

5. **Austria and its Museums**
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Introduction

Austria has about 8.3 million inhabitants and is divided into nine federal regions. The responsibility for museum affairs of the national museums is in federal hands. Each government has its own proceedings and different structures for supporting. There are different laws, supports, activities and a different comprehension and acceptance in museum and regional heritage matters.

Twelve national museums received a new legal structure in the last decade. Each of them now has its own legal capacity in administrative belongings. The state is still owner of the collections and responsible through the Austrian museums law, just concerning these national collections.

Around 60 provincial museums are directly or indirectly subordinated to the regional governments in financial matters and owners of the collections, according to their legal structure. About 1800 more institutions in all 9 regions are private, in the ownership of associations (ca. 45%) or local governing bodies (ca.50%).

Volunteer leadership and general museums work is a common and indispensable way of keeping most of the museums alive.

There are two national museums associations, the Austrian Museums Association and ICOM-Austria. In addition, five regional associations act more or less as self-help groups. Each of them is very active in different ways: care and advice, project development and attendance, or training and coaching of staff. The emphasis is on doing a good job with the main focus on small and medium-sized museums and collections with public access.

5.1 Voluntary work in Austria - overview

Regarding voluntary work, one has to differentiate between *formal* and *informal* services:

Formal voluntary work refers to activities which are carried out within the framework of an organisation, a club, or an institution: such as disaster management, emergency medical services, environmental or animal protection, work in the church, in social services and the health area, political work, citizen initiatives, education, and last but not least the broad area of art, culture, entertainment and leisure time.

Informal voluntary work, often also called neighbourly help, occurs out of personal initiative without the framework of an institution. In the year 2001 (the national year of honorary work), the Federal Ministry of social and consumer protection took steps in order to clarify and improve the unstructured basis for voluntary work in Austria.

After 2001, the first national data collection was carried out by Statistik Austria (2006). The Ministry implemented centres for voluntary workers in the federal states, an internet platform in order for honorary members to communicate, and guidelines for the training of voluntary workers and coordinators were established. A voluntary pass including a definition of voluntary work was introduced. However, not all of the above-mentioned steps have caught on in all areas. The reason could be that they are non-binding and that they are not a political priority. Apart from the strictly organised larger institutions such as the Red Cross, Caritas, or voluntary fire department, volunteers still mostly work according to their own structures.

Under the term "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) pilot projects were started together with the economy and enterprises. The volunteer social service is supposed to become mandatory in Austria as it is in other European countries. In 2006-2007 there were 336 people who took part in the volunteer social service. They worked in institutions of voluntary

welfare work, i.e. in the social and health sector. An assignment in the cultural area has not (yet) been considered.

In October 2003, the Austrian Council for Voluntary Work was founded. It was supposed to enhance the status of voluntary workers and be a lobby for them. However, the last meeting of the council took place in November 2005. The Austrian Council for Volunteers had 49 members, and included representatives of the ministries and central institutions where volunteers work. The area of culture was represented by one person from the Federal Ministry for Education and Art (BMUK) as well as one representative of the umbrella organisation IG-culture.

5.1.1 The following data come from the 2006 micro census of Statistik Austria:

http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/5/1/4/CH0139/CMS1218445655316/presseunterlagen_freiwilligenarbeit_21.1.08.doc

- 43.8% of Austrians older than 15 do some kind of voluntary work. The percentage of men is 47.1 and women 40.7
- Overall, almost 3 million Austrians older than 15 do voluntary work
- Out of 6.9 million people older than 15, 27.9% do formal voluntary work (in organisations/clubs) and 27.1% do informal voluntary work (“neighbourly help”). Women tend to do informal voluntary work more often (27.3%) than men (26.9%). Men are more often helping in organisations, women are more often doing neighbourly help. People between 40 to 59 are especially active. Almost 50% of this age group does voluntary work. Among people below 70, voluntary work is below average. 43% of young people between 15 and 19 are voluntarily active, as well as 43% of people between 60 and 69. Even 20% of people above 80 are still voluntarily active
- Especially active among men are the graduates of a vocational or high school. Among women it is those who have graduated from a high school
- Generally, there are more volunteers in the country than there are in the city
- 62% of volunteers over the age of 15 work in informal areas, followed by 17.1% in art, culture, entertainment, and leisure time (“culture”). 5.8% work in the fields of environment, nature, and animal protection as well as education. The youngest volunteers choose culture second and emergency services third
- Men: neighbourly help (57%) as well as sport and emergency services, each 22%, culture 18%
- Women: neighbourly help 67%, followed by church with 20% and culture with 16%

