

Observatory of Audiences in the Cultural heritage of Catalonia

Visitor count of the heritage centres of Catalonia 2016

The aim of the Observatory of Audiences in the Cultural Heritage of Catalonia (referred to here as the [OPPCC](#), in keeping with its acronym in Catalan) is to serve the museums and heritage centres, as well as the administrations and owners of such heritage by helping to plan, programme and assess their relationships with their audiences.

To achieve this objective, one of the programmes of the OPPCC aims to provide statistics and reports based on the quantitative data submitted previously by the heritage centres themselves.

In 2015, the OPPCC created a model for visitor quantification¹ that enabled the standardised measurement of the data corresponding to visitor traffic at the heritage centres of Catalonia. The cornerstone of the model was the adoption of a single glossary of terms (visitor, use, temporary exhibition, etc.) shared by all the heritage centres.

The visitor count model does not only apply to the museums, but rather to all of the country's heritage centres: registered museums, collections, monuments and interpretation centres.

This document is the report published annually by the OPPCC, with the results for the year 2016 of the heritage centres that replied to the request for information on visitor traffic.

In 2016, Catalonia had 790 registered heritage centres:

- ✓ 113 registered museums
- ✓ 115 museum extensions
- ✓ 389 collections
- ✓ 91 monuments
- ✓ 82 interpretation centres

¹ [Model for the visitor counts of the museums and heritage centres in Catalonia](#), Observatory of Audiences of the Cultural Heritage of Catalonia, 2016.

This document contains a set of 39 indicators related with the visitors received by the heritage centres de Catalonia, based on two essential concepts:

- Visitor²: A physical person who accesses the premises of the heritage centre to use its services, whether exhibitions (both those of the site's own production and those produced by others), its own activities (organised by the heritage centre) or museum services (library, archive, collections, etc.).
- Uses: Each of the uses carried out by the visitors while at the heritage centre, whether the visit is made to one or more exhibits and whether it involves attendance to cultural activities or the use of a museum service (library, consultation, etc.). During his/her visit, each visitor can make one or more uses of the heritage centre. Each visitor is counted only once, regardless of the number of uses that he/she makes of the museum supply.
- People around the heritage: visitors (physical person who accesses the premises of the heritage centre to use its services, whether exhibitions –both those of the site's own production and those produced by others–, its own activities –organised by the heritage centre– or museum services (library, archive, collections, etc.–); plus visitors to the building (people who enter the museum premises and do not visit exhibitions or attend activities held at the site or make use of any museum service. This includes both those who visit the premises of the heritage centre for its architectural value without using the centre per se, as well as those who come to the centre for non-museum purposes –use of the shop, café, toilets...–, as well as those who attend outside activities, in other words, activities organised by institutions that are not associated with the centre); plus visitors to activities outside of the centre (people who attend occasional activities organised by the centre within the framework of a celebration, fair, gathering or similar and which do not involve recorded sign-ups or precise visitor counts. These activities are held outside of the heritage centre and do not form part of the habitual activity of the centre).

² A significant difference between the 2016 report and the 2015 report is that the basic concept of visitors now includes people who use the museum services.

Executive summary

1.1. Summary of general data

	Catalonia Heritage 2016	2015 (235 centres)	2016 (337 centres)	Variation in %
1	Visitors to exhibitions and/or activities	19,992,112	25,232,477	
2	Visitors using museum services	78,053	68,710	
3	Visitors (Visitors to the centre's own exhibitions and/or activities + museum services)	20,070,165	25,301,187	26,1%
4	Visitors to the building	1,310,371	2,106,271	
5	Visitors outside of the centre	298,238	578,904	
6	People around the heritage (Visitors to the centre's own exhibitions and/or activities + museum services + visitors to the building + visitors outside of the centre)	21,678,774	27,986,362	29,1%
7	School group visitors	1,601,681	1,918,266	19,8%
8	Visitors paying general admission fee	9,645,155	11,812,095	
9	Visitors paying discounted admission	4,701,719	5,576,531	
10	Visitors with free admission (including visitors using museum services)	5,723,291	7,912,561	
	Heritage of Catalonia 2016	2015 (235 centres)	2016 (337 centres)	Variation in %
11	Exhibition use: permanent and temporary	23,476,294	29,310,053	
12	Uses of permanent exhibitions	18,219,200	23,151,813	
13	Uses of temporary exhibitions	5,257,094	6,158,240	
14	Uses of the centre's own activities	2,399,554	3,024,027	
15	Uses of the centre's own activities by school groups	1,046,657	1,316,090	
16	Uses of the centre's own activities by specialised groups	58,811	76,416	
17	Uses of the centre's own activities by families	302,635	345,413	
18	Uses of the centre's own activities by the general public	991,466	1,286,108	
19	Uses of the museum services	78,053	69,999	
20	Uses of exhibitions, centre's own activities and museum services	25,953,901	32,404,079	24.9%
21	Uses of outside activities – space lent	425,671	440,021	
22	Uses of outside activities –space rented	116,660	259,512	
23	Uses of outside activities	542,331	699,533	29.0%
24	Website visitors	19,747,685	21,985,669	11.3%
25	Followers in the social media	133,392,278	220,753,975	65.5%

