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A YEAR TO RECOVER, REIMAGINE  
AND CO-CREATE THE FUTURE

# ICOM ANNUAL REPORT 2021





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# Editorial

"In the past two years, the international museum community and ICOM have faced unprecedented challenges. 2020 was centred around responding to the emergencies steaming from the Covid-19 crisis. 2021 was a year of looking into the future. In the face of lockdowns and social distancing measures, the cultural sector showed a great deal of resilience and creativity, demonstrating its potential to be a driver for recovery and innovation in the post-COVID era. As we glimpsed the end of the pandemic, this spirit has been essential in finding sustainable solutions that will not only help museums to get back on their feet — but create a future in which they can thrive."

**Alberto Garlandini, President**  
**Peter Keller, Director General**



**Dear ICOM Members,**



After the disruptive global crisis of 2020, the year 2021 was an opportunity for the global museum community to reconnect, rethink and put into action new ways of moving forwards, onwards, together. In our hybrid 'new normal', digital innovations and solutions abound, broadening access to resources, facilitating inclusive practices, and further diversifying our community.

As we all recover from the pandemic, the ICOM constellation's interconnectedness and capacity to innovate continue to be our driving strengths. Our united voice is present in such fora as the COP26 and the G20 summit, demonstrating our community's commitment and results in mainstreaming ecological, economic, and social sustainability, and harnessing the power of museums as spaces for social discourse and learning.

In an effort to continue democratising and decolonising our modus operandi, we reached out to members to build a communal museum definition and to review the ICOM Code of Ethics for museums; we implemented a new online statutory meeting platform, Agora, which has increased participation by 165%, and we trialled a hybrid format for our 2022 General Conference with 850 online participants joining 230 members in Prague for the International Symposium.

By collectively brainstorming and putting the future of museums into action, particularly in the lead-up to our 75th Anniversary, ICOM members can be inspired and emboldened by our rich trajectory thus far. And looking ahead, we can continue evolving towards our community's shared aim for greater participation and inclusiveness.





# ICOM IN NUMBERS

**45 493 Members**

-8,2% compared to 2020

Membership increased by 20.5% in Arab countries and Asia-Pacific

**119 National Committees**

123 countries and territories

**22 476 Members in  
International Committees**

49,4% of ICOM members are active in International Committees





# RECOVER

After a 2020 marked by the sanitary crisis and lockdowns, museums in 2021 sought to adapt their practices to the "new normal" to continue fulfilling their public service missions.





# THE SMART MUSEUM: DIGITALISATION PRACTICES

The online environment endures as the museum sector's space for innovative cooperation grows, with webinars and fully digital conferences continuing to prove their added value, and as museum professionals devise new ways of collaborating with their peers and external partners.

The third ICOM report on [Museums, museum professionals and Covid-19](#) greatly reinforces this trend. Analysing the results of the third ICOM global survey, which garnered 840 responses from museums and museum professionals across five continents from 15 April to 29 May, ICOM has investigated a scenario which is certainly still a crisis, but which is also increasingly being described as an opportunity for advancement.





After the first survey presented a truly dire situation (April-May 2020), and the second survey (September 2020) focused on the pandemic's ongoing impact, the third survey built on a critical mass of data, presenting trends over time, rather than focusing on regional comparisons, in order to show how the situation evolved over the 18-month period.

The overwhelming digitalisation trend continues to dominate as a promising prospect for the future of museums, both in terms of inclusion and democratisation, and as an effective tool for forging new partnerships and sustaining existing ones.

**The percentage of museums that started or planned to upgrade their digital infrastructure and resources increased significantly** between Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021. While the precariousness of museums' income sources and of museum professionals' economic stability spark opportunities for innovation, 6 out of 10 museums answered that they had not experimented with new sources of revenue yet, especially small to medium-sized museums, as they need **adequate support from governments and international organisations to develop the resources and skillsets** to successfully conduct their digital transition.





*ICOM Red List Presentation in Slovenia, October 2021*

The pandemic did not put on halt the many threats that cultural heritage faces. Every day, somewhere in the world, a cultural object is looted, stolen from a museum, illegally excavated, or smuggled across a border.

While responding to the new challenges that arose from the sanitary crisis, ICOM continued its heritage protection work, notably **through the publication of a new ICOM Red List** – an instrument the organisation began developing in the 2000s to compile categories of cultural objects that may be subjected to theft and traffic.

In October, ICOM launched its 18th List and largest to date: the **Red List for Southeast European Cultural Objects at Risk**, focusing on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. Prepared with experts and coordinators from across the region, this is the first Red List to focus on the European continent, featuring 119 objects from 45 museums in 10 different countries.



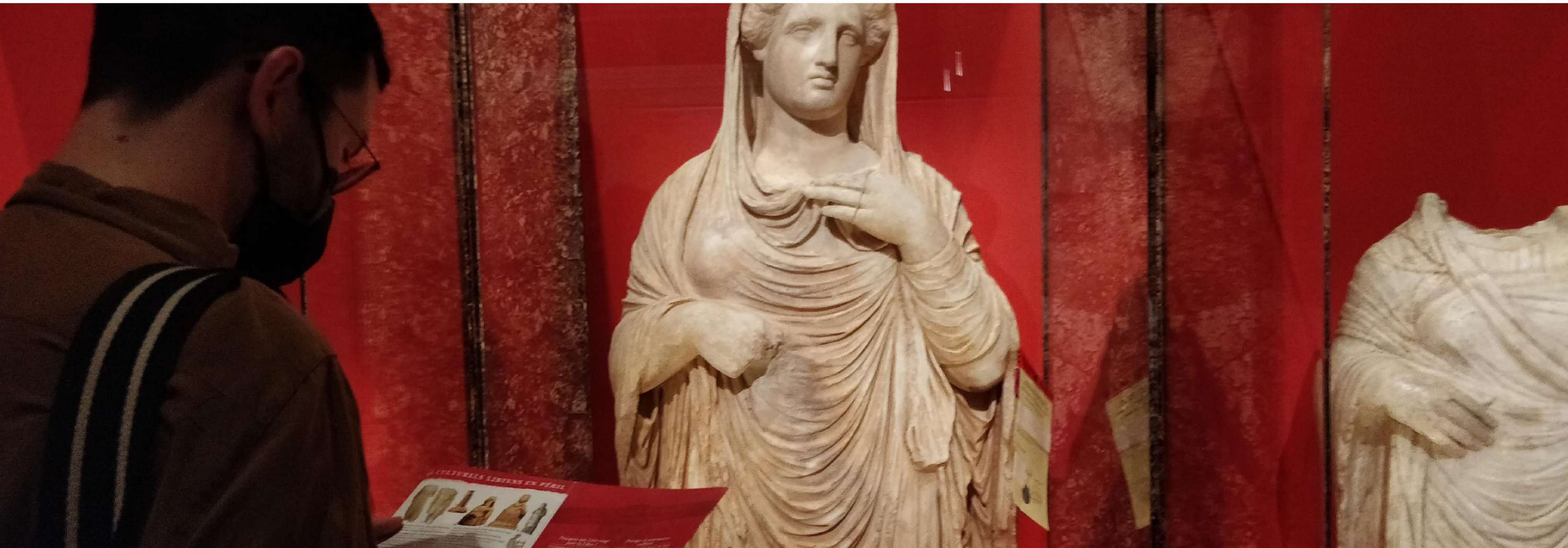
Following the humanitarian and political crisis in Afghanistan, ICOM issued [an official statement expressing their concern](#) at unfolding events in the country, in particular “[the threats faced by the civilian population, and the men and women of Afghanistan who dedicate their lives to protecting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of this historic nation](#)”; advising that ICOM was offering support and monitoring the situation in close cooperation with international partners and actors in the region, in the expectation that all authorities across Afghanistan will continue to respect the integrity of museums, their collections, and the heritage sites, as well as the heritage professionals who hold and safeguard this rich tangible and intangible heritage.