Reasons for doing formal or informal voluntary work include:

- 93% say “it is fun”
- 93% want to “help others”
- 83% “like to meet people and new friends”
- 81% say they can “use their skills and knowledge”
- 76% do it “in order to stay active”
- 95% don’t think that “voluntary work will help them to find a paid job”.
- Regarding “Corporate Social Responsibility”: about seven out of ten companies require voluntary engagement from their employees mainly through donations and sponsoring. Four out of ten companies grant education leave and/or temporary release for voluntary work outside of one’s job

5.1.2 Centres for volunteers

At the moment, there are 10 independent centres in seven out of nine Austrian Federal States which support volunteers and honorary members. Their goals are networking,

consulting, providing information for training and continuing education, lobbying, initiating model products, and many more.

Web of volunteers

At www.freiwilligenweb.at you can find the electronic platform of the centres for volunteers and of the institutions which have a connection to voluntary work. This platform has about 1500 members.

Various institutions in Austria deal partly with volunteering. Some examples are the “Bildungswerke” (Training Centres) of the Federal States, e.g. the Styrian “Volksbildungswerk” (People’s Training Centre) www.volksbildungswerk-stmk.at, the Training Centre Salzburg www.salzburgerbildungswerk.at, or the Catholic Training Centre www.bildungswerk.at, the Caritas in Styria <http://caritas-graz.at>, and the Centre for Volunteers of the Caritas in Innsbruck <http://www.caritas-innsbruck.at/freiwillige.cfm>, the NPO institute at the University for Economics in Vienna <http://www.npo.or.at>. The Centre for Volunteers in Vorarlberg works in connection with the Federal State <http://freiwilligenboerse.vol.at>. Among about 130 institutions there is just one museum or similar cultural institution.

Remarks

The figures regarding voluntary work in the area of culture, art, entertainment, and leisure time do not lead to conclusions about the commitment towards cultural heritage. For example, people who are involved in music for brass instruments make up for 35% of volunteers (183,000 to 516,000), another 10% are members of the choir association of Austria, and 22% are involved in the association for home and traditional costumes (“Heimat-und Trachtenvereine”).

5.1.3 Public libraries and school libraries¹

Libraries and archives also belong to cultural heritage. Libraries are organised on a federal level and sufficient statistical material is available. In 2006, there were 1526 public libraries and 786 school libraries, according to the Austrian Association for Libraries. The data collection focused on the staff structure.

Austrian libraries are organised on two different levels. Full-time libraries are mostly bigger places in cities and medium-sized communities. Libraries that are managed by honorary members supply smaller communities and rural areas, as well as companies and social institutions, with a relatively dense and comprehensive net.

The 257 full-time libraries are concentrated in larger cities where there are also bookstores and other cultural institutions. They provide more services concerning numbers: They have 47.9% of the media, 54.1% of the users of public libraries, and 74.2% borrowings. Due to the work of volunteers in 1269 libraries, this net becomes very dense in relation to other institutions for continuing education.

The Austrian Association of Libraries offers continuing training at various locations. Sometimes seminars are held at the BfEB – “Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung” (Federation for Adult Education) in Strobl. Federal resources being used in this way is similar to indirect sponsorship.

Regarding training, there is a difference between full-time librarians and part-time and honorary librarians. All training courses are offered as modules. The course for full-time

¹ J.Zabini, Bücherzentrum Steiermark, Website Bibliotheksverband

librarians lasts two years and is more comprehensive. To become an honorary librarian you train for 1.5 years in three modules which each last one week. The content of both courses is similar and there are no elements which are specific to honorary posts (conflict culture, motivation, or similar).

