

Congress 2025

FACING UP TO THE CRISIS *Committed and innovative museums*

Friday 3 October 2025

Auditorium of Pavillon Dufour - Château de Versailles & Zoom

In recent months, numerous announcements of restrictions and budget cuts have been made in the cultural sector, and museums have obviously not been spared. This situation has had many effects, impacting programming, the nature of activities, priorities, and human resources management within museums. Projects already underway have been downgraded, new projects have had to be abandoned, there is a risk of a diminished public service, positions are frozen or even eliminated, recruitments postponed, and there is increasing pressure to find new sources of self-generated revenue. This list resembles, if not a catalogue of disillusionment, at least a new stage in the evolution of a trend that began several years ago and remains unfortunately persistent.

It is no longer just about getting through a difficult period for our museums, but about learning to deal with it —and more importantly, to do things differently. How, then, can museums adapt? For several years now, museums have attempted to invent new models, particularly new modes of financing, in an effort to develop their own resources and reduce their reliance solely on public funding. But external resources are neither abundant nor inexhaustible, especially since the economic difficulties are not limited to the public sector.

Faced with this situation, creativity is being harnessed to bring about real, lasting, and sustainable change. How can museums continue to fulfill their mission of preservation and dissemination with fewer resources? How can they continue to "be museums" in an unfavorable and rapidly transforming economic context? This challenging situation is prompting museum professionals to rethink their roles and responsibilities.

Many initiatives are emerging in France and abroad to test new operating methods: resource sharing, co-productions, economic partnerships developed at the local level, new loyalty programs, better integration into the local community, patron circles, crowdfunding campaigns, innovative sponsorships... This day of discussion will highlight these experiences, which often also intersect with concerns related to ecological sustainability and greater societal engagement by museums.

How can we envision museums in harmony with their social and economic environments? How can we imagine museums that are more integrated into society, where the stories conveyed by the institution resonate with its partners and foster strong, stable, and lasting bonds of attachment?

Émilie Girard, President of ICOM France

June 2025

Program

08.45 **Coffee Reception**

09.30 **Official Opening Remarks**

Christophe Leribault

Director of the Établissement public du château, du musée et du domaine national de Versailles

Christelle Creff

Director of the Department of The Museums of France - Ministry of Culture

Emma Nardi

Chair of ICOM international (video)

Emilie Girard

President of ICOM France

10.00 **Opening Keynote: The Open Museum and Its Enemies**

With a title that nods to Karl Popper's "The Open Society and Its Enemies" (published exactly 80 years ago), this talk explores the resurgence of anti-museum sentiment, at a time when the museum institution is becoming more and more global and continues to broaden its field of activity.

Jean-François Chougnat

Director General of Lille3000

10.30 **Session 1: Museums, an Adjustment Variable of Public Policy ?**

Despite their enduring place in cultural heritage and history, and despite their often reaffirmed dual role as educational actors and drivers of tourism and regional influence, museums often remain subject to budgetary and financial uncertainties. They are increasingly expected to generate a growing portion of their own revenue, frequently at the expense of their essential missions: conservation, enhancement, and expansion of collections. Museum leaders are constantly reinventing strategies to balance these competing demands. How can we develop a more sustainable funding model that enables museums to fully carry out their present and future missions? This roundtable will feature insights from museum directors and share potential approaches.

Guillaume Désanges

President of Palais de Tokyo

Valérie Perlès

Director of the musée d'art et d'histoire Paul Éluard, Saint-Denis

Michèle Rivet

Museologist and Scientific Director of the IRAPFM research project

Jean-Michel Tobelem

Director of Option Culture; Associate Professor at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Laurent Védrine

Director of musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux

Modérateur : **Dominique de Font-Réaulx**, Chief Curator and Advisor of the President-Director of the Louvre Museum

12.15 Free Lunch Break

14.00 Session 2: Strengthening Local Roots: Museums in Their Communities

This discussion will address key challenges facing museum professionals: How can a museum fulfill its universal cultural mission while staying closely connected to its local context? How can effective and impactful actions be implemented within the museum's local area? How can connections be built with other stakeholders, such as associations, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities? Does this involve dialogue, co-creation, and arts and cultural education programs, both inside the museum and beyond its walls? These challenges relate not only to how museums engage with their local audiences but also to the content of their programs. How can a museum become an emblematic actor, a bearer of the community's identity, and a place that speaks to everyone, one that people visit and return to?

