Network of Science Centres and Museums (ECSITE)<sup>84</sup>. ASTC's activities are identical to ICOM's, on a smaller scale.

Also of note is the **Visitor Studies Association** (VSA), largely American but with an international vocation (there is also a Visitor Studies Group in Great Britain), bringing together specialists in visitor studies<sup>85</sup>. While mainly connected to museums, the association also operates in other contexts. Nevertheless, it participates in an essential field – the study of visitors – which is not often directly treated by museums, apart from certain major establishments possessing the relevant resources (2.4.2.).

There are a number of other museum associations with an international vocation, which are most frequently organised according to more specific interests. Without any claim to exhaustivity, these notably include the **International Network of Museums for Peace**<sup>86</sup>; the **Inclusive Museum** platform, devoted to the organisation and promotion of the principle of social inclusion; **MUSCON**<sup>87</sup>, which aims to bring together and provide information on available touring exhibitions; the French Regional American Museum Exchange<sup>88</sup> (**FRAME**), devoted to the organisation of temporary exhibitions between France and North America, etc.

Some very large museum associations have also developed specific international policies. The **American Alliance of Museums** (AAM), for example, has developed an exchange programme with foreign professionals, Museum Connect, in partnership with the U.S.

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<sup>82</sup> <http://www.astc.org/profdev/networks.htm>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.aspacnet.org/>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.ecsite.eu/>

<sup>85</sup> <http://visitorstudies.org/about>

<sup>86</sup> <http://inmp.net/index.php/about-us>

<sup>87</sup> <http://muscon.org/>

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.framemuseums.org/>

Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The American association, some 15,000 members strong, is probably the largest national association in the west, with an extensive programme of activities, training and publications. It has notably developed a *Code of Ethics* as well as other reference publications (including *Excellence and Equity*), which are available in Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin<sup>89</sup>.

### 3.3.3. Foundations

Foundations with the specific objective of museum sector development are few and far between. They include the **J. Paul Getty Trust**, which plays an essential role in the fields of research (Getty Research Institute), cultural heritage preservation (Getty Conservation Institute) – albeit mainly artistic – and the development of instruments, particularly documentation databases, as well as a major programme of grants and fellowships (Getty Foundation)<sup>90</sup>. Among the numerous instruments developed in the field of heritage protection, the establishment of the Object ID Standard, intended to provide a minimal international standard for the documentation of objects, was promoted by ICOM (which oversees rights to use of the standard on an international scale) and UNESCO<sup>91</sup>.

In more restricted fashion, the **Instituto Latinoamericano de Museos y Parques** (ILAM) was established in 1997 in Costa Rica, with the aim of providing a documentation centre on Latin American museums<sup>92</sup>.

### 3.3.4. Museums

The largest museums in the western world, and in particular, most of the signatories of the *Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums*<sup>93</sup>, have developed numerous bilateral partnerships with the countries from which their collections hail (with or without the support of the ministries of foreign affairs in their respective countries). Such collaborations are particularly prevalent for ethnographic and archaeological collections. The **Musée du quai Branly**<sup>94</sup> (Paris) and **Africa Museum in Tervuren**<sup>95</sup> (Brussels), for example, have developed programmes for cooperation, training and expertise with the countries represented in their collections.

The largest universal museums, such as the **Louvre**<sup>96</sup>, the **Metropolitan Museum**<sup>97</sup> and the **British Museum**<sup>98</sup>, also have international policies. These are partially implemented via temporary exhibitions touring abroad, organised through partnerships aiming for reciprocal exhibition exchanges, scientific exchanges and exchanges of more symbolic and commercial nature. The exchange or organisation of exhibitions abroad, like collections loans, represents just one facet of these international policies, which are regularly carried out through on-going scientific presence on excavation campaigns, conservation and expertise operations in a number of countries. Grant and training programmes are often also part of these international proposals.

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/international>

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.getty.edu/foundation/funding/residential/>

<sup>91</sup> <http://archives.icom.museum/object-id/about.html>

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.ilam.org/>

<sup>93</sup> Declaration signed in 2002, see *ICOM News*, 1, 2004, p. 4, Available online:

[http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/ICOM\\_News/2004-1/ENG/p4\\_2004-1.pdf](http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/ICOM_News/2004-1/ENG/p4_2004-1.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.quaibrantly.fr/uploads/tx\\_gayafeespacepresse/MQB\\_\\_DP\\_LA\\_COOPERATION\\_INTERNATIONALE\\_2013.pdf](http://www.quaibrantly.fr/uploads/tx_gayafeespacepresse/MQB__DP_LA_COOPERATION_INTERNATIONALE_2013.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> [http://www.africamuseum.be/about-us/cooperation/index\\_html?set\\_language=en&cl=en](http://www.africamuseum.be/about-us/cooperation/index_html?set_language=en&cl=en)

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.louvre.fr/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/fichiers/pdf/louvre-rapport-d039activites-2011.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.metmuseum.org/met-around-the-world/>

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/ITP2011\\_report.pdf](http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/ITP2011_report.pdf)

In this same context, the **Smithsonian Museum** in Washington, with its extensive network of museums, plays a major role on an international level, particularly in the field of heritage safeguarding. It notably developed an important cultural recovery project in Haiti<sup>99</sup>.