1.2. Visitors

In 2016 the heritage centres of Catalonia received more than 25.3 million visitors. Museums accounted for 35% of the heritage centres, attracting 41% of the visitors. Collections occupied 45% of the centres and attracted 49% of the visitors. Another 13% of the centres were monuments, which brought in 10% of the visitors. As to the interpretation centres, they accounted for 7% of the heritage centres and captured 1% of the visitors.

It has been seen that **54% of the centres received less than 10,000 visitors throughout the year –with a median of 3,185 visitors per centre – and accounted for 3% of all the visitors to the heritage centres of Catalonia in 2016. At the other extreme, 6% of the centres received more than 250,000 visitors throughout the year, with a median of 731,081 visitors per centre, and hence accounted for 75% of all heritage centre visitors.** When considered by type, proportionally 96% of all interpretation centres, 83% of the collection centres, 62% of the museums and 59% of the monuments received less than 25,000 visitors.

Theme

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the heritage centres of Catalonia are focused on art, 19% on history and archaeology, 18% are monographic heritage centres, 16% are local multi-disciplinary centres –museums and collections that conserve and spread knowledge of the heritage and memory of the corresponding regional community–, 10% are focused on science and technology and 8% are dedicated to ethnography, anthropology and society. **The heritage centres dedicated to art captured 51% of the total number of visitors in Catalonia,** with a median of 11,447 visitors per centre. The centres dedicated to history and archaeology received 20% of the visitors.

Ownership

In 2016, the privately owned heritage centres attracted nearly 60% of the total number of visitors, although they only accounted for 29% of the total number of centres. The publicly owned centres captured 41% of the visitors, although they accounted for 71% of all centres. Despite this, the median number of visitors per publicly owned centre was 9,355.5, virtually twice the median number of visitors for privately owned centres, which came to 5,621.0.

The city of Barcelona is the only regional area where the number of privately owned heritage centres is higher than the number of publicly owned ones (55% vs. 45%). In the rest of Catalonia, most of the heritage centres are publicly owned, accounting for 75%, with the exceptions of the rest of the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona (83% public centres) and the Terres de Lleida i Aran region (66% public).

Among the heritage centres that received more than 100,000 visitors in 2016, most of them are privately owned. Conversely, most of the heritage centres with an annual number of visitors below 100,000 are publicly owned.

The centres dedicated to art show equal numbers between publicly and privately owned centres. For all other themes, the publicly owned centres show vastly higher numbers than those of the private ones, with percentages exceeding 90% among those focused on history and archaeology and those of a local multi-disciplinary nature. We must point out that 40% of the monographic museums are in fact privately owned, which is most probably due to the activity of private collectors who have traditionally focused on highly specific themes.

Regional distribution of centres and visitors

The rest of the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona accommodates 19% of the heritage centres of Catalonia, followed by the counties of Girona and Terres de Lleida i Aran, with 18% each. Camp de Tarragona i les Terres de l'Ebre holds 16% and the city of Barcelona contains 15%. Finally, the Penedès region and Central Catalonia together accommodate 14% of the heritage centres.

The regional distribution of visitors to the heritage centres of Catalonia is very uneven. **The city of Barcelona attracts virtually 74% of all visitors throughout the country, and the counties of Girona account for another 11%. Hence, these two regions amass 85% of all visitors to the heritage centres of Catalonia.**

At the other extreme, Camp de Tarragona i les Terres de l'Ebre, the rest of the Metropolitan Region, Penedès and Central Catalonia and Terres de Lleida i Aran, with a proportion ranging between 14 and 19% of the heritage centres, each attract between 2 and 6% of the total number of visitors.

