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**National Preventive Conservation
Strategy in Hungary, 2003-2010**

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MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION
AND CULTURE


Museum
Preservation
Programme



Museum Conservation Booklet, 5.

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INTRODUCTION

There are several different initiatives at the root of recent Hungarian developments targeting the improvement of museum collections. One excellent source of support has come in the form of a **Dutch-Hungarian collaboration**. Between 1995 and 1997 as part of the MATRA project, Hungarian museum leaders were given training in museum management. Additionally, the Pulszky Society of the Hungarian Museum Association and the Nederlandsche Museum Vereniging (Netherlands Museum Association) embarked on a co-operative effort in museum management with the financial support of the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education, Culture and Sciences; the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education (later Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, now Ministry of Education and Culture); and the national committees of the International Council of Museums in both countries.

During the second phase of the MATRA project, between 1997 and 2000, collections management workshops and study trips were organised for Hungarian museum staff in both Hungary and the Netherlands. In this phase, in addition to 25-30 museum professionals, both the Ministry of Culture (including the State Secretary and Head of the Museum Department) and the Cultural Heritage Inspectorate participated in workshops and study trips conducted in the Netherlands.

Another important source of assistance came from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). The year 1998 saw the launch of ICCROM's project Teamwork for Preventive Conservation 2, in which Hungary, as a candidate for EU membership, joined a partnership composed of Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic with the Ministry of Culture appointing the Museum of Ethnography as its own representative.

With both the help of various workshops and the personal involvement of ICCROM advisors Jim McGreevy and Neal Putt, first, a Preventive Conservation Working Group was formed within the Museum of Ethnography, second, an ongoing project to map the collection, storage rooms, and exhibitions was begun, and third, a strategy for establishing Preventive Conservation policy in the museum was drafted. The Museum of Ethnography was accorded the title of "Associate ICCROM Institution" both in 1999, and in 2000.

As regards the foreign aspect of the Teamwork for Preventive Conservation Strategy project, following two workshops for organisers, a workshop was held in Vantaa, Finland in 2000, as a result of which the **Vantaa Document** on the importance of Preventive Conservation was drafted. This work was translated into Hungarian before reaching decision-makers in Hungary. In 2003, the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage set up a Preventive Conservation Committee for museums.

In the spring of 2003, the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage produced a medium-term plan for museum modernisation. Entitled *The Necessity of Renewal*, this strategic document accorded high priority to the issue of protecting museum collections. To this end, a five-person team of experts set about developing a comprehensive plan for optimising

the conditions under which museum artefacts in Hungarian museums are kept. The programme defined the agenda deemed necessary for the protection of all such artefacts, emphasising that achievement of the objective would be subject to a sizeable expansion of allocated state budget resources. In 2003, the ministry provided 168 thousand euros for the implementation of the plan and charged the Museum Preservation Committee (MPC), the body that had developed the programme, with management of the project.¹ A national centre from which the programme was co-ordinated was set up in the Museum of Ethnography. Starting in April of 2004, after the year's preparatory work had been completed, the preservation programme was incorporated into the ministry's Alpha Programme, a large-scale effort launched almost concurrently by the ministry. The project was given the official title *The Future of our Museum Heritage – Preservation Sub-Programme*.

At the time the programme was accepted, the ministry planned, based on a proposal by the committee, to provide funding in amounts that increased from year to year. This proved possible during the initial phase, and the allocation was doubled between the first and second years. During the third year, however, the amount was not increased, while in the fourth, it actually fell, a result of general economic austerity measures, to 160 thousand euros (*Figure 1*). However, the ministry was able to supplement the amount spent on the preservation programme from other funding sources and to include preventive conservation as a condition for the realisation of exhibitions set up or in the process of being set up as part of the Alpha Programme. Thus, the ministry spent *nearly one million and 200 thousand euros (300 million forints²) in the first phase, between 2003 and 2006*, on the Hungarian museum preservation agenda. The latest phase of the programme was launched in 2007 with no essential conceptual changes and with usable funds continuing to depend on the opportunities afforded by the annual budget.

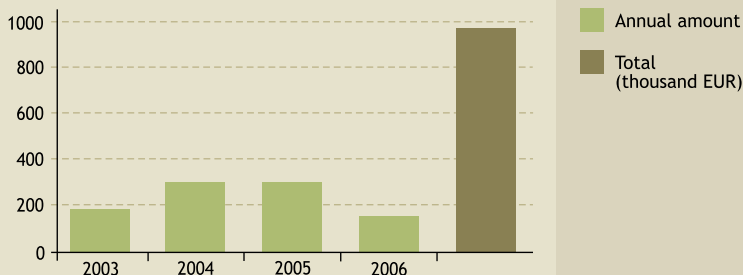


FIGURE 1. Museum Preservation Programme funding, 2003–2006

¹Members of the Committee are Zoltán Fejős (General Director, Museum of Ethnography), chairman of the Committee; György Balázs (Deputy Director, Museum of Ethnography), Mrs. Judit Perjés Bakay (conservator, Budapest History Museum), Péter Földessy (conservator, Hungarian National Museum; until 2006), Márta Járó (conservator, Hungarian National Museum), Katalin Nagy (conservator, Museum of Applied Arts, starting 2007); ministry coordinator Ágnes Holport.

²Using an average rate of 1 EUR = 250 HUF rate between 2003 and 2007.

CONCEPT AND STRATEGY, 2003

The comprehensive national conservation strategy plan that serves as the programme's point of departure is based on the results of a general survey regarding the *preservation situation* at institutions belonging to museum organisations maintained either by the state or by one of Hungary's county governments.