[Wikimedia and ICOM joined forces in an online initiative](#), mobilising Wikipedians and the public at large to [contribute knowledge](#) surrounding categories of items [on the Red List of Afghanistan Antiquities at Risk](#). First published in 2006, the Afghan list was the fourth Red List, and was successful in contributing, among other examples, to the repatriation of more than 1,500 cultural artifacts to Kabul between 2007 and 2009. The new joint initiative sought to continue and update the historic Red List’s visibility efforts by democratising online engagement and maximising its [awareness-raising potential in a digital context](#), in light of the fact that many illicit transactions involving cultural heritage now happen online via social media or e-commerce platforms.





In an effort raise awareness about the problem of illicit trafficking of cultural goods for the public at large, the Louvre Museum presented the exhibition "Ancient sculptures from Libya and Syria: Fight against the illicit traffic of cultural goods" (May 2021 - February 2022), an initiative exhibiting six archaeological objects from Libya and Syria that were seized by French authorities between 2012 and 2016. The interactive display, featuring the iconic red of the ICOM Red Lists, included QR codes that allowed visitors to [learn about the ICOM Red Lists and other endangered objects in the regions](#). This initiative — the first time the Louvre Museum has ever displayed items that are the object of ongoing investigations — confirms [the key role museums can play in raising awareness of the dangers threatening cultural heritage](#) and underlines the importance of international cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking.





Another ICOM online initiative in the fight against illicit trafficking of cultural property and heritage protection, in close partnership with UNESCO and the support of the European Union (EU), was the [UNESCO-ICOM Workshop: Fighting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property](#), a two-day capacity-development workshop held in October, and open to EU Member States' museums and cultural heritage professionals, featuring four panels on related topics. The event gathered more than 20 speakers, 100 online participants and 2,700 views.

Pursuing this line of action, a [DRMC – ICOM Japan hybrid conference](#) was held in November in Tokyo, focusing on the [interdisciplinary networks for cultural heritage risk management](#) and addressed the experience of museum professionals in tackling the disasters as well as the strategies to help safeguard lives and collections.







ICOM and the UNESCO Almaty Office also [cooperated on several online capacity building webinars](#) for museum professionals in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in May and June. Two classes, led ICOM-CC Members, focused on textile conservation and paper conservation, a third class focused on reaching the public through digital tools, and a fourth one was dedicated to countering illicit traffic in cultural goods, organised in collaboration with the Secretariat.

The [Transatlantic Seminar for Museum Curators and Educators: Museums in Post-pandemic Times](#) was a virtual event held in April, involving 26 curators, educators and professionals working in museums, historic sites and other cultural institutions in Germany and the United States. Convened to discuss [how the pandemic has impacted museums](#), examining [societal gaps](#) revealed and considering potential courses of action, the online seminar was a COVID-19 extension of the 2019 in-person seminar “Museums as Spaces for Social Discourse and Learning”, coordinated by Fulbright Germany, the Leibniz Association, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

*Transatlantic Seminar for Museum Curators and Educators © Mike Maguire*





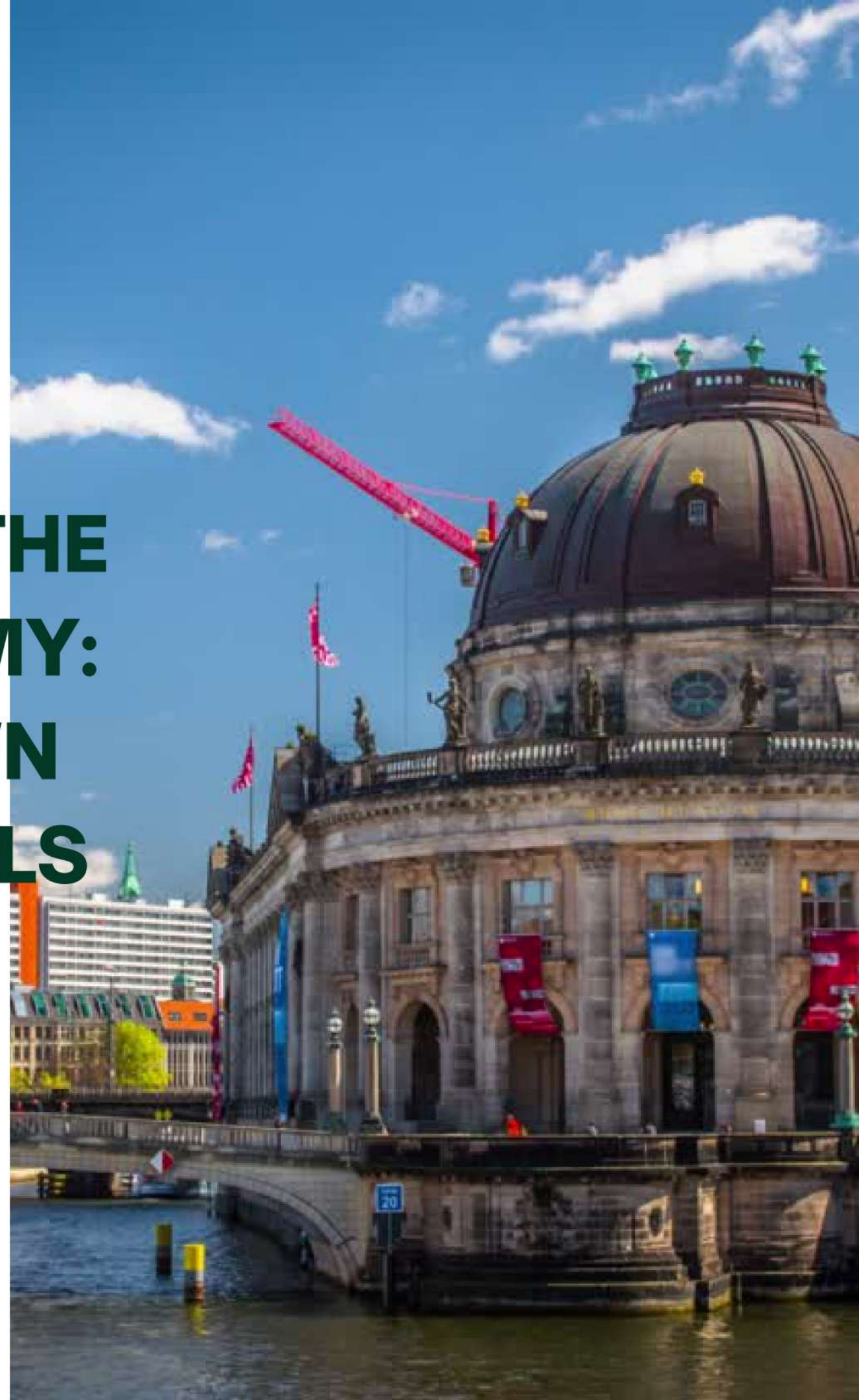
The project also included a special edition of the “Journal of Museum Education” (March 2021), on topics ranging from improving transatlantic understanding (with the creation of a ‘dictionary’ of museum terms that have differing, nuanced meanings in both countries) to the **role of diversity, equity, access and inclusion** in exhibition designs, public programs, and the practice of repatriation.

Another standout online initiative — and recipient of ICOM’s 2021 Solidarity Project funding — is the **“Clothing the Pandemic” project**. Led by ICOM Costume, this online exhibition explores how to **document the material culture of the pandemic**, and how to associate international museums and curators working on this topic, virtually connecting their collections to a global public. The cornerstone of the reflection on “clothing the pandemic” was the face mask — an iconic object and symbol of the pandemic, **representing humanity’s resilience, community, and unity** during this global tragedy, implicated in a wide range of facets of society — from health, fashion, and art, to politics, identity, and sustainability.

*Butterfly People mask by Rahul Mishra  
© Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore*



# MUSEUMS AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY: POST-LOCKDOWN BUSINESS MODELS



During lockdown, museums innovated with online exhibitions, tours and other digital content in an effort to continue engaging with visitors. In the post-lockdown period, the museum community is finding the balance between digital technologies and direct experience, optimising these tools without compromising neither the human factor nor the tangible and intangible collection.

The ICOM Solidarity Projects initiative called on Committees to submit project proposals related to pandemic challenges and museums' resilience, with eight projects selected — out of 17 proposals received — for funding by the ICOM Strategic Allocation Review Committee (SAREC).

Favouring projects that brought together numerous Committees in order to foster cooperation, the SAREC chose the following eight standouts, which all look beyond the ongoing crisis to explore new models for museum practice in the aftermath of COVID-19:





Ethical Collecting during the Pandemic: a shared space for museum professionals, ICOM COMCOL

Clothing the Pandemic: Resiliency, Community & Unity Expressed through an International Collaboration of the COVID-19 Facemask Project, ICOM Costume

Los ruidos que somos: patrimonios sonoros de los Andes, ICOM Ecuador

“Solidarités, musées : de quoi parle-t-on ?” Cycle de 10 séances sur plateforme numérique, ICOM France

Museo para llevar, ICOM Costa Rica

HELP/Heritage education new web formats and free licenses opportunities for dissemination, co-creation and open data, ICOM Italy

INTERCOM Global Museum Leadership Study and Knowledge Platform, ICOM INTERCOM

Museum Tendencies and Perspectives: Focus on Lithuania and Latvia, ICOM Latvia



An online conference **exploring innovative architecture and museum techniques** was hosted by ICAMT on 11 - 12 November, on the theme of **“New Needs for Modern Museums and Future Steps”** with keynote speakers from Georgia and Italy and presentations from architects and museum professionals from 14 different countries discussing the pandemic and the post-pandemic eras, museum architecture, storage facilities, exhibition design, low-budget solutions and technology.

Encouraging participation in a creative process was a focal point of the **annual ICOM CECA conference** in Brussels and Leuven, Belgium, which included various research workshops, poster sessions and lectures on the theme of **co-creation** and focused on practical examples of a co-creative project versus a participatory or inclusive project.

New business models for museums were also explored through the editorial space of our website, **ICOM Voices**, with a contribution from Jamie Larkin (Assistant Professor of Creative and Cultural Industries at Chapman University, USA) and Paul Burtenshaw (International Heritage Consultant) arguing that museums have had to **create or reconfigure digital content to maintain audiences**, utilising social media, sharing existing digitised objects and exhibitions, and providing access to online learning resources.



*‘The Met Unframed Game Example’ © Verizon,  
Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art*





Echoing aspects of survey results gathered for the 3rd ICOM Report, Larkin and Burtenshaw posit that a shift in thinking from souvenir-focused merchandise to **creative ways for audiences to engage with museum collections beyond their walls** — such as selling digital content, stories and experiences — could increase income streams, expand meaningful learning opportunities and sustain relationships with external audiences.

Rather than solely relying on attracting visitors to a site, the authors suggest that museums must develop methods for creating experiences and products they can offer directly to the public, thus building dispersed supporter communities. While this model poses conceptual challenges to a sector that sanctifies the in-person experience, it also presents opportunities **to create compelling forms of engagement in light of the developing digital economy and changing modes of cultural consumption.**



ICOM INTERCOM, ICOM ICME and ICOM Azerbaijan hosted a hybrid joint conference on October 14 – 16 in Baku, Azerbaijan on [Transforming Collecting Policies in Museums: the need or leadership and societal responsibility](#) aimed to empower and raise awareness on the issues of changing authority and transformative leadership. The participants gathered around three sessions, namely, Decolonizing Museums: Restitution, Repatriation and Healing; Museums and Ethnotourism; Leadership and Museum Management for our Times.

An initiative of ICOM France in partnership with ICOM Finland, ICOM Greece, ICOM Israel and CIMUSET resulted in the online debate series [“Solidarity, museums: What is it about?”](#) not only to affirm the solidarity between museums but also to instill hope in the trying times and trace the impact of COVID-19 on the museum sector. AVICOM MuseumDigit live talks and workshop that took place on November 23 – 24 in Budapest, Hungary, were devoted to [“Changemakers, rebels and pioneers: Museum directors on innovation”](#) and centered around the transformation in museums, inclusion, placemaking and social relevance.

*‘ICME, INTERCOM & ICOM Azerbaijan Hybrid Joint Conference  
Transforming Collecting Policies in Museums*







# **International Museum Day 2021**



# THE FUTURE OF MUSEUMS: RECOVER AND REIMAGINE



For over 40 years, ICOM's International Museum Day commemorations have sought to raise awareness of the fact that "Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples".

In this vein, the pandemic has served as a catalyst for museums to adapt their operations to support new virtual formats and crucial innovations, with an increased focus on creating new and inclusive forms of cultural experience and dissemination.



This was echoed by ICOM Committees' **initiatives to commemorate International Museum Day around the world**, such as four Members of CIMCIM: the Museum Geelvinck in the Netherlands, the Museu de la Música in Barcelona, the Royal College of Music Museum in London, and the Lusaka National Museum in Zambia, for whom the “Future of Museums” theme inspired a variety of events, ranging from a “Beethoven is Black” project over a Museum Night, a Twitter marathon, to poetry and debates (including an art exhibition “COVID-19 in the Eyes of the Zambian Children”).

For the 2021 edition of International Museum Day, dedicated to the **theme “The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine”**, **ICOM resumed its cooperation with Wikimedia Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France and Italy**, motivating volunteer authors to contribute content and boost museums' online presence on Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons and Wikidata, “where culture knows no borders and lives on virtually”.



ICOM Serbia



To commemorate IMD 2021, ICOM US offered a promotion to view the complete [“What is a Museum?” webinar series](#) free of charge to everyone for one week, doubling as a membership promotion — the cost of purchasing the series as a non-member was equal to one year of membership to join.

In keeping with theme on the future of museums and in anticipation of the day itself, [ICOM joined the United for Biodiversity Global Coalition](#) and called on its Members worldwide to **“advocate for a future in which respect for nature and biodiversity is a non-negotiable imperative”**, and on all museums to “engage their communities in finding solutions to the ecological emergency, and to demand swift and thoughtful action on biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution.”