5.2 Volunteering in Austrian museums

Preliminary remarks

A comparison of national statistics of voluntary work cannot be done without problems. On the one hand, regarding the informal leadership and management of regional museums and collections in Austria, the question arises: how can these informal areas be recorded? On the other hand, the question relates to how such volunteers see themselves as honorary.

5.2.1 Data

There are no comprehensive state-wide statistics for museums. The Österreichische Kulturstatistik (Austrian Statistics for Culture) only considers between 380 and 470 locations. The selection criteria are inadequate. Therefore, only 3,158 people have been counted as volunteers in the year 2006.

The various institutions (public institutions, state departments for culture) which are responsible for culture in the Federal States or which take care of museums (clubs, support companies) have different statistics and / or only estimated data. Below you will find some examples. This list is not exhaustive and does not claim to be accurate:

5.2.2 Styria²

- At the moment, we have 265 museums or similar institutions as well as public access private collections
 - 168 of those are regional, city, or museums of local history
 - 96 fall into the category of private collections or institutions similar to museums.
- Since 2001, 28 museums have been awarded with the certificate of the MBÖ and ICOM, making up for 17% of all certificates in Austria. The guidelines for getting this certificate are not bound to having employees
- 57 museums and collections in Styria as well as 21 institutions similar to museums – that's 29% - have at least one employee
- 11 have 3-4 employees
- Only 10 institutions besides the Joanneum have more than 5 employees
- 208 institutions are managed on an honorary basis
- 25 institutions work according to the principle of volunteering with employees
- Altogether, according to our data, 2400 people work in museums and collections
- About 700 are employed. About 70% of all employees (about 500) work in 7% of the institutions, which means in departments of the State Museum Joanneum
 - 230 people are paid on an hourly expenses rate
 - The other 30% have mostly part-time contracts
- About 1500 people are volunteers or work on an honorary basis – this does not include friendship clubs because their support is mainly financial and not so much physical

The number of hours which are covered by volunteers and honorary members can only be estimated since there are no reports on this. A conservative estimate might be about

² Data material from an internal survey MUSIS 2007

500,000 hours per year. It is interesting to observe that the number of honorary members decreases or disappears if more people are employed.

	Museums	>= 1 employee	Just volunteers	Volunteer manager
Wien*	No statistics available			
Niederösterreich**	Ca. 700	150	550	none
Burgenland***	73	10	63	none
Steiermark**	265	57	208	none
Kärnten**	102	38	64	none
Oberösterreich**	276	67	209	none
Salzburg**	83	14	69	none
Tirol**	Ca. 170			none
Vorarlberg**	49	16	33	42

*no information available, no statistics, no reaction to request

**information by provincial institutions

***website informations

5.2.3 Survey

The quality of communication on the occasion of the VoCH survey showed how the volunteer contribution to cultural heritage and museum activities in Austria is not yet conscious or focused in the minds of the directors or managers, even where the number of volunteers is huge and indispensable.

The importance of volunteering for the museums themselves is described as:

1. economy in times of declining budgets
2. chance to do work which doesn't fit (or no longer fits) into the schedule of the paid staff
3. social and integrative capacity

A positive effect for reputation outward bound or multipliers effect is not perceived. Most of the volunteers are thought to be retired people, however there is no specific data to support this.

Even large professional museums do not employ volunteer managers. This task is done as extra work by professional staff or, in small museums, by the directors or managers. Training mostly happens by introducing the new volunteers into their special work field. Most training is experiential – learning by doing – with the helping hand of more experienced colleagues.

There is no general legal base, neither is it a common practice to hold insurances or work place checks by any official institution.

Among the interviewed volunteers – about 80% retirees – there is a high degree of satisfaction and contentment. As their motivation they mention:

- Interest in the contents and issues of the museum
- To provide services for the community
- To meet people with same interest

General surveys in the volunteer field in Austria declare these motivations as matters of the elder generation. Motivation of the young generation, whose representation is actually negligible in the museums field, would be likely to include very different aims.