Number of visitors in relation to the population and the tourism of each region

In 2016, **the heritage centres of Catalonia received 3.4 visitors per inhabitant. The city of Barcelona held an exceptional position, with a rate of 11.6 visitors per inhabitant. The other regions of Catalonia showed values ranging between nearly 4 visitors per inhabitant in Girona to the 0.3 visitors per inhabitant in the rest of the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona.** Similarly, the rest of the province of Barcelona received 0.9 visitors per inhabitant, whilst the other areas showed values above 1: 1.2 visitors per inhabitant at the centres of Terres de Lleida i Aran and 2.0 visitors per inhabitant at the centres of Camp de Tarragona i les Terres de l'Ebre.

As to the heritage centre visitor / traveller ratio in Catalonia, which is separated by tourism brand, once again **Barcelona held an exceptionally high position, with 2.4 visitors per traveller received by the Catalan capital in 2016. Second place went to the brand Paisatges de Barcelona (Anoia, Bages, Osona and Moianès),** which, despite receiving a modest number of travellers, reached a rate of more than 1.4 visitors per traveller. The other tourism brands obtained diverse results below 1, which suggests that the number of travellers received was higher than the number of visitors. Moreover, there was an apparent correlation between the volume of travellers and the visitors received by the region's centres.

Days open and daily visitors

In 2016, all together, the heritage centres of Catalonia were open on more than 86,000 days. 41% of those days corresponded to collections and another 40% to the museums. Moreover, the museums were the type of centre with the largest number of days of the year, reaching an annual average of 293 open days; 60 days more than the collections and nearly 110 annual days more than the interpretation centres.

There is a certain apparent correlation between the number of open days of the heritage centres of Catalonia and the number of visitors received.

The privately owned heritage centres were open more days of the year than the publicly owned ones. A comparison of their averages reveals that the private centres were open 20 days more a year than the public centres.

In 2016, the heritage centres of Catalonia received an average of 291.7 visitors each day. Among them, the collections presented the highest ratio of all, with as many as 352.7 visitors each day, followed by the museums, with 299.2 visitors a day.

People around the heritage

The total number of people drawn to the heritage centres of Catalonia, whether as visitors to their exhibits or users of their other activities and services, as well as those who entered the heritage buildings just to use their complementary services, and those who attended another activity organised outside of the centre came to nearly 28 million people in 2016.

Heritage centres and education

The heritage centres of Catalonia received more than 1,900,000 school group visitors in 2016.

The heritage centres dedicated to science and technology received the largest numbers of school group visitors with an average of more than 12,750 students. Next came a group formed by the centres dedicated to history/archaeology and art, with very similar average numbers of school visitors, with approximately 8,000 students per centre.

The public centres received 62% of all the school group visitors, although they only received 41% of the total number of visitors. Conversely, the private centres received 38% of the school group visitors, although they received 59% of the total number of visitors.

The school groups accounted for 10.2% of the visitors received by the heritage centres of Catalonia in 2016. In the case of the interpretation centres, this proportion was as high as 26%.

The heritage centres of the rest of the Metropolitan Region showed rates of 27% of school group visitors. Those of Camp de Tarragona and Penedès and Central Catalonia showed rates higher than 22%. The only regions that displayed school group visitor rates below the overall rate were the city of Barcelona and the Counties of Girona, which obtained a lower rate of school group visitors due to the fact that

they received larger volumes of visitors, which was largely due to the heavy presence of tourists.

The heritage centres that received up to 25,000 annual visitors were the same centres that presented the highest proportions of school group visitors, with rates between 22 and 23%. In the cases where this visitor volume was exceeded, the proportions of school group visitors were progressively lower. Hence, school groups accounted for as little as 6.7% of the visitors at the centres that received more than 250,000 annual visitors. Most probably, the heavy presence of tourists at the most frequented centres led to a lower proportion of school group visitors in terms of percentage, much despite the larger numbers of students in terms of volume.

The heritage centres dedicated to science and technology not only received a higher average of school groups; they were also the ones to receive a larger proportion in relative terms. In fact, more than one quarter of their visitors consisted of students. Also worthy of note is the percentage of school groups that visit the local multi-disciplinary centres and those dedicated to ethnography, anthropology and society, which show rates of 17% and 15% respectively. Conversely, the monographic and art centres capture relatively lower school group visitor rates (taking in only 7%), in comparison with the centres focused on other subjects.

The public centres received the greatest relative proportion of school group visitors, accounting for 12%, whilst the private centres received 8%.