*IMD2021 Around the world @GAMeCBergamo*





*IMD in Bakhrushin Theatre Museum, Russia*



*IMD in Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland*



*IMD in Museo de Palencia, Spain*





*IMD in Museu de Lisboa, Portugal*



*IMD in Westfälische Salzwelten, Germany*



*IMD in China*





# REIMAGINE

What does the future of museums look like? Harnessing the spirit of innovation brought on by the exceptional challenges of 2020, museums around the world in 2020<sup>1</sup> developed ground-breaking initiatives that will pave the path to a future where the wellbeing of communities and the planet are central.



# MUSEUMS, COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION



The pandemic did not slow the efforts of ICOM Members to connect with local communities; on the contrary, it accelerated their capacity to engage with a broader range of participants, and is a hopeful prospect for a more inclusive future of museums.

With the sanitary crisis exacerbating existing inequalities, many of our network's activities centered around inclusivity and the social role of museums. Education was also at the heart of our missions in 2021, as we continued to produce and disseminate research through online training, webinars, and publications.

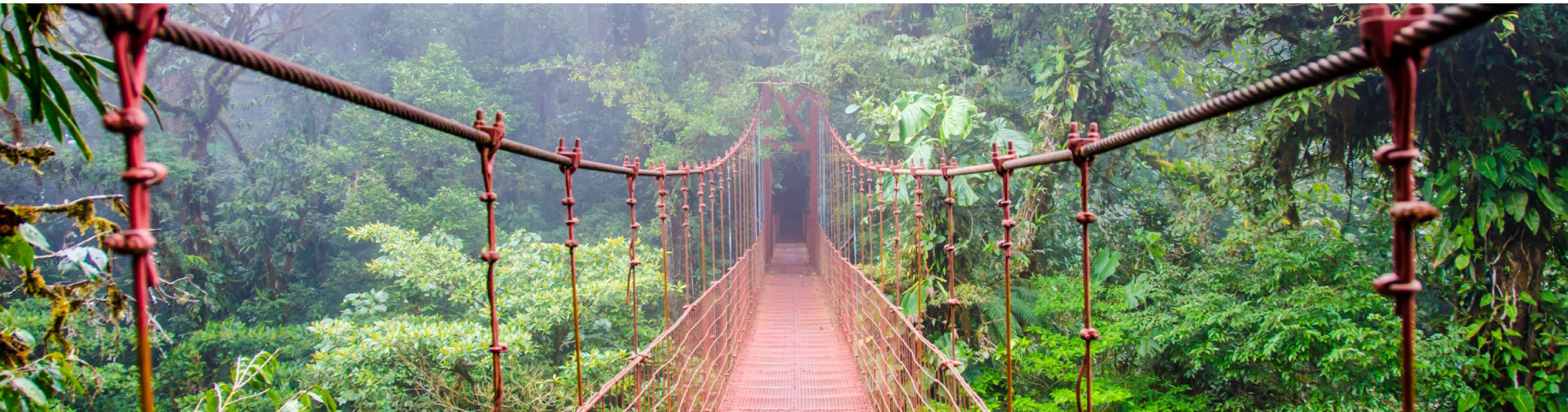


Representing the ethos at the heart of the ICOM partnership as a whole, the Horizon 2020 project [“EU-LAC Museums: Museums and Community: Concepts, Experiences, and Sustainability in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean”](#) (September 2016 - January 2021) concluded, having reached 154 countries, with over 100,000 people engaging in onsite or online activities, and over 100 community workshops hosted on 30 museum sites, involving approximately 28,000 participants.

Involving museum professionals, local communities and the wider public in Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru, Portugal,

Scotland, Spain, and Trinidad & Tobago, the EU-LAC Museums project was designed to meet the Horizon 2020 INT12 (2015) challenge of fostering cultural relations between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Shortlisted for the prestigious Europa Nostra Ilucidare Prize, the EU-LAC Museums project was found to have **successfully fostered a sense of interconnectivity, support, and research activism** that will serve as a model for future EU and transnational research projects, in the face of societal and sustainability challenges.





Another promising digital initiative is ICOM's first **MOOC — Massive Open Online Course — on “Creating Meaningful and Inclusive Museum Practice”**, which proposes a four-week curriculum on participatory methodologies and strategies that can promote wider cultural participation, community inclusion, and co-curation.

Launched in November 2021 (and accessible and available to all on the Future Learn platform), **5400 participants from 150 different countries have already enrolled in the course free of charge**. The MOOC is coordinated by ICOM with content developed by heritage and museum practitioners, Armando Perla (El Salvador/Canada) and Deirdre Prins-Solani (South Africa).







*Watch the webinar on ICOM's YouTube channel*

ICOM inaugurated **a new immersive webinar format on Indigenising Museum Practices**. Held on 15 December, the webinar featured a virtual tour of the Haida Gwaii Museum in Kay Llnagaay, Canada, led by Sean Young, the Manager/Curator of Collections and Lab of Archaeology at Saahlinda Naay “Saving Things House”.

Focusing on **decolonising museum exhibits, meta data (archives), collections and conservation techniques (care and handling) of cultural treasures**, the immersive webinar included a live lecture, tour and Q&A session, delivered in English and translated simultaneously into French and Spanish.



The decolonisation theme was also the focus of a joint ICOFOM / University of St. Andrews webinar on [“Decolonising the Curriculum in Museum and Heritage Studies”](#), on 10-11 December. This is the second in a ICOM Special Project on Museums, Community Action and Decolonisation (2020-2022), with linked seminars occurring in Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, the Cayman Islands and New Caledonia, among other venues, and which aims **to foster international debate and develop theoretical bases for museum practice** relating to the claims and actions of communities seeking greater agency through the forum of the museum. In this instance, “community action” refers to groups moved towards voicing and making visible a common purpose or social cause that can lead to the decolonisation of the museum device.

