

Museum definition - the way forward

19 January 2020

To the Chairs and Boards of ICOM National Committees and ICOM International Committees

Dear Colleagues, dear Friends,

I hope that you made a good start to 2020 and once again I wish you and your families a Happy New Year and a happy new decade.

As you well know the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) on 7 September 2019 in Kyoto decided that **we postpone the vote on the new museum definition in order to continue with the discussion further more**. In fact, some committees came to Kyoto having already accomplished comprehensive discussions with their membership. And now, following the EGA 2019, other committees are trying to take actions. Moreover, conversations around ICOM's alternative museum definition continue around the globe. We can only be happy for this enthusiasm and commitment and benefit from their outcomes.

This being said, we would like to set the way forward with the new museum definition for the whole of ICOM. Now that **ICOM Executive Board (EB) appointed a new Standing Committee on Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials (MDPP2)** and that it will start working with a new brief, I would like to share with you the brief for the MDPP2 as well as the road map conceived by the Executive Board. Meanwhile, the MDPP is enlarged for the 2020-2022 term with the addition of a representative group of members from the NCs and ICs and it is renamed MDPP2 to mark this change. The committee will be chaired by Jette Sandahl.

In accordance with the EB's decision, with this letter I would like to kindly ask you to start discussing the new museum definition at length in your respective committees. ICOM Executive Board decided to invite **a participation of members that goes beyond that of the Committee Boards and embraces all Committee Members**, thus ensuring a participatory and bottom-up model for the decision on the new museum definition.

Allow me to reiterate that we anticipate our National Committees and International Committees to open up these conversations and discussion to the whole of their members and not limit themselves to their boards. You are encouraged to conduct physical and/or online discussions in smaller or larger groups covering as large a proportion of your membership as possible and/or make surveys among your committee members. This is something already implemented by some committees before Kyoto and there is a number of Committees which started such a process after Kyoto.

Both the current museum definition and the new museum definition presented at the EGA in Kyoto, as well as, the eight criteria that the MDPP had initially presented to the EB and shared with the ICOM membership are all accessible on the ICOM website. You are welcome to start from any of these. The "Museum Definition Brief" to the MDPP is in the attachment of this mail. (Please note the dates on the Brief are for MDPP and not for your committees unless specified.) Besides any communication with the MDPP2, please feel free to liaise with the MDPP2 contact person at the Secretariat, Afsin Altayli (afsin.altayli@icom.museum), Museums and Society Coordinator, for any questions or inquiries you may have. It goes without saying that the Director General and I are at your service at any time.

Based on the results of these activities, you are expected to come up with your NC's or your IC's preliminary inputs on the museum definition process for discussion at the ICOM June Meeting on 10-12 June 2020 where the MDPP2 will present process and methods to be adopted. You are therefore invited to progressively send information on your committee's activities (e.g. surveys and workshops) as well as any potential outcomes of your discussions (although they may not be final versions) to the MDPP2 preferably **by 30th April 2020** so that we, together with the MDPP2, can better plan the discussions that will take place in June 2020. Further information on how these inputs will be gathered is to be communicated separately in the coming months.

Please be advised that we will not have an EGA or a vote for a new museum definition in June 2020. But, we will have an extensive discussion which will enable participants to communicate, exchange and refine their views for a new definition and discover points of convergence for a shared one to be developed fully in the following year. We are aiming for an EGA and a vote for a new museum definition in June 2021, the year of ICOM's 75th anniversary.

I look forward to your full cooperation and I thank you in advance for your constructive contributions.

With very best wishes,

Suay AKSOY

President

ICOM - International Council of Museums