Visitors by admission fee

Among the 25.3 million visitors received by the heritage centres of Catalonia, **47% of the visitors paid the full admission prices** – 75% of those admissions were paid at privately owned centres –, **22% of the visitors paid discounted admission prices and 31% accessed the centres free of charge.**

The public centres presented the highest median of free-admission visitors per centre (4,741), which more than doubled the figure presented by the private centres. All the same, it must be noted that more than 2.5 million visitors accessed privately owned centres free of charge.

In 2016, the free admission rate was 33%³. This rate was higher among the visitors of interpretation centres (51%) and collections (35%). The free admission rate for visitors to museums was 33%. As to the monuments, they had the lowest number of free admission visitors, showing just 24%.

The heritage centres of the rest of the Metropolitan Region showed the highest free admission rates of all: 56%. The sites with the lowest free admission rates were the heritage centres of counties of Girona, with only 24%.

It was seen that as the number of visitors increased the free admission rate dropped. In fact, although the less frequented museums (up to 25,000 visitors) showed free admission rates well over 50%, with figures within the 54–56% range, the centres that received more than 250,000 visitors displayed a free admission rate of around 30%.

The local multi-disciplinary heritage centres showed the highest free admission rate of all (66%). Not far behind were the centres dedicated to science and technology, ethnography, anthropology and society, with rates between 58% and 60%. The centres focused on history/archaeology allowed 51% of their visitors to enter for free. These rates were considerably lower at art centres–20%– and at monographic heritage centres, where only 19% of the visitors were admitted free of charge.

The public centres presented the highest free admission rate, reaching 52%, which is nearly three times higher than the free admissions of the private centres (19%).

1.3. Uses

Uses are each of the uses carried out by the visitors during the time they spend at the centre, whether they visit exhibitions, attend cultural activities or use a museum service. Each visitor can make one or more uses of the heritage centre during his/her visit. **The 25.3 million visitors received by**

³ This figure is slightly higher than the figure presented in the first paragraph of this section, because in order to draw up this indicator, it was necessary to take into account the 317 centres that presented data on the number of free-admission visitors, whereas a smaller number of heritage centres (234) provided data on the number of visitors that had paid the general and discounted admission fees.

the heritage centres of Catalonia in 2016 generated 32.4 million uses, translating 1.28 uses per visitor.

The interpretation centres and museums were the venues most active in generating a diverse supply, reaching rates higher than 1.35 uses per visitor.

The heritage centres of the rest of the Metropolitan Region showed a rate of 1.70 uses per visitor, which was considerably higher those of other the regions in Catalonia. The rate of 1.52 uses per visit at the centres in Penedès and Central Catalonia is also worthy of note.

The centres that received up to 50,000 annual visitors presented the highest indicators of uses per visitor, ranging between 1.57 and 1.63. At the centres that received more than 50,000 visitors, this indicator showed a progressive decrease, reaching 1.22 uses per visitor at the centres that received more than 250,000 visitors.

The heritage centres dedicated a science and technology presented the highest rate of uses per visitor (2.08). Together with the centres focused on ethnography, anthropology and society (2.03), these rates were far higher than those of the other centres. Similarly, the local multi-disciplinary centres also showed a high rate of uses per visitor (1.65), whereas the centres focusing on other themes showed rates below the overall average.

The public centres presented higher indicators of uses per visitor (1.37) than the private centres, suggesting that the former offered a wider ranging supply of exhibitions and activities.

Although the heritage centres of Catalonia received an average of 292 visitors per day, the daily number of uses were as high as 374.

Exhibition uses per visitor

In addition to the permanent exhibits that are offered by virtually all the centres (in the cases of monuments, the building itself or the archaeological remains are considered a permanent exhibit), **83% of the museums scheduled temporary exhibits; a relative percentage far higher than those of the other types of centres.**

The heritage centres of the rest of the Metropolitan Region of the Penedès region and Central Catalonia presented higher exhibition

usage rates per visitor in comparison with those of the other Catalan regions.

As the number of visitors of a centre increases, the number of exhibition uses per visitor decreased.

Mention must be made of the high rate of exhibition use per visitor at the centres dedicated to ethnography, anthropology and society (1.71) and science and technology (1.52), which showed far higher values than those of centres focused on other themes.

School group uses

The school activity uses encompass the workshops, guided tours and other activities that the school group visitors take part in at the different centres. **The heritage centres of Catalonia offered more than 1.3 million activity uses to the school children that visited them in 2016.**

Mention must be made of the high number of uses of the school activities that were offered by the local multi-disciplinary heritage centres, with a median of 3,146 uses. The science and technology and art centres particularly stood out in this sense, presenting medians of more than 2,730 uses. School groups made the least usage of the ethnography, anthropology and society centres, which showed a median of only 433 uses.