This type of agreement between large museums and partner museums only represents one facet of general relations that an establishment may build, most often in informal fashion (and between colleagues). The concept of patronage, previously discussed with the example of African and Swedish museums (SAMP and ALAS), represents a remarkable example of well-framed bilateral cooperation. It would be interesting to encourage the development of such partnership and patronage projects in more systematic fashion.

Also of relevance are the more directly lucrative operations for the opening of branches or trademark transfer undertaken by some museums in recent years. The Guggenheim Museum is often presented as a reference in this respect, while the project for the Louvre Abu Dhabi is another example of this logic, as is the Nagoya branch of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

### 3.3.5. **Museum friends**

While they are not professional organisations, by nature, museum friends associations play an essential role in providing support – notably funding – for the establishments with which they work. The **World Federation of Friends of Museums**<sup>100</sup> (WFFM) unites these different associations, also structured on a national level. Regular meetings are held, using a similar logic to organise the exchange of information and good practices for friends' societies, dialogue on the role that they may play and financial issues. Some associations of extremely large establishments such as the Louvre have also developed international associations like the **American Friends of the Louvre**<sup>101</sup>, for example, in order to collect donations on the other side of the Atlantic.

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<sup>99</sup> <http://haiti.si.edu/>

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.museumfriends.com/>

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.aflouvre.org/>

## 4. Deciding on new instruments to implement

The following analysis covers the instruments already implemented by UNESCO and investigates the possibility of considering new, potentially standard-setting instruments for the protection and promotion of museums and heritage collections. It examines arguments for and against these instruments, their potential scope and the added value that they may offer on an international level.

The question of the most appropriate type of instrument – convention or recommendation – has been extensively treated in the analysis of the legal aspects of this question undertaken by Patrick O’Keefe. We adhere to his point of view in support of the implementation of a recommendation.

### 4.1. General analysis of current instruments

We may attempt to summarise this set of instruments by examining their field of intervention. Globally, as has already been highlighted, the instruments (conventions and recommendations) implemented by UNESCO essentially entail measures for protection (only one recommendation covers the reception of publics and truly targets communication). These positions are complemented by the action of three international organisations: ICOM, ICCROM and the Blue Shield. A number of bilateral agreements or agreements reciprocally connecting certain museums specifically focus on these issues, particularly in terms of training<sup>102</sup>.

We might infer that international professional organisations such as ICOM, alongside museums themselves, States (via bilateral or multilateral agreements) and national and international professional associations, have developed international actions for research and communication in order to compensate for UNESCO’s lack of action focused on these other functions.

Preservation (acquisition, collections management, security, conservation)	Research	Communication (exhibition, publications, education)
UNESCO ICOM ICCROM Blue Shield Bilateral Museums	ICOM ICCROM Bilateral Museums Getty ILAM	ICOM Bilateral Museums Iberoamericanos AAM NEMO LEM SAMP ASTC ASEMUS FRAME Getty

<sup>102</sup> In this chart, we have attempted to present a summarised view, necessarily limited in terms of implemented actions. Thus, UNESCO action could figure in all three sections, but is mainly present in terms of preservation. Likewise, the action of the American Alliance of Museums could be presented in all three sections, but is mentioned because of its international actions, which largely encompass communication and training. AAM is the only national association cited, due to its importance in terms of size.

According to another interpretation of these differences, research and communication actions seem better organised on a national decision-making level: States could prefer to act bilaterally in the domain of research and communication; it may prove difficult to develop standard attributes for such forms of cooperation.

Whatever the case, the set of international agreements addresses all museum functions. Nevertheless, most of the restrictive agreements for States (conventions, European legislation, etc.) only address questions of protection, leaving promotion aside. This theoretical inquiry warrants exploration through the analysis of the means necessary for museum functioning, represented by the five “flows” discussed previously – and which, in the age of globalisation, must increasingly be analysed on a global scale.

Objects	Capital	Staff	Information	Publics
UNESCO ICOM ICCROM Blue Shield Bilateral FRAME Museums	ICOM Bilateral WFFM	ICOM ICCROM Bilateral Ibermuseos AAM NEMO LEM SAMP ALAS ASTC ASEMUS Museums Getty	ICOM ICCROM Bilateral Ibermuseos AAM NEMO SAMP ASTC ASEMUS Museums Getty	(UNESCO) ICOM LEM VSA Inclusive M. WFFM

Globally, as has been emphasised, UNESCO provisions in favour of museums essentially focus on objects and their protection rather than the promotion of museums, questions of staff training and circulation, information, capital or publics. Most of the measures considered for the sector – largely non-restrictive – focus on information exchange and staff training (via encounters or staff hosting).