Jean-Sébastien Bélanger

Director of Philanthropic Development, mission Old Brewery, Montréal.

Barthélémy Etchegoyen-Glama

Director of musée Bonnat-Helleu, Bayonne

Hélène Jagot

Director of musée et château de Tours

Corinne Meyniel

Director of Culture at the Urban Community of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

Moderator : **Cécilie de Saint Venant**, Deputy Director General for Development at the National Chambord Domain

15.45 Session 3: Creating Shared Narratives: Museums Aligned with Their Socioeconomic environment

The budget crisis is prompting museums to question their model and rethink their priorities. This reflection involves examining what "builds relationships" both inside and outside the institutions, while simultaneously testing their capacity to adapt to their environment. How can new shared narratives be constructed that both strengthen the internal coherence of museum organizations and create common stories with their partners, especially financial ones? What are the constraints and success factors? Do museums have assets to achieve this? And if so, what are they?

Etienne Bonnet-Candé

Deputy Director of France Muséums - Abu Dhabi

Philippe Le Diouron

Director of Transition and Consultant, expert in organizational and crisis management

Fleur Morfousse

Director of musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes

Grégory Pagano

Director of musées de Niort Agglo

Moderator : **Louis-Samuel Berger**, Deputy General Administrator of the Établissement public du château, du musée et du domaine national de Versailles

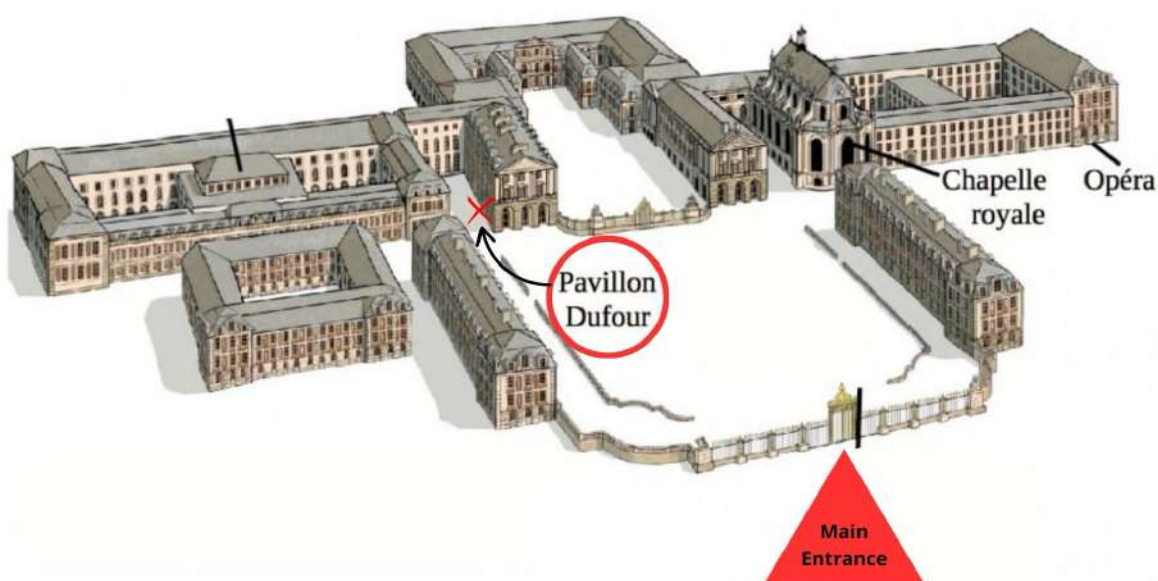
18.00 Professional tour of the Congress Hall at Château de Versailles

Practical Information

This professional day will take place in-person and online (select your preferred format during registration).

On-site access - doors open at 8.45

Auditorium, Pavillon Dufour, Château de Versailles



Registration is mandatory to attend the congress in person.

Online access

Available via Zoom, using the following links:

MORNING SESSION 9.30-12.15

Webinar ID: 845 5898 1682

Passcode: 061376

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84558981682?pwd=9BBL7prsdZp6ehpyJoJvp2ZvWwSFB.1>

AFTERNOON SESSION 14.00-17.45

Webinar ID: 871 3573 5185

Passcode: 995516

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87135735185?pwd=GhrgPcEa6dFYvllh2SwbaXorToZaSG.1>

Simultaneous interpretation will be available online in Spanish, English, and French, thanks to the support of the Ministry of Culture (SMF / Mission du patrimoine mondial).