



Statement on the Impact of the Energy Crisis on Museums in Europe

Berlin, 16 September 2022: Rising energy costs across Europe are placing a considerable burden on museums and other cultural institutions. Significant increases in the cost of electricity and heating are expected for autumn and winter because of exceptionally rising energy costs in the world market. Museums throughout Europe have been challenged by two years of significantly reduced visitor numbers due to the pandemic, leading to unprecedented losses of income. Museums and other cultural organisations usually have fixed budgets for running costs, which includes energy costs. In the past years, the energy costs have been relatively low, and museums are clearly worried about the increasing prices in this and the coming years, as some museums foresee a cost increase of up to 400% in energy bills this winter.

The cultural sector has proven to be resilient and adaptive during COVID19 and will of course do its best in contributing to overcome this crisis by investigating every possible way to save energy. Several recommendations have already been published on national and local level by various organisations. However, the already challenged financial situation of museums due to the pandemic, limits investments in their infrastructure, in sustainability and energy efficiency. In addition, the investment backlog in the public cultural sector across many countries prevents museums to work in an energy-efficient manner, which will increase costs as the energy crisis advances. Furthermore, cultural heritage protection makes the introduction of measures for energy efficiency more difficult for many museums since their buildings are under special protection.

Cultural spaces and offers – as we have witnessed during the pandemic - are extremely important for social cohesion and personal well-being during times of crisis. The cultural sector in Europe is still in a state of emergency due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. NEMO is concerned about possible anew closures and dramatic reductions of services and opening hours of museums due to increased energy costs. The closure and/or reduction of services of museums has a minimal impact in terms of energy savings but does have a significant impact on the cultural and social fabric of Europe.

NEMO asks policy makers at all levels to do their utmost to keep museums open by:

- considering the rising energy prices and increase the operational budget for museums accordingly
- providing additional funds for 2022 for further payments and budget adjustments for museums and cultural institutions,
- increasing the budgets for operational fixed costs according to need for the years 2023 and following
- providing additional funds for investments in the infrastructure of museums, so that buildings can be maintained in a more energy-efficient, ecological, and sustainable manner as soon as possible