Two types of flows connected to museum functioning in particular are all but absent from both international agreements and intersectoral cooperation: that of museum financing – which is nevertheless addressed by certain ICOM committees such as INTERCOM, the committee on management, and may be subject to bilateral agreements or even funding agreements, in the case of friends’ societies (FRAME, American Friends of the Louvre); and that of publics, subject of just one recommendation by UNESCO, alongside measures linked to lifelong learning as part of the Grundtvig programme. ICOM addresses and deals with relations with the public via certain international committees (notably CECA, its education committee, and MPR, its marketing and public relations committee), but a vast amount of research is undertaken by outside associations (Visitor Studies Association, Visitor Studies Group). There is only one international “visitors” association, which is that of Friends of Museums.

Thus, it may provisionally be concluded that (1) all museum functions and the flows necessary for their functioning are subject to international measures; however, apart from those promoted by UNESCO or committed to by States in the framework of bilateral relations, very few are restrictive, besides those concerning the flows of objects or collections (looting, pillaging, trafficking, acquisitions). (2) The circulation of information and measures for staff exchange and training are essentially subject to agreements between professionals themselves or with museums and foundations, or bilateral agreements. (3) Questions of flows of capital necessary for the financing of museums and questions pertaining to the

circulation or reception of publics are relatively absent. (4) This regrettable absence is nevertheless explained by the difficulty of developing restrictive standard-setting instruments, which are directly contingent upon the means (financial and human) to be applied, with an international agreement on these issues proving challenging. (5) Lastly, the portrait of the museum as painted by UNESCO's international texts only provides an extremely biased and somewhat obsolete view of this institution; this portrait could be revised in the light of multiple other international agreements, and nevertheless warrants clarification based on the new roles the museum has taken on, and more particularly, in the light of the 2005 Convention.

The added value of a standard-setting instrument introduced by UNESCO essentially lies in its international character. This aspect could be important on two levels: (1) given restrictive powers, it allows for the establishment of rules common to all parties; (2) the international character of the jurisdiction provides it with extensive visibility.

The risks of a standard-setting instrument, in contrast, lie in its actual application: for the added value to be verified, the instrument must be adopted (ratified) by the largest number of States possible and for this to occur, each one must find an advantage in its application. The motivations for adopting a tool can furthermore evolve over the years. As an illustration, it is interesting to once again evoke the drastically different economic context of the 1970s, which witnessed the emergence of two of the most important heritage-related conventions (1970 and 1972). Globally, while the reasons dictating the drafting of the 1970 Convention on the Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property may be similarly presented today, current tourism issues relating to the classification of a site were not the driving force behind the negotiations for the 1972 Convention. Questions linked to the economic development of a site due to its potential as a tourist attraction (2.2.1.) greatly influenced the implementation of the 1972 Convention, and more recently, the 2003 Convention. In contrast, it is surprising to note that the 1960 Recommendation on the reception of publics is referred to so little (it is not mentioned in the working document drafted by IBRAM for the Rio meeting in July 2012, for example).

## **4.2. General museum framework**

While there is no question as to the quality of instruments prepared by UNESCO and related to museums, and many of them – particularly the 1954, 1970, 1972, UNIDROIT, 2003 and 2005 Conventions – represent elements regularly referred to in the museum world, these tools nevertheless only cover a limited area of the museum system's functioning, and taken as a whole, contribute to providing a relatively obsolete view of the institution – largely focused on its collections. However, it is important to note that these conventions were not specifically drafted with a view to museums, but in order to respond to particular needs directly or indirectly impacting museums, notably in the field of illicit trafficking and heritage preservation.

The following issues are successively addressed here: the various roles that museums can play within society and the changes that have occurred in recent years; quality standards and elements for comparison between museums, which have also substantially evolved in recent years; and lastly, the method of functioning of museums, according to the ethical framework implemented.

### **4.2.1. Museums and/or collections, museum or heritage collections?**

The title of Decision 190 EX/11 focuses on the protection and promotion of museums and collections. Should the term collection be retained, a qualifying adjective would allow this to be better defined; the terms museum collections and heritage collections have thus been suggested (1.2.).

The point of associating the concepts of heritage collection or museum collection may nevertheless be called into question. Three interpretations are possible. (1) It is possible that the collections belong to the museums themselves, charged with protecting and promoting them. In this case, the promotion and protection of the museum entails that of the collections. The instrument's title may then refer to "The protection and promotion of museums and museum collections". However, this possibility seems somewhat redundant and of questionable added value. (2) Heritage collections may be presented as different from museums, that is to say, not incorporating the totality of museum functions – the case, for example, for certain collections not belonging to museums or not inventoried by museums, but belonging to other institutions (churches, hospitals) or individuals. In this context, the instrument's title may be "The protection and promotion of museums and heritage collections". It is noteworthy that preliminary studies conducted for the Experts Meeting held in Rio (July 2012), as well as the conclusions and recommendations adopted, make only slight mention of the question of heritage collections. The relevance of addressing such collections is thus questionable, particularly for the instrument's title. Furthermore, an emphasis on collections, to the detriment of the more overarching role of museums, strengthens the traditional view of the institution, focused on collections rather than its social and economic role.