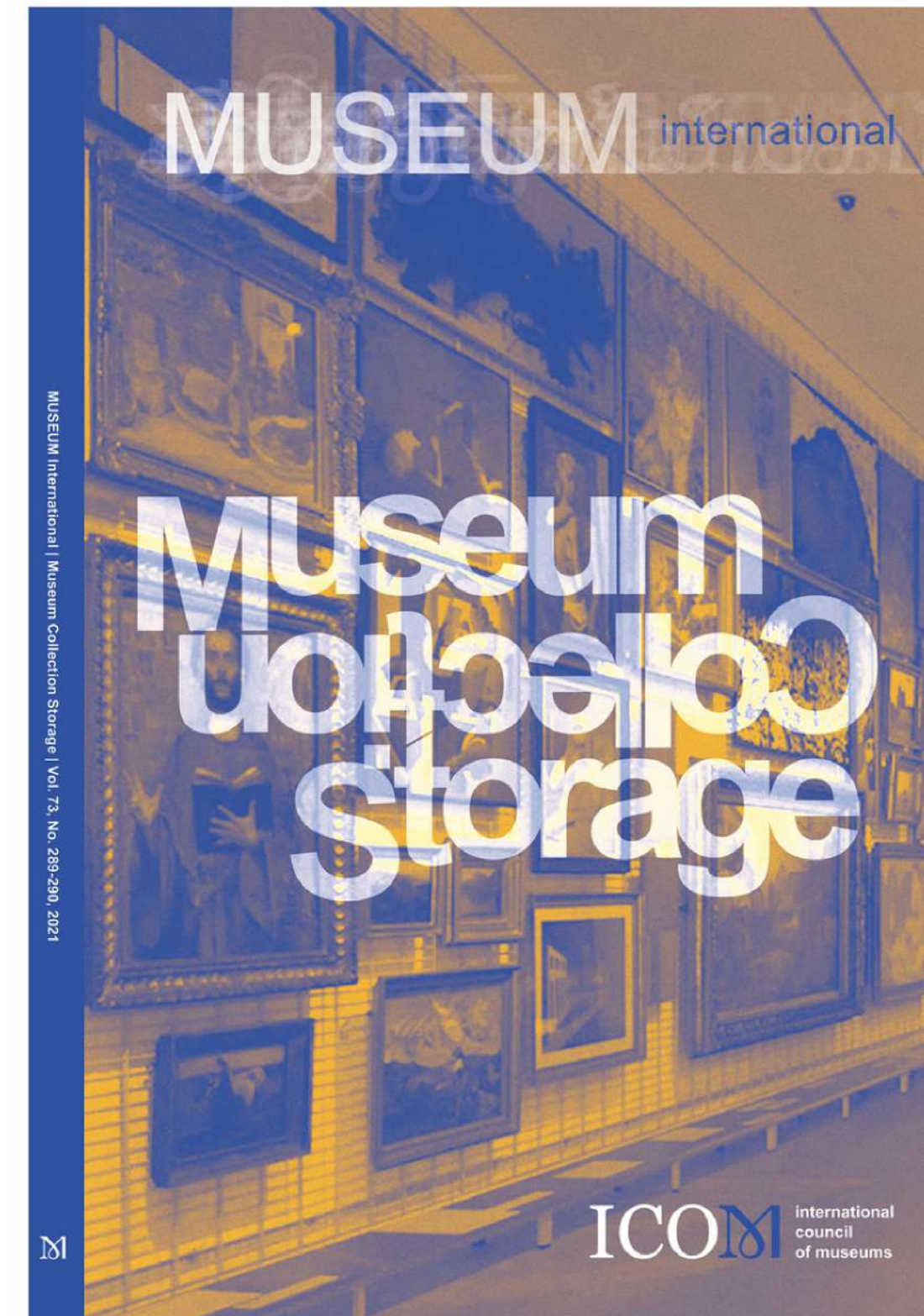




In 2021, *Museum International*, ICOM's peer-reviewed journal, published an edition on the theme **"Museum Collection Storage"** — an aspect of museum work that, while often neglected, is essential to the management and proper conservation of collections.

The issue, guest edited by Yaël Kreplak and François Mairesse, presents articles and case studies on **storage models and initiatives across a broad spectrum of countries and institutions**, which show how the world of museum storage is changing, with dedicated buildings being constructed; skills in preventive conservation being developed; greater emphasis on sustainable practices; and awareness raising by opening storage spaces up to the public.

*Museum International* is also transitioning smoothly into the digital realm, with **online readership up 76%** since 2020.



*Museum International "Museum Collection Storage"*





The ICOM-CC held its 19th Triennial Conference on the theme **"Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation"** from 17-21 May, aiming to **"bring together, exchange and discuss knowledge, traditions, and skills with conservation professionals from both East and West"**. 162 papers and 116 posters were selected for participation from within the 21 ICOM-CC Working Groups, with participants focusing on the latest achievements and global, multidimensional perspective of collection conservation.

The **ICOM ICEE Annual Conference** and **Exhibitions Marketplace** were both fully digital this year, hosted in collaboration with the Museum of Art and History of the City of Geneva (MAH) and ICOM Switzerland from 28-30 September, reflecting on **the future of exhibition exchange in a post-pandemic world**.



Examining the powerful ways in which exhibitions contribute to **reimagining the role of museums in an increasingly competitive cultural marketplace**, colleagues were invited to explore the **“Reimagining Exhibition Exchange”** theme in a post-pandemic world through the lens of three sub-themes: Technology, Audience Engagement, and Operations and Practices. In parallel to the conference, the **ICEE Exhibitions Marketplace** featured a virtual group video chat via SpatialChat for a digital networking experience.

*ICOM Finland*

The fully digital 2021 edition of the **UMAC-UNIVERSEUM Annual Conference**, held from 1-3 September, built on its 2020 edition — where participants shared COVID-19 experiences and their impact on professional practices — to move forward, exploring broad lessons of adaptability and resilience, while attempting to define the relevance and potential of university collections and museums in times of social, economic and cultural uncertainty. Three main topics were debated, including **“Collections: Documenting the past and the present”**; **“Collections and museums closed: new ways of access”**, and **“Engaging with society, taking stances”**.





During the ICOM MPR Annual Conference [LET'S TALK! #ReimagineVisitorJourney](#) on September 16 –19, co-organized with ICOM Russia in Moscow, the presentations on the socially relevant role of museums led to the discussion on how to bridge the gap between on-site and digital to create smart communication strategies.

Echoing the [topic of resilience and new approaches between museums and public](#), ICOMAM [Conference](#) on November 15-19 in Toledo, Spain featured sessions on the historical military legacy, the ways it mirrored the past and opened the possibility of fulfilling a social mission in the future.

Together with the Instituto Ricardo Brennand in Recife, Brazil, ICOM Brazil and Federal University of Pernambuco hosted the COMCOL Conference with the title [“Reimagine Collecting: How Collecting Can Inspire The Future”](#). The conference addressed the practices of collecting to understand contemporary societies and find ways to navigate the future challenges, be it climate change, increasing refugee numbers or political polarisation.

*ICOM Armenia*





A photograph of a person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, holding a green fern frond. The person's hands are visible, and they are holding the frond in a way that it is partially obscured by the text on the left. The background is a soft-focus image of green foliage, including other ferns and leaves.

# MUSEUMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In the fight against climate change, social equality, empowerment and the inclusion of local communities are key to ensuring a transition that leaves no one behind. Museums have a key role to play in dialoguing creatively with the diversity of voices still largely excluded from the debate, including activists, the Global South, Indigenous peoples, and youth; and are thus uniquely positioned to foster innovative solutions towards sustainable futures.

