

Explanations of the title, structure and content of the Recommendation

This notice aims to explain in the fullest terms the choices behind the current text. ICOM, which has actively worked on drafting the Recommendation, sought to make the best choices most likely to be supported by all Member States. These choices were made in order not only to make the text as clear and as functional as possible, but also as easy as possible for Member States to apply.

Title of the Recommendation

The original title of the Recommendation, based on which the initial meetings were organised, was: *“Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections.”* The change in the title was proposed for the following reasons:

1. The idea of collections, as originally intended, appeared too broad; the concept could include both private and public collections, as well as collections of anything ranging from matchboxes to archaeological masterpieces. The term “collection” could therefore have either been removed or specified (heritage collection). However, it currently seems difficult for the States to reach a consensus in precisely defining what could constitute a heritage collection beyond those found in museums. It was therefore preferable to include the issue of collections within the functions of the museum.
2. In addition, a recommendation on museums is of fundamental importance. Dedicating a recommendation to another subject, which is indeed related to some extent, and less institutional, could be to the detriment of the main focus of the present recommendation: the museum.
3. However, two basic characteristics of the museum, which are at the heart of the recommendation, have been added to the title. The diversity of museums refers to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, of which museums are a major tool. The educational, social and economic role of museums in society is also a factor that seems important to highlight in the title.

Structure of the text

4. The structure of the text is largely shaped by the structure of other UNESCO recommendations. The Preamble lists all of the principles already found in texts approved by the Member States, on which the Recommendation could be based. This also implies that the Recommendation will not reiterate principles already discussed in other UNESCO normative instruments.

Draft Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums, their Diversity and their Role in Society

5. A large body of texts, conventions, recommendations, and, in some cases, declarations, exists as a basis for the international community. The list we have given is not exhaustive. We did not include regional declarations or those supported by a small number of States.
6. We sought to present:
 - a. On the one hand, the basic functions of the museum, by emphasizing certain elements that appear to be at the heart of museum work, such as carrying out an inventory of collections. A broad consensus (the PRC model) aims to group the functions of the museum into three entities: preservation, research and communication.
 - b. On the other hand, new issues for the museum, of which we present three: its relation with the economy, its social role and technology.
7. We did not include a number of issues which are already the focus of other conventions, including:
 - a. Illicit trafficking, which is amply covered by the conventions and recommendations of 1970, 1956, 1995 and 2001
 - b. The protection of collections and museums in the event of armed conflict, which is the focus of the conventions and protocols of 1954 and 1999.

Definitions

8. The definition given of the museum is that used by ICOM. We stress that it is important to use this definition, which enjoys a broad global consensus. Presenting the museum as a non-profit institution does not mean that it may not conduct activities to fund its own operations, but rather that its end goal is not that of a for-profit enterprise.

Content

9. In order to make this Recommendation as relevant and as effective as possible, we had to focus on a targeted number of actions that would not require excessive means to implement.
10. Some Member States may find most of the issues relatively standard, but it must be stressed that museum infrastructure (inventory, preservation, communication, etc.) and corresponding principles continue to vary widely among countries. It should be recalled that respecting these major principles remains essential to the proper conduct of museum activities.
11. We also had to choose a certain number of principles that could win the approval of the entire community of Member States.
 - a. The economic context in which museums operate. This dimension is important in all countries, and even more so in times of austerity. However, it is very different depending on the size and location of museums.
 - b. The social role of museums and their participative and community functions.
 - c. The development of digital technologies, the Internet, etc.

12. However, we did not believe that the topics presented below could achieve a consensus among all Member States:
- a. We did not wish to present a rigid, standardized framework inside the Recommendation. We refer to existing international standards, particularly those advocated by ICOM, but many countries still have a relatively different view of museum standards (conservation, access, inventory, etc.).
 - b. The issues of education and access are amply covered in the Recommendation of 1960, to which we directly refer.
 - c. The issue of the link between museum collections and instruments adopted by UNESCO that aim to protect heritage is specified in (§10).
 - d. We believed that the issue of the ownership of collections, as well as the classifying of collections, was a subject on which a consensus could not be reached among Member States. For it to be included, a significant number of countries must already have addressed this issue in their own national legislation.
 - e. For the same reason, we believe that copyright issues related to the digitization of collections should be addressed in other instruments especially dedicated to these issues.
 - f. The text does mention the issue of the mobility of collections; we did not present it at the centre of the Recommendation's structure and content, as this issue is not sufficiently shared in the same way among Member States. Furthermore, it does not directly concern the subject of promoting and protecting museums, but rather that of knowledge sharing.
 - g. The issues of museum management and administration are discussed (§27), but the technical nature of these issues and differences between Member States and the size of museums make it difficult to more precisely specify the management techniques that should be used. Best practices in this area are also presented and shared within various networks and national and international groups of museum professionals.
 - h. The issue of the role of museums with respect to indigenous communities is not directly addressed, as not only does it not arise in the same way for all Member States, but it is also a subject that deserves specific attention in a form other than this text. However, this issue is amply discussed in the *ICOM Code of Ethics*, to which the Recommendation refers.
 - i. A large number of more specific issues concerning museum funding, studies, questions of provenance, etc., are also amply discussed in the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. It is for this reason that the Recommendation refers to it explicitly, and because these are also issues that could be the subject of texts dedicated to these subjects alone.