In this context, it may not be advisable to directly incorporate the concept of heritage collection into the instrument's title, and to instead only conserve that of museum. A specific paragraph could nevertheless clarify that the targeted protection measures also apply to heritage collections – those collections which are not inventoried or managed by museums (3). As previously discussed (1.2.), the current title of the recommendation could be interpreted based on the fact that, in the eyes of some, museums without collections exist. To my mind, this proposal should be rejected, as the concept of museum functions based on the concept of collection (tangible or intangible) – even in its most contemporary social transformations and without tangible collections.

#### **4.2.2. The museum's various roles**

The global context for museums has transformed substantially in recent decades, shifting from object-centred museology to other ways of considering the museum and the roles that it may assume within society. While the heritage role of the museum is not questioned, although the concept of heritage has radically evolved and may continue to do so in the years to come, its social as well as economic role are continually highlighted.

A new instrument should contribute to the formulation of a contemporary vision of the museum institution. This vision is rooted in all of the aforementioned roles: a role in heritage protection and promotion within society, and more globally, a social role as well as a role in economic development. These latter two roles are partially contradictory, at times rooted in the targeting of different publics: while the museum's social role is based on its ties with the community, the role of economic development strives for national or international tourism. While theoretically, these two roles are not incompatible (and have always existed), the concrete implementation of these functions is not without risk, and the promotion of a project's economic potential is liable to harm its social potential, leading to a reversal in the priorities of the museum in favour of the search for financial means. The harmonious development of these two roles thus demands rigorous attention from all involved in the project: museum professionals, community members and public authorities – which implies a strict ethical framework.

The drafting of the 2005 Convention on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity strongly pertains to this theoretical view, which is rooted in the wider context of commercial trade development in the framework of the WTO, and the exceptions to these agreements that may be subject to specific support measures by public authorities. In this respect,

museums appear to be one of the most effective instruments for the protection and promotion of cultural diversity: via their collections and increasingly, the development of society or civilisation museums, their role encompasses the study, preservation and enhancement of the many aspects of society through their tangible and intangible testimonies. The museum's position as an instrument allowing for the promotion of the 2005 Convention's objectives warrants emphasis.

It is nevertheless important to recall that positions in favour of museum functioning vary from one part of the world to the next. The commercial development of museums (2.1.2.), sparked off following the substantial transformations in economic policies of the 1970s, has not spread to all countries equally, leading to highly divergent positions on the issue of museum funding (4.4.2.).

#### **4.2.3. Establishing standards or comparative analysis**

The contemporary view of museums encompasses both these various roles and the ways in which they are performed. Before going on to more specifically clarify museum functions and flows (4.3. and 4.4.), it is important to highlight the importance of the establishment of quality or excellence standards for museum organisation, as displayed by all bodies of professionals. These quality standards have greatly evolved in recent years. It is not UNESCO's role to establish or define them within a convention, as by definition, they evolve; but it could be pertinent to define a framework of comparative elements, highlighting their roles and underlying stakes.

Through the term standards, rather than addressing the specific characteristics linked to museum functioning (hygrometry, display techniques, multimedia, etc.), the focus is on the set of elements facilitating an evaluation of these characteristics based on their specific context. But, first and foremost, it is necessary to evoke the risk of standardisation that the establishment of standards too quickly adopted on an international scale could entail. Certainly, standards for preservation may be defined globally: this task has furthermore been undertaken by ICCROM for many years (hygrometric climate, lighting, dust, insects) and widely disseminated by ICOM as well as a number of other institutions, such as the Getty Foundation. However, more generally, cultural diversity appears on the same scale as museums, which have developed and will continue to evolve in different ways around the globe. Their size, orientation and roles may differ; and following the logic of the 2005 Convention, it is vital to take into account and respect this diversity. In this context, the question of standards cannot translate into a simplistic scale allowing to determine an establishment's good or bad functioning; a small rural museum is different from a large urban museum, and it is useless to compare them without taking into account the particular context in which each one developed. In contrast, certain large urban museums in different countries or continents warrant comparison, as do certain small rural establishments. One of the forces of cultural diversity lies precisely in the infinite solutions that cultures have found to respond to certain questions; and in these responses lie the questions of standards – or rather, the merits of comparative analysis.

The search for standards or indicators of excellence, while representing a substantial portion of the work of national and international professional organisations, thus stands to gain in being undertaken on a truly international level, in order to enlarge the pool of solutions that the museum world has found to respond to problems pertaining to heritage preservation, work with communities, economic and social development. UNESCO has been a driving force in this respect. The essential role played in this field by ICCROM, and especially, by ICOM, warrants attention and could be substantially extended in such a way as to present elements for comparison taking into account the diversity of museum approaches.

#### **4.2.4. Ethics and ethical codes**

Museum functioning is rooted in a set of technical methods and increasingly sophisticated (museographical) material – but also, above all, in staff. Just like the authorities working for institutional funding, the staff functions based on a framework of more or less defined moral rules, which may drastically differ from one culture – and one individual – to the next. In this context, ethical codes for professionals have been developed by a number of museum associations.