60% of the school activity uses were provided by publicly owned centres, whereas the remaining 40% were provided by private centres.

The school service rate shows the relative importance of the school activity uses in relation to the total uses of the activities of the centre. The higher this rate is, the higher the relative importance of the school group activities in relation to the total number of activities offered. **The interpretation centres (70%), followed by the museums (53%), were the centres with the highest school activity use rates.**

The monographic and art centres displayed the highest relative proportion of school activity uses: 59% and 52%, respectively.

Particularly worthy of note was the usage rate of the science and technology centres, which presented a school activity use rate of 43%. This was lower than the average rate of the other thematic centres (44%).

Family uses

In comparison with the 1.3 million school activity uses, **in 2016 the heritage centres of Catalonia presented more than 345,000 family activity uses.** The collections particularly stood out in this sense, accounting for 54% of the total family activity uses.

The local multi-disciplinary centres offered the highest numbers of family activity uses in absolute numbers and also presented and the highest family activity average.

The privately owned heritage centres offered 60% of the family activity uses in 2016, versus the remaining 40% accounted for by the public centres. The average and median numbers of family activity use per centre also displayed higher values among the private centres than among the public centres.

The family service rate for the year displays the relative importance of the family activity uses in relation to the total uses of the activities offered by the centre. The higher this rate is, the higher the relative importance of the family activities in relation to the total number of activities offered. Along these lines, the **monuments particularly stood out, with a family service rate of 44%, which was far higher than that of the other types of heritage centres.**

The local multi-disciplinary centres presented the highest family use rate in relation to the total number of activities offered (30%), followed by the science and technology centres (19%).

The family use rate at privately owned heritage centres (26%) was patently higher than the same rate at publicly owned centres (10%).

1.4. Virtual visitors

The heritage centres of Catalonia received nearly 22 million visits to their websites⁴, a number that closely resembles the number of their physical on-site visitors. There is a strong correlation –entirely logical– between the volumes of the on-site and virtual visitors.

⁴ It must be borne in mind that to calculate this ratio not all of the centres were taken into account. Rather, the ratio only took into account the centres that presented virtual visitor counts.

In 2016 the heritage centres of Catalonia received 1.3 website visitors for each physical on-site visitor. It must be mentioned that the centres that received more than 250,000 visitors were the only ones to receive less virtual visitors than physical on-site visitors. The history/archaeology and local multi-disciplinary centres were the only ones to receive less virtual visitors than physical on-site visitors.

The publicly owned heritage centres received one million sessions more on their websites than the privately owned centres, translating to 8% more. Nevertheless, both the average and the median of the website sessions of the private centres tripled the number of sessions of the public centres.

The virtual visitors of the heritage centres of Catalonia spent an average of 2 minutes and 23 seconds per visit at their websites. On average, the virtual visitors of the heritage centres visited 3.5 pages per web session. The websites of the heritage centres of Catalonia presented a 49% bounce rate. **All of this information appears to indicate that a large number of website visits were simply to consult basic information on the centres, such as the timetable, price or the address; whereas another important group of the virtual visitors consulted the different sections of the website in depth to find out about activities, exhibitions, collections or other detailed information.**

On 31 December 2016, the heritage centres of Catalonia had more than **2.2 million followers in the social media**. The museums accounted for 51% of the total.

1.5. Evolution of the visitors between 2015 and 2016

The 2015 report included 235 heritage centres, whereas the 2016 study includes 337. This increase in the number of centres (43.4%) that have provided their information displays that the total volume of visitors at the heritage centres of Catalonia has increased (26.1%). Nevertheless, there was an apparent decrease by more than 10,000 visitors in the average number of visitors per centre. This result can be explained by the fact that the Observatory has managed to attract a larger number of heritage centres that received less visitors than the average for the previous year.

If we compare only the centres that took part in the studies of both 2015 and 2016 (215), we obtain a more realistic calculation: a 2.6% increase in the number of visitors to the heritage centres of Catalonia in 2016 over 2015.

A case-by-case comparison would reveal that 63% of the centres increased their number of visitors in 2016 over 2015, whilst 37% showed a decrease in the number of visitors.