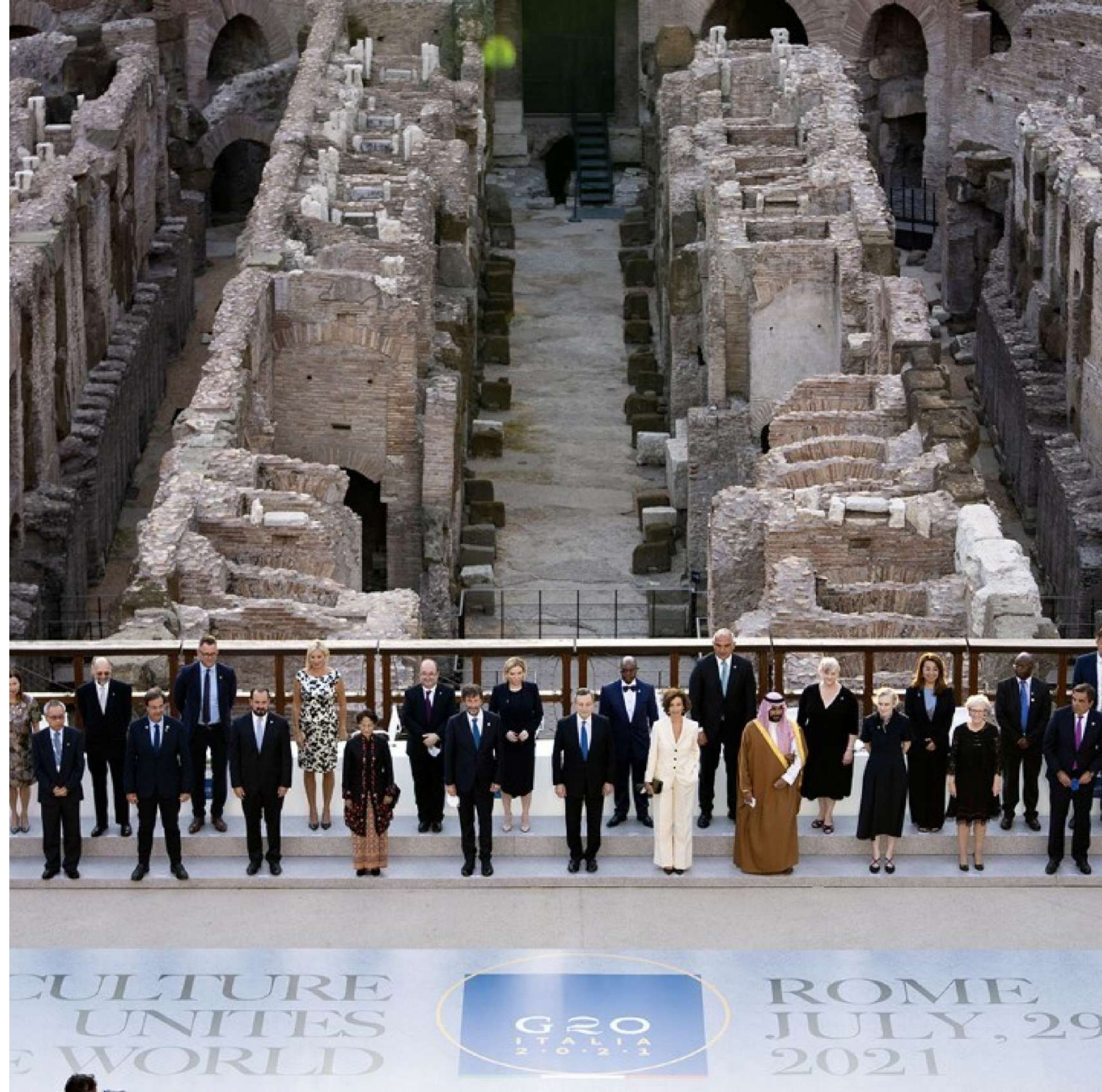
ICOM was one of only two non-governmental organisations invited to participate in the G20 Culture Ministerial Meeting, from 29-30 July, which explored topics around integrating museums as key drivers in the post-pandemic recovery, and museums' role in addressing the climate crisis through culture, actively contributing to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



In a [speech](#) delivered at the G20 session on “**Addressing the Climate Crisis through Culture**”, ICOM President Alberto Garlandini focused on the close connection between **climate change and damage to natural and cultural heritage**, recalling in particular that the knowledge of indigenous peoples, who are on the frontline of the climate crisis, can be crucial in mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis. The President used this opportunity to recall the links between climate change and the protection of cultural heritage, in particular illicit trafficking, noting that the climate crisis is exacerbating the challenges to mitigate the threats to heritage.

Subsequently, the G20 issued an official declaration highlighting “**the diversity of contributions museums make to sustainable growth**”, from educating the public on the challenges of climate change to protecting heritage from the natural catastrophes that result from it”, and specifically welcoming “ICOM's efforts in supporting cultural activities that highlight and address climate issues”.

*The G20 Representatives, including  
ICOM President Alberto Garlandini*





Indeed, the six key elements of the UNFCCC Convention's Article 6 on reducing the impact of climate change by enabling society to be a part of the solution — **education, training, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation** — are all key entry points for ICOM Members to cooperate and contribute meaningfully to building sustainable futures, and the **ICOM Working Group on Sustainability**, established in 2018, facilitates this undertaking.

On Earth Day (April 21), **ICOM announced** that it had become an **official supporter of the Global Coalition #UnitedforBiodiversity**, joining more than 200 institutions and 36 organisations to respond to a call launched by the European Commission, engaging its network in the common effort to overcome the trio of ecological emergency challenges: **biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution**. The EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, welcomed ICOM and its members "to speak up for nature."





Also to mark the occasion of Earth Day (April 21), an **ICOM Webinar on “Museums and Sustainability”** brought together panelists from the United Kingdom, Kenya, Pakistan, and Costa Rica to discuss what sustainability looks like in their regions, and how museums are able to address these issues, reflecting together **on how global partnerships and collaboration can support the local implementation of sustainability**, and how they can inspire sustainable practices globally.

The webinar on **“Museums, Sustainable Cities and Communities”** (September 17) — one of a series of six designed to address Agenda 2030 — in collaboration with CAMOC, brought together museum professionals from different countries to discuss **how museums can and are contributing to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable**, with panelists addressing issues such as migration and inclusion, community engagement, civic and collective climate activism.

The poster for the ICOM Webinar "Museums and Sustainability" features a dark blue background with a stylized Earth graphic on the right. The text is in white and green. It includes the ICOM 75th anniversary logo, the title "EARTH DAY CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY", the date and time "21 April, 2021 17:00 CEST", and a list of speakers and a moderator. A "Share" button is in the top right corner.

75 ICOM 1900-2021

Earth Day webinar: Museums and Sustainability  
ICOM WEBINAR

**EARTH DAY  
CULTURAL  
HERITAGE AND  
SUSTAINABILITY**

21 April, 2021 17:00 CEST

**MODERATOR**  
**Caitlin Southwick**  
Secretary, ICOM WGS  
Founder and  
Executive Director,  
Ki Culture

**SPEAKERS**  
**Frances Morris**  
Director, Tate Modern  
London, UK  
Member of ICOM  
WGS

**Helen Gutiérrez**  
Project officer  
La Ruta del Clima  
San José, Costa Rica

**George Abungu**  
CEO, Okello Abungu  
Heritage Consultants,  
Emeritus Director General,  
National Museums of Kenya

**Zahida Quadri**  
Antiquities Department,  
Government of Sindh  
Board Member, ICOM Pakistan

Watch on  YouTube

WGS

Share

The poster for the ICOM Webinar "Museums, Sustainable Cities and Communities" features an orange background with a stylized cityscape graphic on the right. The text is in white and blue. It includes the ICOM 75th anniversary logo, the title "MUSEUMS, SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES", the date and time "17 September, 2021 17:00 CEST", and a list of speakers and a moderator. A "Share" button is in the top right corner.

75 ICOM 1900-2021

ICOM Webinar | Museums, Sustainable Cities and Communities  
ICOM WEBINAR

**MUSEUMS,  
SUSTAINABLE  
CITIES AND  
COMMUNITIES**

17 September, 2021 17:00 CEST

**MODERATOR**  
**Glenn Perkins**  
Curator of Community  
History, Greensboro  
(NC) History Museum

**SPEAKERS**  
**Catherine C. Cole**  
Director of Planning  
Nunavut Heritage  
Centre

**Anais Reyes**  
Exhibitions Associate  
The Climate Museum

**Andrea Delaplace**  
PhD in Museum studies and  
heritage; Researcher on  
Museums and migrations

**Luiz A C Souza**  
Coordinator of LACICOR  
Conservation Science Laboratory  
at the Federal University of Minas  
Gerais, member of ICOM WGS

Watch on  YouTube

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ICOM's presence at the [2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference \(COP26\)](#) in Glasgow, Scotland featured a panel presented in the EU pavilion (11 November), addressing how cultural heritage institutions, practitioners and policymakers are responding to the climate emergency, and how we might achieve a more integrated and radical action. COP26 was distinguished by an **unprecedented presence of culture and representatives of local and international cultural organisations**, in part due to the attention paid to culture by the British and Italian governments and thanks to years of work by countless

organisations and professionals, including the Climate Heritage Network and the Reimagining Museums for Climate Action project. On the theme of [“Museums & Environmental Concerns, New Insights”](#), CIMUSET hosted its 2020-2021 Annual Conference in Tehran, Iran, from 7-11 November, with sessions featuring museum professionals and specialists from Iran, Italy, Germany and the United States on **museums and environmental education** (Italy and Iran); **museums and environmental citizenship** (US and Iran); museums and improvement of public understanding of environmental issues (Iran); and museums and sustainable environment (Germany).