ICOM's work in this field is exemplary (3.3.1.). Its *Code of Ethics*, available in 21 languages, is the most widespread in the world. The fruit of international cooperative efforts over several years, a thoroughly updated edition of the code was published in 2006. ICOM has a permanent ethics committee whose members are selected by the ICOM president for a three-year term. The committee's missions notably encompass monitoring respect for the code, as well as incorporating changes that may arise within the museum sector by proposing amendments to the code.

The code's scope is truly global: it addresses questions concerning collections of cultural objects (ways of preserving them and presenting them to the public, principles for acquisition, respectful of international treaties, etc.) as well as the way in which professionals should work together, questions of research, and of course, questions of communication with the public and ties with communities – either directly associated with museums or related to the source of the collections. The question of museum funding as well as relations between museums and funding flows is also addressed in depth.

The work of the ethics committee, undertaken on an international level, encompasses not only ethical rules applicable for museums (what should and should not be done), but also aims to discuss and define, in joint fashion, the values serving as a basis for these rules – values which are in all respects identical to those serving as a basis for UNESCO's work.

This document, which thus presents the museum in thorough and coherent fashion, with an international perspective, strongly warrants being presented as a reference tool by UNESCO. This instrument furthermore offers the advantage of not having a restrictive legal scope: it is up to national authorities to decide whether or not to grant certain articles a more regulatory scope via their incorporation into legislation.

### **4.3. Instruments pertaining to museum functions**

More specifically, it has already been emphasised that although UNESCO has played an essential role in initiating an international theoretical framework for museums, and continues to play an important role for the protection and promotion of museums around the world through a number of projects, the instruments implemented have largely focused on certain museum functions. The following paragraphs aim to evoke the functions that have been addressed as well as those that could be clarified with the help of a new instrument.

#### **4.3.1. Preservation**

This function has probably garnered more attention than any other from UNESCO, which played a central role in this respect, with projects (conservation, inventory, collections safeguarding) demonstrating the interest that it continues to display. The function of preservation is first and foremost presented in the texts in terms of security measures aiming to prevent looting and the trafficking of cultural goods. Questions of conservation and inventory are also generally thoroughly addressed. In contrast, the question of the physical management of collections (storage and collections mobility) is perhaps inadequately addressed, given its importance nowadays.

The promotion of good practices in the field of management, like that of the Object ID standard implemented by ICOM and the Getty Foundation (3.3.3.), or the standards developed for collections description by the ICOM International Committee for Documentation (CIDOC), could be subject to specific publicity measures in order to consolidate the international authority of these references.

#### 4.3.2. Research

The question of research has not truly been subject to specific measures through UNESCO's legal instruments. As previously stated, this question is more often the focus of bilateral accords (between countries, foundations and museums). The role of ICOM and its *Code of Ethics* in the field of research has also been recalled, as pertains more specifically to the sharing of information (4.4.4.) and relevant relations with communities which produce some of the cultural objects studied.

When it comes to research, it seems difficult to impose a restrictive framework for the type of research that could or should be conducted. Such policies essentially emerge from the museums themselves, as well as the authorities which fund them. In contrast, with its international position, UNESCO is able to recall the importance of research in museum functioning, and strengthen the framing mechanism implemented by ICOM via its *Code of Ethics*. Museum work continues to be rooted in a specific type of research, based on the study of collections – but also, increasingly, the study of society. Museum collections thus appear in the *Code of Ethics* as holding “primary evidence for establishing and furthering knowledge”. The questions of the accessibility of collections and the information they contain are addressed here, as are the ways of collecting objects on the field, the issue of human remains, cooperation between museums and the sharing of knowledge. These elements warrant being highlighted in the framework of a general instrument on museums.

#### 4.3.3. Communication

The function of communication has only been very partially mentioned in the instruments previously established by UNESCO, as well. While concepts of protection have been subject to descriptions and specific measures, those of promotion have been largely absent (with the exception of the 1960 Recommendation and Article 7 of the 2005 Convention). And yet, it is essentially in terms of communication that museum promotion may be addressed, be this in the form of measures related to the public (4.4.3.) or means related to the presentation and dissemination of collections: preparation of temporary exhibitions, collections exchanges, mediation and publications policies (particularly online).

As seen previously (3.2. and 3.3.), most of the cooperative efforts on an international level, besides those initiated through UNESCO, pertain to these particular questions. In this way, a number of international organisations – ICOM of course, as well as AAM, Ibermuseos, NEMO, LEM, SAMP, ASTC, ASEMUS, FRAME, etc. – are working for the formalisation and funding of museum exchanges in these areas, be they exchanges of exhibitions, collections, information or staff.

It is probably not necessary for UNESCO to stand in for these organisations, whose work is of sufficient quality. In contrast, it seems somewhat surprising and troubling that all of these actions are not indexed somewhere – meaning that there is no panorama of the collective work undertaken by all of these organisations as regards international cooperation on a museum level.