Annex

Types of centres: registered centres and response rate

Below is the list of the heritage centres of Catalonia on 31 December 2016, grouped into the categories of Museums (main headquarters and extensions), Collections, Monuments and Interpretation Centres. The following table presents the number and percentage of each category in relation to the total number of the listed centres and the number of responses obtained in each category:

Heritage centres of Catalonia. Registered centres and response rate. 2016				
	Registered centres	% of registered centres	Responses	Response %
Museums	113	14.3	112*	99.1
Museum Extensions	115	14.6	115	100.0
Collections	389	49.2	151	38.8
Monuments	91	11.5	44	48.4
Interpretation Centres	82	10.4	25	30.5
Total	790	100.0	447	56.6

* One registered museum did not send in its results for 2016. In this case, and because it was a registered museum, the information from 2015 was used in lieu of that of 2016. In all the other categories, only the information from the heritage centres that sent in their information from 2016 was included.

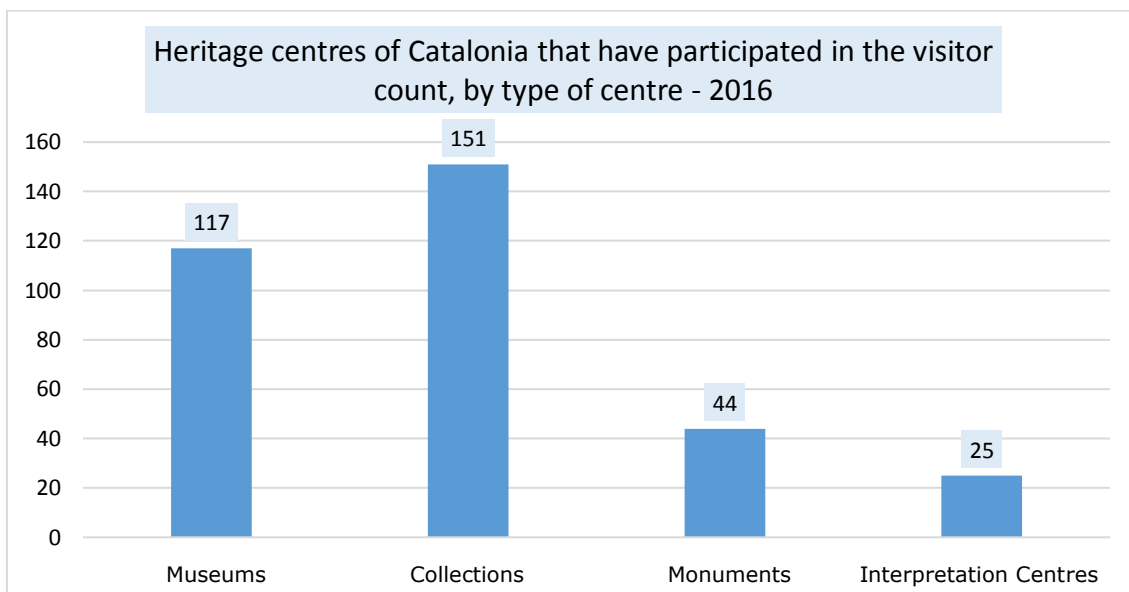
It was decided to process the information of each museum together with that of their corresponding extensions. The heritage centres were grouped into 4 types: Museums (including the main headquarters and the extensions), Collections, Monuments and Interpretation Centres.

Catalan heritage centres that participated in the visitor count, by type of centre. 2016		
	Centres	%
Museums	117*	34.7%
Collections	151	44.8%
Monuments	44	13.1%
Interpretation Centres	25	7.4%
Total	337	100.0%

* The charts in this report present a total of 117 registered museums. The difference from the official number of registered museums (113) is the result of the following circumstances:

- The *Can Llopis Romantic Museum* was closed during 2016.
- The *Cau Ferrat Museum* and the *Maricel Museum* were processed as one, as they share a single entrance.
- The Museum of the *Botanical Institute of Barcelona* sent in its information combined with that of the *Botanical Garden of Barcelona* (extension of the *Museum of Natural Science of Barcelona*).
- Moreover, the following extensions were considered as individual centres, due to their regional dispersion: the 4 secondary locations of the Museum of Archaeology of

Catalonia (*Empúries, Girona, Olèrdola and Ullastret*) and 3 extensions belonging to the Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia (the *Farga Palace, the Asland Cement Museum* and the *Sedó Colony Museum*).





This report was drawn up by the Observatory of Audiences in the Cultural Heritage of Catalonia.

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The Observatory of Audiences in the Cultural Heritage of Catalonia is a project of the Catalan Institute of Cultural Heritage Research (known by its acronym in Catalan, ICRPC).



With the support of:

