

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Museums and art galleries play a special role in the social fabric and political life of the community and form a vital pillar of national identity. They collect and preserve the heritage of the past and curate contemporary endeavours for future generations. This preservation of culture is an adamant commitment to the nation. Today, these commitments are joined by concerns for the health and safety of society, economic stability and an awareness of the people who are rebuilding the world after the epidemic. In doing so, we must now not forget about the humanities, including and above all, culture. The celebrations of this year's International Museum Day, unlike ever before, will be an opportunity to remind others of these museological duties that remain relevant, regardless of the time.

According to the announcement of the Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki on April 16<sup>th</sup> this year, in the coming weeks there will be a phased abolition of orders and prohibitions resulting from the state of the epidemic, among others (in phase II) - regarding certain cultural institutions, including museums and art galleries. Following the belief in the basic importance of these cultural institutions as being socially integrale to communities and their significant in education, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage recommends the gradual reopening of museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions. To reopen in such a scheduled manner that adheres to organisational specifics, statutory activities and the ongoing assessment of the current situation. This is to be undertaken by the institutional directors in consultation with the organisers / founders.

It should be emphasized that the deadline for the implementation of the second phase of thawing economic and social life has not been set, as its specifications depend on a responsible assessment of epidemiological conditions for safety. Therefore, it is not possible to set a specific date for the reopening museums for visitors, all the more so considering all the various aspects in play (locations, collections, museum-related activities, etc.). In the end, it will be up to the directors of the institutions, who know their own specific situations the most. They are the ones able to determine the best implementation of the statutory requirements for the safety of the public and collections alike.

Piotr Gliński

Deputy Prime Minister

Minister of Culture and National Heritage

## **Guidelines for museums, art galleries and other cultural institutions operating in the field of cultural heritage policy and heritage protection in connection with the planned reopening of the state in light of the epidemic COVID-19.**

The guidelines below are meant to be the basis for the management of museums and other types of cultural institutions in the preparation process for their reopening. Accessibility will be gradual and divided into three phases.

### **Phase 1: The transition from working remotely to on site**

The tasks completed by said institutions should be assigned in a manner so as those positions that do not require a physical presence of the employees at the office, can be realised remotely for as long as possible.

#### **The course of action:**

1. Employees (with a particular emphasis on those in contact with the public) are to be provided with access to personal protective equipment (disinfectant liquids, masks, gloves);
2. The organisation of work stations taking into account the required spatial distance between employees;
3. The organisation of the working mode, including shift and rotational systems along with the necessary staff in reserve (in the event of an epidemic risk increase);
4. Restoring the accessibility of individual services, incl. security services: in the following phases, the security service, while cooperating with other employees, will be held responsible for the monitoring and compliance of the sanitary regulations by the public (e.g. keeping distance, utilizing sanitizing liquids, masks); in preparation for this task, an on-the-job training must be performed;
5. The preparation, including equipment (disinfectant liquids, overalls etc.) of teams (based on security services) responsible for the execution of all sanitary procedures (e.g. interior decontamination);

6. The purchase of additional monitoring equipment (e.g. cameras);
7. The servicing and the overhaul of ventilation and air conditioning equipment (if sanitary regulations allow for its use);
8. The equipping of public places (cash registers, information points, as well as stores, small and large gastronomy points, as long as the sanitary regulations allow for their opening) with added security measures (especially transparent partitions);
9. Amending and visibly displaying the new regulations for visitors;
10. Additional measures in place for employees from higher risk groups affected by the epidemic.

### **Phase 2: The implementation of museum activities without direct contact with the audience**

In accordance with the implementation process/distribution of phase 1, as long as the maximum safety for both employees and visitors is maintained, the following activities shall to be continued.

#### **The course of action:**

1. Conducting basic operations over the internet;
2. Conducting the other statutory activities of museums and institutions that do not require direct physical contact with the public;
3. Only park and garden areas will be accessible to the public, which will act as a test of the correct following of procedures and their following through by employees. In addition - as an estimate of the financial risk associated with partial access (increased service costs and potentially reduced income from the sale of services).

### **Phase 3: Opening of museum and exhibitions**

The transition to phase 3 should take into account the fact that some tasks that do not require physical presence of employees at the office, will still be realized remotely.

The transition to phase 3 requires that the following conditions be met:

1. For a certain period of time, access to the interiors will be the standard form of activity, in conjunction to virtual tours;
2. Access to museum and exhibitions must take place without damage to the collections within (when making decisions about access, maintaining the sanitary requirements may interfere with the obligation to preserve the collections and thus must be considered (disinfectants used for decontamination are not chemically inert and have a corrosive effect));
3. Real world visitation will be limited by:
  - a) the limitation of the physical number of visitors,
  - b) providing personal protective equipment for visitors (e.g. disinfectant liquids),
  - c) the limitation of visiting hours,
  - d) the changing of reservation systems,
  - e) postponing of group tours and then gradually reoffering them for various social groups, for example: day / hours of the visit for the elderly, health care workers, policemen,
  - f) the reorganization (development of special educational programmes for smaller groups, conducting outdoor activities) or temporary resignation from on site educational activities,
  - g) changing of the visit routes,
  - h) deactivating the multimedia and the other devices activated by touch (e.g. audio-guides),
  - i) suspend the use of cloakrooms,
  - j) postponing access to the commercial and educational spaces located within buildings,
  - k) abandoning or limiting events of larger groups of people (vernissages, closings, picnics, fairs, reviews, scientific conferences, etc.); museums, due to their social role as a popular past time, the sense of security for loved ones, cannot be allowed; any situation in which close proximity evokes, in social opinion, a belief in an increased risk of morbidity, must be limited,
4. A gradual return to various forms of social interactions will also be a period of "taming" the audience with the new visit conditions, sometimes testing its new preferences and undertaking flexible changes to the educational programme (e.g. with the possibility

of greater inclusion of outdoor activities). Hence the immense role of a properly selected external communication strategy.

### **Agreements with territorially competent sanitary and epidemiological services**

The preparation to open museums, art galleries and other institutions once again to the public, is primarily the responsibility of the directors of said institutions. However, one should remember about the necessity to take consultations and suggestions from health services. The Minister of Culture and National Heritage asked the Chief Health Inspector to inform the sanitary and epidemiological services reporting to the Chief Health Inspector that the directors will strive to be in contact with the relevant health and epidemiological departments in order to obtain approval of any planned rule changes. Approval of said changes is vital for making museums and other cultural institutions available to the public after a period of complete closure due to the state of the epidemic. Considering the scale of involvement of sanitary services, we recommend presenting them only specific projects specially adapted to the situation of individual institutions, which will facilitate mutual cooperation (<https://gis.gov.pl/>).

Below is a list of contacts that may prove useful as a source of reliable, updated information or - advice on individual solutions:

- <https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus>
- <https://www.gov.pl/web/kultura/tarcza-antykryzysowa-dla-kultury>
- <https://nimos.pl/aktualnosci/koronawirus.html>

(prepared by: the Department of Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections)