

Annual report ICOM Netherlands 2022

March 2023, Caroline Breunese , chair@icom.nl

Recovering after the pandemic

This year brought us joyful and inspirational meetings with colleagues and visitors after the complex years of the COVID pandemic. But there were also worries.

In The Netherlands the museums were allowed to reopen from 26 January 2022 on. The visitor numbers increased slowly. Tourists returned to The Netherlands, but carefully. In general the visitor numbers for 2022 were only 75% compared to 2019. This aligns with the global trends. It had a great impact on the income of our museums: many of us felt not confident yet to organise new exhibitions or do other big investments. Also many museums were coping with a reduced staff due to financial cuts and long term illness after the COVID pandemic.

On top of the slow recovery, we were shocked and worried by the Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022. Dutch museums and ICOM Netherlands tried to help our colleagues in Ukraine. There have been several initiatives, from finding housing and jobs for refugees to shipping packing materials to damaged museums. As a result of the war, the energy costs increased enormously. This way we fell from one crisis into the other. We hope in 2023 we will see a solution to the war and a more stable and upward trend, not in the least on a personal level for the people in Ukraine.

On the positive side we have also experienced many inspiring and cheerful events. The highlight of the year was of course the General Conference in Prague in August 2022. We were able to meet again, exchange ideas, make new friends and plans for the future. ICOM Netherlands would like to thank everyone who made this possible.

Members activities

➤ Training sessions Cultural Awareness

The whole year round, on 6 occasions, we organised a training on 'Cultural Awareness'. This course was developed tailor made for the Dutch ICOM members. It made them aware of their own (lack of) experience with foreigners and more in general with people with divergent backgrounds. The specialized trainer gave the participants many tips and tricks. This is going to help them when they cooperate with ICOM members abroad. The training was highly appreciated.

➤ Scholarships for research and meetings abroad

During 2022 several members approached us with an application for a scholarship. This would help them to travel abroad to join an ICOM IC meeting or another conference in their field of expertise. It could also help them to do research in another country. We also gave

several contributions to travel and hotel accommodations in Prague during the General Conference. During the years of the pandemic these kinds of grants were not used at all, but in 2022 the amount of applications slowly increased.

➤ General Assembly ICOM Netherlands (May 2022)

Once a year ICOM Netherlands organises a General Assembly for its members. In 2022 this took place on the 20th of May in the Mesdag Collection in The Hague. During the meeting the financial annual report on 2021 was presented and approved. Also on the agenda was the change of the composition of the Board and the division of tasks: Diederik von Bönninghausen stepped down as chair and Board Member, and Ruud Moesbergen, our treasurer, also took leave of the Board. New members were installed (see also 'Board activities').

➤ 'Towards Prague': preparing with guests from Prague

To prepare our members who would be travelling to Tjech, we organised a gathering in June. For this occasion we invited Kristýna Hájková from ICOM Czechia to come over to The Netherlands. Kristýna gave an excellent presentation about Prague, with practical and cultural information and everything we wanted to know about the conference. This way our members were well prepared. They also made plans to travel together and exchanged their conference schedules. ICOM Netherlands arranged a hotel for all members who wished to stay together in this 'Holland House'. About 35 members took advantage of this opportunity.

➤ General Assembly ICOM in Prague

During the week of the General Conference and Assembly in Prague, ICOM Netherlands organised several gatherings and opportunities for our members to meet each other, prepare meetings and lectures and exchange information and connections. The week was kicked off during a very pleasant reception at the residence of the Dutch ambassador in Prague. Many Dutch members fulfil tasks as active (Board) members in IC's, Regional alliances, working groups and standing committees. ICOM Netherlands was present, active and very much involved. The Dutch press was very much interested in the new museum definition and was in touch with our communications officer several times.



Preparing the conference
with Kristýna Hájková



Speeches by ambassador Daan Huisinga and ICOM chair Caroline Breunese

Board activities

➤ New Board

On May 20th new Board members were installed in The Hague. We thanked our former chair and treasurer, and installed a new chair, treasurer, communications officer and events officer.

Board from 20 May 2022

Caroline Breunesse - chair

Arja van Veldhuizen - secretary

Amanda Vollenweider - treasurer and museum definition

Paul Klarenbeek - communications

Femke Haijtema - programming

Justin van den Berg - social media and programming

Rapti Miedema - programming

➤ Meetings with ICOM France, Belgium, Germany

Our new Board feels it is really important to have good relationships with other NC's. Next to the many meetings during the General Conference, our chair has started an 'introductory round': she met intensely with our closest neighbours ICOM France, Belgium and Germany. Many other meetings will follow.

➤ Strengthening cooperation with Dutch Museums Association and Commission of Code of Ethics

ICOM Netherlands and the Dutch Museums Association are working together more and more. This cooperation will encourage Dutch museum officers to build on their network and develop new skills. A good example of this is the sessions we organised together on the new museum definition and the upcoming translation in Dutch. For this we also have a close collaboration with the Flemish speaking ICOM branch in Belgium and the Belgian Association on Cultural Heritage, Faro. The new chair has also met with the Dutch commission of Code of Ethics and agreed to have a more regular contact.

➤ Donation to Ukraine from our emergency fund via CER

ICOM Netherlands has donated its emergency budget of € 10.000 to help our colleagues in Ukraine. We worked together with Cultural Emergency Response, an organisation who is an expert in helping heritage professionals all around the world.

➤ Lecture on ICOM Netherlands in Japan for ICOM Japan

Thanks to the support of ICOM Japan, our chair was able to travel to Japan in October with a visa. She met with the ICOM Japan staff in Tokyo and held a presentation on 'museums and ICOM in The Netherlands'. She also met with staff from several museums in Tokyo and in Nagasaki. The Netherlands have a special connection to Nagasaki. For centuries no foreigners were allowed to visit Japan, except for Dutch tradesmen who were allowed to stay at Deshima

island, now part of Nagasaki. The visit of our chair to Japan strengthened the bonds between our two countries.

➤ Communication

ICOM Netherlands has a very active communications team. They further improved the website, were visible on all social platforms and initiated a members survey.

➤ Preparing strategic plans 2024-2026 and activity plan 2023

Aligned with the new general Strategic Plan from ICOM, we have started to discuss our own Strategic Plan for 2024-2026. We will present this at the Dutch General Assembly in May 2023. An often bespoke topic in our Board are the criteria for our (new) members. We agreed to start a special Working Group on this, following the advice from the NCWG, the ICOM Working group on Membership Criteria under chairmanship of Hugh Maguire. Other important topics are an intense program of activities for our members to stimulate participation in the international ICOM network and exchanging museum expertise. We pay special attention to inclusion and diversity and to climate change and biodiversity loss. Last but not least we are preparing a further professionalisation of our administrative processes.



Dutch members
at the Embassy
of The
Netherlands in
Prague, 2022