In this respect, UNESCO could play a fundamental role by taking inventory of all of the actions relating to the communication of museum activities, and collecting information relating to all bilateral and multilateral collaborations. In this way, the action – or inaction –

favouring certain types of museums or certain countries whose museum activities are unable to develop optimally could be coordinated in more effective manner. An initial measure for the implementation of such policies could be the creation of an international observatory on museum cooperation. This mission could be overseen by UNESCO and organised by ICOM, which already organises museum documentation on an international level.

#### **4.4. Instruments pertaining to museum flows**

As we have seen, the construction of an international instrument may relate to the context in which museums have developed, their role and their functions, and may also be linked to the inputs and outputs of museum functioning – that is, all of the flows linked with museums' activity. The questions of objects, funding, publics, information and staff (1.5.3.) are successively addressed here.

In this context, an international instrument may play two roles: aiming to improve knowledge – on an international scale – on museum flows; developing a system intended to regulate these flows.

##### **4.4.1. Objects**

The question of object flows is at the heart of most of the UNESCO conventions. These are doubtlessly the most characteristic of museum flows, at least in terms of the relationship with collections. In this context, the 1954, 1970 and UNIDROIT Conventions very clearly seek to provide a frame of reference for this specific flow. It has notably been specified in the ICOM *Code of Ethics*, which tells its members to acquire only those objects not in breach of international legislation.

This set of texts forms a seemingly adequate framework for delineating the flows of objects and preventing trafficking risks (with the exception of matters related to the practical financing of these interventions, cf 4.4.2.). The specific instruments implemented by ICOM (*Red Lists*) as well as the Blue Shield represent coherent measures which do not appear to require strengthening as a priority in the framework of an instrument.

In contrast, the issue of collections management, and in particular that of deaccessioning, could be the subject of a theoretical inquiry by UNESCO, in order to complement other such inquiries applied on a national or international level.

##### **4.4.2. Funding**

The question of museum funding is central to their functioning despite being largely absent from conventions. Certainly, the conventions of 1972 (Article 5), 2003 (Articles 11 and 19) and 2005 (Articles 6 and 18) address the need to provide the means for the security and promotion of heritage and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, apart from the creation of an international fund (2005 Convention, Article 18), the question of funding remains unaddressed in specific manner. The reasons for this are easily understandable, given that the logic of museum funding (1.5.3.) widely differs from one region of the world to the next. In many countries, as stated earlier in this report, the intervention of public authorities is still the rule; it nevertheless seems difficult and debatable to define standards for intervention in this area. The commercial development of museums, sparked off in the wake of the political transformations arising in the 1970s, led to substantial divergences in viewpoints on the matter, making it difficult to reach a consensus.

In contrast, the concept of non-profit organisation, as appears in the ICOM definition of a museum, represents an internationally accepted principle worthy of being highlighted, able to serve as a fundamental standard in museum work. This issue is not always well understood

due to the fact that despite their non-profit status, in recent years, museums have been able to develop lucrative activities (sales of services, shops, etc.). All of these activities are nevertheless carried out with the ultimate goal of serving the museum's overarching objectives – in particular, the objectives of constituting, preserving and transmitting knowledge.

In this context, the principle of the economic role of museums, as increasingly appears in literature, warrants clarification. Without general supervision, the creation of museums for economic purposes alone would not be unimaginable, undermining their nature and bringing their logic closer to that of classic commercial and industrial activities, in contradiction with the museum's non-profit principle.

Beyond this general framework it appears implausible, to say the least, to develop a general mechanism for the funding of museums around the world, given the extent to which international opinions on the matter diverge.

Nevertheless, the creation of specific funds addressing particular needs could be discussed. For example, although instruments dealing with the trafficking of cultural goods exist, the creation of funds devoted to their promotion for the international community and civil society could be explored, as could the creation of a fund for the protection of heritage in emergency situations (natural disasters, conflict or political instability). In a similar perspective, the creation of specific funds for museum research and promotion could be broached, in order to provide aid for museums in difficulty. In any event, the setting up and supplying of these funds could gain in effectiveness via the specification of their fields of application.

The concept of partnerships between different museums around the world, as implemented within the SAMP network, could also be considered in this context of financial or in kind aid from certain establishments to others.

#### **4.4.3. Publics**

The only instrument that has specifically addressed the question of publics is the 1960 Recommendation. It appears necessary to highlight the central role of receiving publics, which could be more generally considered from the angle of the museum's social role and its relations with its community.

This general framework rightly recalls the importance of the museum-public connection, which deserves being emphasised once again. It is striking to consider how little attention is paid to the 1960 Recommendation these days. Perhaps this gradual forgetting is precisely due to its non-restrictive nature, but above all, to the fact that its principles have not been adapted to the evolution of museums.