# THE FUTURE OF ICOM

In 2021, ICOM engaged its Members in a variety of participatory processes that will culminate in the next General Conference, ICOM Prague 2022. Our Organisation also celebrated its 75th Anniversary — a unique opportunity to look back at our history and design together a path forward.



# FINDING NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING OUR MEMBERS



ICOM is harnessing the power of digitalisation to foster inclusion and participation for all Members, exemplified by its newly online statutory meetings, which have increased in overall numbers by 165% (5 meetings in 2019, 6 in 2020 and 10 in 2021).

ICOM Members and Governance now meet more often to make decisions concerning the Organisation's future on the Agora platform, designed and launched in 2021.



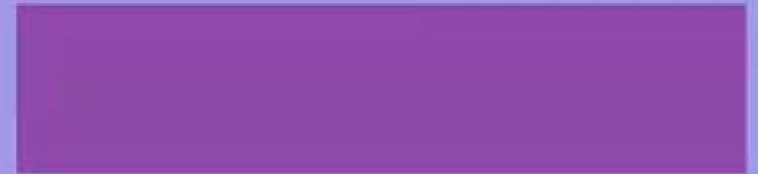
In 2021, ICOM engaged its Members in three participatory processes with a view to collectively shape the museum of the future: [the revision of ICOM's official definition of what constitutes a museum](#), led by ICOM Define; [the review of the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums](#), a standard-setting reference text for museum professionals, led by ETHCOM; and [the 2022-28 ICOM Strategic Plan](#), led by the Strategic Plan Standing Committee.

In order to guarantee coherent outcomes for these participatory processes, the Standing Committees worked in parallel and in close collaboration, featuring open consultation process with National and International Committees, Regional Alliances and Affiliated Organisations and their members.

For the Museum Definition process, ICOM Define successfully [completed Steps 3 through 6 of its 12-step consultative process](#), thus arriving at the half-way point by the end of 2021.



# a museum is





Consultations 2 and 3, revolving around defining and evaluating key words and concepts were designed to ensure a truly participatory global process and **a new museum definition that echoes the voices of all ICOM Members.**

For the Code of Ethics process, ETHCOM led the review of the original text, a reference tool first adopted in 1986 and subsequently revised in 2004, designed to provide guidance in diverse museum-related topics, and presented as **a series of principles supported by guidelines detailing expected professional practice.**

The Committee also published two new complementary standards on fundraising and accessioning in 2021.

Finally, for the 2022-28 Strategic Plan, SPC engaged in a wide-spread consultation of the membership and the Secretariat to determine the priorities of the Association for the next 6 years. The Plan, which will be presented and bring forward to vote in ICOM Prague 2022, focuses on **the role of ICOM in leading the global museum community through this period of transition**, in the intersection of challenges such as the post Covid-19 crisis and climate change.





A flock of birds, likely cranes, is captured in flight against a clear, bright blue sky. The birds are arranged in a loose V-formation, moving from the bottom left towards the top right. Their wings are spread, and their long necks are visible. The image is partially obscured by a white vertical bar on the left side, which serves as a background for the text.

# **REACHING MILESTONES, TOGETHER AND ONWARD**

ICOM's 75th anniversary represents as much an opportunity to rediscover our history as it is to look towards the future. Conceived at a time when calls for pacifism and unity birthed many international organisations, who all shared the aim to build lasting peace in the aftermath of WWII, ICOM's first Members were convinced that if the culture of every nation were more widely known, there would be a broader ground for mutual understanding.

Since the pandemic hit, access to heritage and participation in cultural life have been afflicted by dramatically increased inequalities and widened disparities, yet more than ever, ICOM draws on its values and the context of its creation to affirm that international cooperation is essential to create a global strategy.



ICOM was founded in 1946, at a time in which calls for pacifism and unity birthed many international organisations with the aim of building a lasting peace in the aftermath of World War II. **Chauncey J. Hamlin**, then Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo Museum of Science (United States), envisioned an organisation of museums dedicated to fostering international cooperation. ICOM was born on November 16, 1946 at a meeting held at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

From the outset, UNESCO offered to host ICOM on the premises of its Paris headquarters and made it one of the first NGOs with which it established formal links. A year later, on November 8 1947, ICOM celebrated its first General Assembly in Mexico City.

***“1. We believe that it is of the greatest importance for every nation that the knowledge of the cultures of the various countries forming part of one world should be made more widely known; 2. By these means there will be a broader ground of mutual understanding, for through exchange of cultural knowledge there is a common ground for peace;” – Resolution No. 4 ICOM 1st General Assembly, Mexico City, November 8, 1947***



*Together and Onward, a short film released on the occasion of ICOM's 75th Anniversary*



The design for the hybrid 2022 ICOM General Conference format includes **a digital dimension to the traditional in-person event, ensuring all ICOM members have equal opportunity to attend**, in a decisive step towards greater participation and inclusiveness for ICOM conferences. The new format is also more sustainable, with particular concern for environmental, economic, and social issues.

ICOM trialled this new format in a pre-conference to the 26th ICOM General Conference, hosting a **hybrid International Symposium** for the first time in the organisation's history, with 850 online participants joining 230 onsite participants in Prague from August 25-27. While the main conference theme for 2022's ICOM General Conference — the Power of Museums — was chosen in 2018, recently-chosen sub-themes more specifically address the challenges that museums and museum professionals worldwide have been facing in the wake of the pandemic.

*Prague International Symposium*





# ICOM ONLINE IN 2021



## FACEBOOK

40,030 followers **+7.5%**  
341 posts



## TWITTER

36,559 followers **+10.8%**  
1,027 tweets  
3.7 million impressions



## INSTAGRAM

24.9k followers **+32%**  
92 posts  
169 stories



## WEBSITE

569,200 users **+4.4%**  
73 news articles



## ICOM Voices

19 news articles  
21,235 unique pageviews



# KEY FINANCIAL DATA FOR 2021

ICOM's membership dues reached € 3,848,364 in 2021, representing an decrease of 5.5%. This decrease is mostly due to a decrease of number of members amounting to 45,493 in 2021.