Discussions about volunteering have been initiated at some specific activities of three regional associations (MUSIS Stmk, OÖ, S) as well as events settled in Vienna by the Museumsakademie am Joanneum, and training modules within the curators trainings (OÖ, MUSIS Stmk, NÖ.).

One catalyst for development could be the increasing lack of volunteers and the missing of follow-up within the younger generation. This perspective touches all institutions working on a volunteer basis.

5.3 Case studies

5.3.1 Honorary work in the Salzburg Museum: Catering, Modelling, Visitor Services

Renate Wonisch-Langenfelder

The Salzburg Museum – the provincial museum of the federal state of Salzburg in the capital town – has been working with volunteers for more than ten years. These volunteers are members of the museum association. The museum association has about 5,000 members – a high number of people who feel connected to the museum's tasks and contents. These workers are almost always retirees who either used to work in a museum or who have turned their hobby into a (non-paying) profession. The cooperation with the employees works without conflicts since the volunteers are a big help and make work easier.

The 60 volunteers work in various areas of the museum, onstage as well as backstage:

- **Visitor Services:** On two days of the week, the visitor service team is replaced by volunteers. They work in the exhibition rooms as well as at the coat checks. The manager of the museum does the scheduling. Members of the association are informed about these possibilities to volunteer in the Salzburg Museum through ads in the "Museumsblätter" (newsletter of the museum).
- **Catering:** Ladies of the museum association help pouring and serving drinks during events of the Salzburg Museum.
- **Exhibition preparation and construction:** If a special model, a wooden silhouette or even a bakery is needed, a retired locksmith will do this job. The model train in the toy museum is also maintained by a retiree.
- **Inventory:** there are three retirees working in the library who do the inventory of whole volumes (e.g. poster collections, postcards, etc.).

The Salzburg Museum offers the following benefits to its association members and volunteers:

- There are weekly meetings called "Museumsgespräche" (museum conversations) which are a meeting point for "regular visitors" of the museum. These lectures, tours through exhibitions, etc. support cultural education as well as socialising and communication among visitors.
- Four to five times a year, the museum offers excursions within Austria or to other countries, which have been gaining popularity over the past 10 years.
- Volunteers receive exclusive invitations to special events such as the ceremonial act of the presentation of the Austrian Museum Award 2007, to exhibition previews or special events on the occasion of the museum opening in 2007.
- Once a year the museum director invites all volunteers to a half-day trip (visit of a museum etc. with dinner).

Because of the work of volunteers, the Salzburg Museum can fulfil many tasks which might not be possible otherwise because the museum budget is becoming tighter and tighter. Through its members, the museum association not only contributes to the rising value of art and art history collections of the Salzburg Museum (purchases which can be financed through membership fees) but also to the appreciation of the work in the museum.

5.3.2 Werner Berg Museum, Bleiburg

Arthur Ottowitz

Bleiburg is a small town of 4,000 inhabitants in the very south of the Austrian federal state Carinthia, just 4 km. from the Slovenian border. More than one famous artist was born or lived there due to the privacy and attractive landscape.

The Werner Berg Galerie der Stadt Bleiburg (founded in 1968 and redefined as Werner Berg Museum“in 2008), has been a positive example for an efficient combination of volunteer and official curatorial work in the museum field ever since.

Conceptual work regarding both content and presentation of the artworks has always been done on a volunteer basis. The administration, going concern, and the operating are incumbent upon the City council of Bleiburg.

In Werner Bergs lifetime (1904-1981) there were mainly two volunteers besides the artist himself - the head of the gallery and the former cultural officer of the city of Bleiburg - being responsible for the supraregional success of the gallery by their enthusiasm and dedication. Since Mr. Bergs death the volunteer board of the Werner Berg trust is responsible for the main management and content parameters.

The artist's grandson Dr. Harald Scheicher, acts nowadays on a volunteer basis as administrator of the artistic estate, as curator and motor for the museums success and presence in the public. His unpaid efforts over the decades are predominantly responsible for the museum's current level of quality and popularity.

The base of the whole legal construction is the statue of the Werner Berg trust from 1984, which regulates the relation between the trust as owner, the main collection and the City council as owner and administrator of the building.