As the 1960 Recommendation is more than a half-century old, a close re-examination appears necessary in order to clarify the new elements requiring mention, of which there are several: access conditions for physically vulnerable visitors (vision, locomotion), the museum's inclusive role, new conditions offered by Internet, etc. The 1972 Declaration of Santiago de Chile already went well beyond the frame of reference presented in this recommendation (the museum as a space for receiving publics), more broadly presenting the social role that could be played by this institution. In this same perspective, it is necessary to present the current role of the museum – and notably that of community and society museums. Furthermore, the museum's role in relation to tourism should also be clarified, in keeping with this logic, as should the relations between tourists and visitors from the community. It appears extremely difficult to claim to welcome all publics in good conditions, and it is up to each museum to make specific decisions in order to enhance reception for a given type of visitor, be it community members or tourists, or specific categories of the

population (children, schoolchildren, students, adults, non-publics, etc.). A focus on one or the other of these categories could have highly divergent consequences for the museum's role within society. The importance of a theoretical consideration of these questions must be emphasised.

In this respect, knowledge relating to publics has grown substantially over the past half-century. Several thousand studies have been conducted, the results of which generally remain relatively unknown to museums. Bringing together and more effectively disseminating this information could represent an important contribution to decision-making over the types of visitors awaited, the best ways of receiving them, considering the museum based on their needs and working together in joint fashion.

One notable change that has occurred within the museum also encompasses the role of the public, appearing as a player in its own right in the museum field and a factor of creativity for museum work itself.

A new instrument should thus reflect these transformations by presenting the fundamental changes in the role of the museum institution. It could specifically focus on the information necessary to help define the publics to be received, and the importance of the decisions to make in terms of the types of visitors expected, which have decisive consequences for the museum's role and activities. This question could furthermore be resolved by updating the 1960 Recommendation.

#### **4.4.4. Information**

The circulation of information represents a fundamental issue for the development of our societies. In this respect, the museum represents one of the very best spaces for the exchange and dissemination of ideas and knowledge. Presentation as such from the very start led to the creation of the International Museums Office in 1926, in order to ensure its promotion. The circulation of information also represents an essential dimension of museum influence and the dissemination of knowledge. But the fact that it represents a particularly remarkable and open mediation system means that the museum may run the risk of being subjected to commercial lobbying or a political authority. The international circulation of ideas doubtlessly represents the best guarantee for avoiding these risks.

This rule also applies to discourse produced within museums and that reigning inside of them, for objects as well as know-how. A collection of cultural goods is only worth the quality of its associated information – a fundamental aspect of research work, and one that is indispensable to the museum's communication work. But the improvement of museum work is also based on the dissemination of museographical information.

This is the principle implemented within ICOM and ICCROM, as well as all associations working on an international scale (4.1.).

In this context, the added value of an international standard-setting instrument for museums proves considerable, to the extent that this would aim to bring together and disseminate information on an international level. It would nevertheless be detrimental to attempt to substitute the existing framework with another. In contrast, as previously noted (4.1.), a true lack of global information on the existing framework, in the field of international relations, is strongly felt. In this context, beyond measures promoting the improved dissemination of information on collections – notably via Internet and the creation of international databases – the need to develop an international museum observatory is felt, as already exists in a number of countries on a national scale, with the role of bringing together and disseminating this information on a global level. ICOM, which oversees the museum documentation centre, could certainly develop such a tool for the benefit of the entire museum community.

#### 4.4.5. Professionals

All staff working in museums, in volunteer or professional manner, in most cases represent their main strength. This flow is renewed from one generation to the next, and enriched by contacts with professionals from other museums and heritage institutions. Since the creation of the Museums Association in 1889, museum associations have provided an invaluable contribution to the development of the institution (the professionalisation of the sector is linked to the creation of these first associations).

On this level, ICOM's role has proved fundamental for the sector's transformation. New ideas are effectively able to spread via initial and continuing education and encounters (conferences, meetings). These exchanges greatly benefit from digital technologies, making resources available online (handbooks, videos, etc.). Face-to-face encounters nevertheless often allow for more enriching collaborations.

This is the principle at the heart of all international associations, created in bilateral or multilateral fashion, on a sectoral or continental scale (4.1.).

The elaboration of a new instrument by UNESCO should not have the objective of replacing existing initiatives. However, it appears important to better index them in order to ensure their promotion. The added value of an international instrument notably emerges from the widening of the field of vision that it may offer, in this way sketching out a particularly rich panorama of the various flows in the area of professional training, encounters or exchanges. It is also at this level that specific needs in terms of professional training or exchange could be better defined in certain sectors and geographical zones. And once again, this process could be launched with the help of an international observatory, in order to better coordinate efforts to be made in the area of museum staff.

## 5. Conclusions

The museum world has witnessed profound transformations over the past four decades, and in this context, the development of new international instruments aiming for the protection and promotion of museums and collections has been placed on the UNESCO agenda. The present report has sought to address the opportunity, scope, rationale and added value of such an instrument.

Several elements emerge at the end of this study, which must be briefly presented here.

A. The question of definitions is essential when it comes to standard-setting instruments. In this respect, certain terms are clearly specified on an international level or have already been defined in the framework of a convention (as is the case for the definition of museum or the concept of protection), while others are less well defined (as is the case for the concept of collection). Museum and collection are concepts that diverge in both content and scope. The concept of museum is rooted in a set of functions, activities and staff, while that of collection relates more directly to objects, both tangible and intangible. Here, the concept of collection must be clarified in any event – in the heritage or museum context. In order to avoid confusing the two elements, it is suggested that they not be associated in such direct manner in the title of a single international instrument.