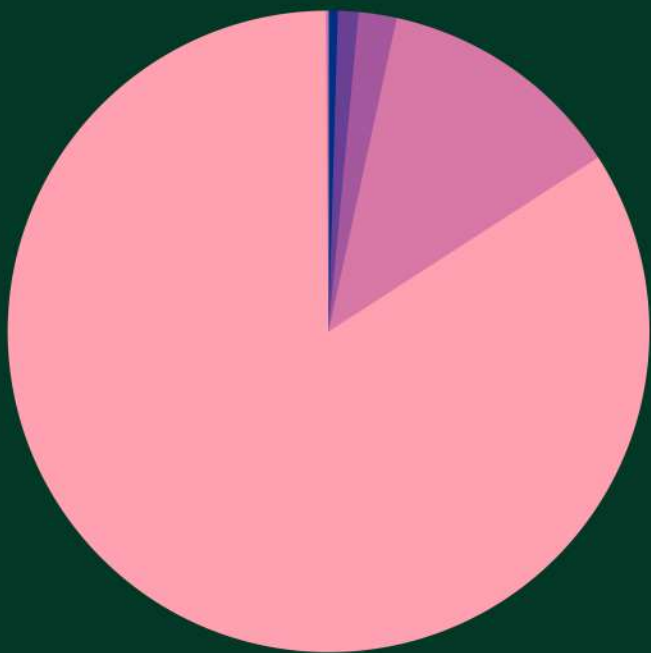
In 2021, ICOM received a total amount of €471,625 in subsidies from:

- French Ministry of Culture and Communication € 20,000
- Getty Foundation (ICOM Prague 2022) € 75,000
- Getty Foundation (Online Library) € 80,000
- ICOM Foundation € 270,000
- Foundation Adolfo Pini € 3,000
- Stichting ICOM-CC Fund € 8,817
- Support for hiring apprentices € 11,333

## BREAKDOWN OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR 2021

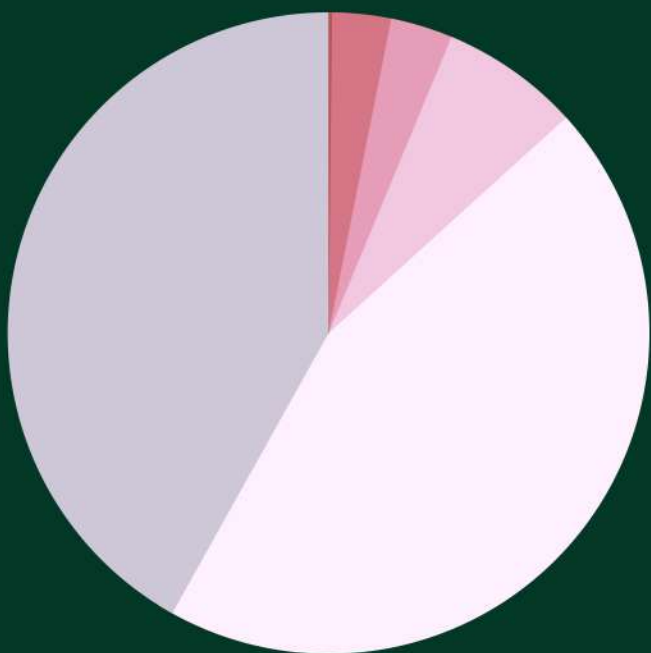
### REVENUES

- Financial income
- Exceptional income
- Joint operations
- Other income
- Subsidies
- Membership dues



### EXPENSES

- Financial expenses
- Exceptional expenses
- Expenses allocated to programmes
- Depreciation and provisions
- Support to the network
- Salaries, social charges and taxes
- Operating expenses





## 2021

Resources	4,507,386
Minus operating expenses	2,053,215
Minus salaries, social charges and taxes	1,775,227
Minus depreciation expenses	123,769
<b>Operating result</b>	<b>555,175</b>

<b>Joint operations</b>	<b>47,500</b>
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Financial income	6,289
Financial expenses	1,231
<b>Financial result</b>	<b>5,058</b>

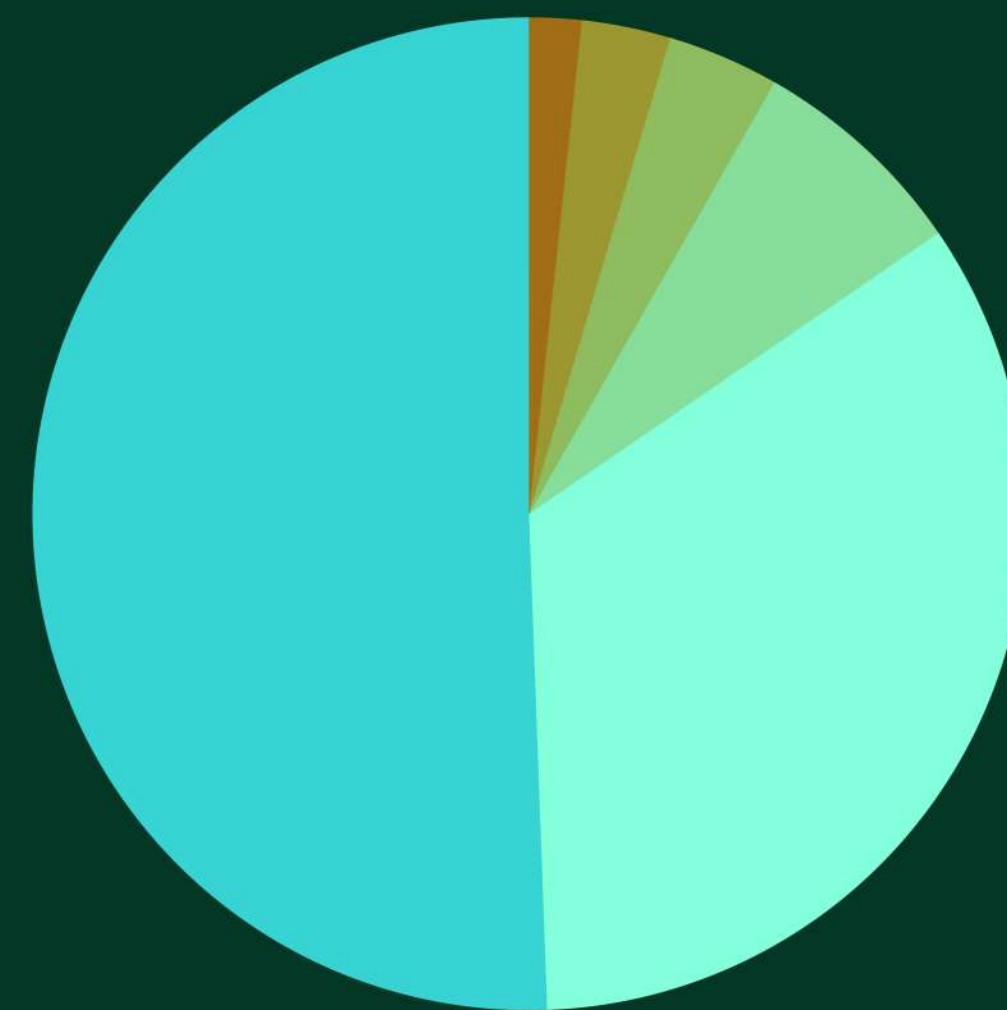
<b>Exceptional result</b>	<b>14,338</b>
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<b>Final result</b>	<b>622,071</b>
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<b>Voluntary contributions</b>	<b>0</b>
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<b>Average staff number</b>	<b>27</b>
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All figures expressed in euros



## SUPPORT TO THE NETWORK

- Subsidies for the Regional Alliances
- Funds allocated to the Standing Committees and Working groups
- Regular projects funded
- Solidarity projects funded
- Subsidies for the International Committees
- Partnerships



## **Conception**

ICOM Secretariat

## **Editor**

Alberto Garlandini, President / Peter Keller, Director General

**Editorial coordination, graphic design and redaction**

Communications and Public Relations Department

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