The City council cares for the general administration by a clerk in the central administrative bureau, employs usually one person as custodian, and due to the dimension of the particular exhibitions (2008: K08-Emanzipation und Konfrontation, Europe Exhibition 2009 Stift St.Paul - Bleiburg) as well more for information and counter service.

Due to growing popular interest, guiding and educating is done by a team of 12 specially-trained volunteer art-educators, who live in the city and are therefore easily available.. They have a very different professional backgrounds and different ages. They are trained directly by the curator and by the general educational institution of Carinthia (Kärntner Bildungswerk).

The museums owes its big success to these volunteers and the high empathy on the part of the cultural responsables and the people of Bleiburg, whose cooperation enables the institution to attract and handle up to 12000 visitors per year, with just a small administration machinery and far away from any area of high population density.

5.3.3 Kammerhof Museum, Bad Aussee

Karola Ainhirn

The Kammerhof Museum, ('KHM'), is a local museum with the task of representing the history of the region of Bad Aussee. The museum is located in the Kammerhof building, which has been owned by the community of Bad Aussee since the 1970s and was for hundreds of years the main management centre for the local salt mines. Currently the museum is run by ARGE founded in 2001. The team accepted the challenge to convert the museum into a modern contemporary exhibition space and has actively implemented changes in the recent years.

The ARGE KHM is a team of volunteers working for the museum. Curators, who also volunteer their time and skills to the museum, manage the various departments of the museum. The great advantage in Aussee is that for decades the beauty of the area has attracted many intellectuals, scientist and other educated people from the capital Vienna and other university towns, many of whom have a second home in Aussee and are willing to contribute to the local civil society.

The chairperson of the association is a teacher at the local High School. One retiree is responsible for the museum's administration and archive. The archaeological consortium Salzkammergut supported by the regional heritage board and its staff maintains one of the collections in the museum. A specialist of the Salt mines of Austria assumes supervision of the salt department. One local retiree, supported by a university historian and another history professional, maintains the local and contemporary history. A folk music scientist supports the new folk music department. A professional ethnographer and successful participant of the first Styrian curator course, supports folklore and traditional dress. The speleological collection and the fossil department are supported by three university professionals.

Museum remodelling is being financed by fundraising events organised by the chairperson and volunteer administrator. The KHM is in the hands of a highly competent and committed team, whose work has been bestowed with the "Austrian museum quality seal" 2004. Team conferences held throughout the year decide all-important issues relating to the museum.

The museum is also supported by a dedicated team of volunteers for special events (including exhibition launches, presentations, readings, concerts, the traditional Narzissenfest-Bistro and The long night of KHM). The museum therefore has the ability to call on the support of experienced and enthusiastic workers.

The community of Bad Aussee does also employ staff: there are two cashiers alternating at the cash desk as well as housekeeping staff; background administration is performed by a community employee for ten hours per week.

The key to the museums success is that the museum's welfare is ensured by motivated volunteer staff employing their skills enthusiastically.

5.4 EMAC

EMAC stands for European Museum Advisors Conference. This is a loose association of museum advisors from non-profit institutions, whose goal is an exchange of information in order to make museum advising in Europe more efficient and standardised. Every two years

there is a conference lasting several days, hosted by a different country each time, where participants can present and discuss their work (projects, structures, best-practice examples of their advising work). In addition, there are excursions to various museums.

From May 28 – 31, 2008, MUSIS, the umbrella organisation of Styrian museums, organised the EMAC-conference in Graz. 45 people from various European countries participated. Under the headline “Quality management – a never ending story”, various aspects of advisory activities were examined. One whole day was dedicated to recruiting and management of honorary and voluntary workers.

Most of the lectures of this conference can be read and downloaded at www.musis.at/Projekte-EMAC.

Here are some brief results of this conference:

- In the field of honorary work in museums, the structures vary highly between the Federal States
- The reasons for people to become honorary workers are also very different. This depends mainly on the history and the image of an honorary position in the various Federal States
- The better these honorary workers are trained and taken care of, the greater the likelihood of retaining them in the institution
- It is easier to find people for projects that run for a limited time than for a longer-term commitment.