B. Since 1954, UNESCO has developed fifteen or so instruments to respond to specific needs either directly or indirectly related to museums (illicit trafficking, heritage preservation). Some of these instruments are major references in the museum field, particularly in terms of collections object acquisition. However, the idea of museum as expressed by these instruments is increasingly out of touch with the current view of museums. In them, the general principle of museum is largely presented based on the concept of movable heritage. Although this principle is still of great importance for the evolution of museums, it only partially corresponds the contemporary view of this institution and its action within society. Certainly, the principal objective of conventions and recommendations is not to exhaustively define museum functions, but their applications greatly contributes to the dissemination of a certain image of this institution. The museum is based upon three central functions: preservation, research and communication. To implement these functions, the museum relies upon staff, collections, financial means and specific know-how (information). It is destined for publics, at the centre of the institution, who, as well as being the end-users, are increasingly presented as players in the museum field.

C. While museum activity has evolved in recent years, the role of museums within society has also undergone extensive transformation notably in terms of their social and economic role. These new roles join the more classic heritage and cultural role at the heart of museum work.

1. The museum today presents itself in sometimes-radical fashion as a particularly dynamic player within society and the groups which form it. As an instrument related to community and identity-based development, it may be presented as the centre of social life, factor for integration or inclusion of certain vulnerable publics. As a forum for exchange and veritable media unto itself, it may address all contemporary issues pertaining to life in society.
2. But while the museum appears as a cultural and social instrument, it may also be presented as a factor for economic development. Over the past thirty or so years, this role has been increasingly highlighted, with the museum appearing as a (non-profit-

making) tool promoting the creativity and attractiveness of a city or enhancing tourism in a region, and more generally participating in the creative economy.

C. For these reasons, it appears relevant to consider a new instrument addressing all of the functions and roles of the museum within society. The interest of an instrument introduced by UNESCO notably lies in the added value of its international nature – provided that it be used and disseminated. It has emerged according to different and at times contrasting points of view expressed on the conception and organisation of museums around the world, that an instrument presented in the form of a recommendation could be better disseminated and adapted than a convention. Furthermore, elements requiring a restrictive framework – notably relating to the mobility of objects – have already been subject to conventions. Certain instruments that have already been implemented by UNESCO, such as the 1960 Recommendation Concerning the most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone, contain certain key elements for the museum mechanism, which must be once again highlighted and simultaneously adapted to the contemporary context. Another fundamental instrument for understanding the museum's role in contemporary society is the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In this respect, the museum appears as one of the most effective institutions for ensuring the protection and promotion of cultural diversity.

D. The main elements currently missing from the measures developed by the UNESCO conventions and recommendations, which could be incorporated into a new instrument, are the following:

1. The various general characteristics at the basis of the museum and how it is woven into society: museums are designed for the public and encompass a certain number of functions (preservation, research and communication), playing a cultural as well as economic and social role. They function based on specific elements or flows (tangible and intangible objects, staff, funding, information).
  - a. Among the points to be more specifically addressed, the social and economic role of the museum warrants being highlighted.
  - b. In terms of functions, it is important to emphasise the importance of the responsible management of collections and the importance of the museum as a site for research, notably on publics and society as a whole.
  - c. The central position of publics (community members and outside tourists alike) calls for better insight into them. The development of studies devoted to them appears to be an important instrument for the evolution of museums (the 1960 Recommendation could be updated to reflect this).
  - d. In terms of cooperation, the development of specific funds for research and promotion actions for museums could be discussed, as could the strengthening of partnerships between museums.
2. Museum functioning is based on rules and ethics which, in the age of globalisation, must be devised on an international level. The theoretical axes in this field, as developed and disseminated by ICOM via its *Code of Ethics*, should be able to find a place at the theoretical heart of this new instrument. This is the case for research and communication as well as funding activities.
3. Lastly, museum functioning goes hand in hand with the enhanced circulation of information and staff, and the development of international exchanges in this area. In this context, an international instrument could greatly contribute to improving these exchanges, through the verification and dissemination of information relating to collaborative projects, theory, good practices and different standards in the field of the organisation and functioning of museums around the world.

- a. These exchanges could allow for the promotion of diversity in museum practices worldwide and, via the dissemination of standards in effect within the museum community, contribute to the harmonious development of the profession.
- b. Practically speaking, it seems vital to reflect on the development of a body able to bring together and disseminate the information advanced by this new instrument. This could take the form of an international observatory overseen by UNESCO and organised by ICOM, in order to bring together and disseminate all information pertaining to international cooperation, particularly those efforts not implemented by UNESCO, ICCROM or ICOM. This observatory could play a major role in terms of summarising and disseminating the information related to the aspects addressed in the present report: the social role, the cultural and economic role, ethical aspects, standards, cooperative actions undertaken by certain governments, national associations and foundations, prospective views of the development of the museum field, etc.