The survey made a record of various museum collections, the physical circumstances under which they are kept, and the condition of both storage facilities and exhibition areas.

The image yielded by the survey was an extraordinarily negative one. It was discovered, for example, that the condition of Hungary's approximately thirty million museum artefacts (of these, an estimated thirteen million have been individually inventoried) is varied at best, and in some cases is *alarming, with the majority of artefacts kept under declining circumstances*. The reasons for this are complex:

- The vast majority of museum collections are kept in buildings that were not constructed for the purposes of preserving artefacts, or in warehouses under poor storage conditions, often without adequate security.
- The museum network is compartmentalised from the standpoints of institutional and collection ownership, maintenance, and financing, making consistent operation difficult. As a result, the standard of protection accorded arte-

facts is inconsistent, as is the responsibility taken for their security.

- Institutions have insufficient budgetary funds to care for artefacts in complex fashion, as current international standards require.
- As regards general opinion on the subject of conservation, the field appears to suffer from somewhat restricted vision, applicable to funders, institutions, and museum staff of all kinds, each from a somewhat different point of view.
- Those involved lack up-to-date information and specialised knowledge of modern conservation practices, international norms, and the opportunities afforded by preventive action and proactive policies.
- Given the current exhibition-oriented approach, which inclines toward visually appealing results, preference is often given – both by maintainers and museum professionals – to the restoration of individual objects, rather than to preventive conservation, which favours adequate environmental conditions and the better design and maintenance of storage areas and exhibition halls.



Fusty chests in a regional storage room

STRATEGY

Adequate protection for all artefacts preserved in Hungarian museums can only be provided by a comprehensive, well-planned, long-term programme constructed in step-by-step fashion and co-ordinated by professionals. Such an approach presupposes the availability of significant material resources, while ensuring that funds are used both efficiently and in a well-balanced manner. The medium-term strategic plan developed to remedy this situation, implemented over the period from 2003 to 2006, defined 15 individual areas of activity, while also dealing with the issue of financing. The steps described under this plan and the reasons for each are the following:

Steps 1, 2, and 3: Conservation Survey, Database, and Monitoring

To preserve the body of museum artefacts in Hungary as a whole, a realistic assessment of prevailing circumstances was required. The *preservation* survey that, initiated in the spring of 2003, represented the first step in the overall program covered institutions belonging to national and county-run museums. Program targets included rounding out and completing the survey, as well as extending it to cover bodies of artefacts kept by institutions maintained from other resources. The next step will then be to assess the situation of special groups of materials and artefacts (photography, anthropological material, etc.). Survey data, recorded in a computer database, will form the basis for determining what major direction concrete funding, provided within the framework of the conservation programme, will

take in improving the fate of artefacts and artefact collections. At the same time, the *database* may be used for tracking changes. In the ideal case, *conservation monitoring* may be set up so that new data sets are taken every five years.



Storage (dis)order

4. Monitoring Equipment Programme

According to the pilot survey, *96 percent of storage facilities had no thermometers, over 80 percent had no relative humidity monitors*, and where such instruments were present, only about 30 percent were actually functional. From this it followed that the first order of business was to provide institutions – first national and county museums and museum organisations, then local government and ecclesiastical museums – with proper monitoring equipment.

5. Building Security Programme

Only one quarter of the windows and doors to museum exhibition rooms and storage facilities were protected with iron bars, only about half of buildings had alarm systems, and one tenth were protected by other means. In sixteen percent, no protection of any kind was present. Only three

percent of institutions employed security guards. Under such conditions, the minimum requirement for the protection of artefacts was seen as the provision of physical security, with primary reference to the construction of anti-intrusion systems.

6. and 7. Packaging, Storage, and Protective Material; Storage Equipment and Furnishings Programme

Survey data demonstrated that 64 percent of storage facilities were cluttered beyond the acceptable level, and nearly 70 percent contained objects that lay on the ground or were leaning against a wall. Nearly 60 percent of objects were free-standing, without the benefit of the protection afforded by a cabinet or cover. These and other similar data suggest that until such time as artefacts can be placed in locations with adequate storage conditions, they should be furnished with the additional protection of packaging or covering materials. Most packaging materials (such as boxes or crates) will continue to serve their useful purpose when artefacts are later moved to new facilities and/or permanent storage.

During the second phase of the programme, measures were taken that aimed at the modernisation or replacement of furnishings in storage facilities that certain museums wished to operate on either a long-term or permanent basis.

8. and 9. Museum Building and External Storage Facility Insulation; Climate Control Programme

The preliminary survey revealed that 25 percent of exhibitions held in museum buildings and 72 percent of storerooms had damp walls (or displayed signs of

dampness, such as salt efflorescence or flaking plaster). Forty-five percent of exhibitions and 96 percent of storerooms did not have properly sealed windows and doors. Ambient conditions under such circumstances were extreme: the temperature and relative humidity in the vast majority of cases varied greatly from the optimal value for artefact protection. Fluctuations were radical, which further increased the extent of damage. Nearly 70 percent of the storage facilities studied had no heating of any kind, and some reached temperatures as low as -7°C in winter and as high as $+41^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summer. Not one of the museums in the sample had a central climate control system for the purposes of stabilising temperature and relative humidity, only 7 percent had ventilation fans, and only 11 percent had some sort of facility for local humidification/dehumidification. In general, the overall condition of buildings, including poor wall, door, and window insulation, made it impossible for the institutions in question to provide adequate ambient conditions in exhibition halls and storage facilities.

This unfavourable situation may be remedied through well-selected and properly installed equipment (humidifiers, dehumidifiers) and adequate insulation.

10. Modular Artefact Storage Block Programme

At present, Hungarian museums in general struggle with various artefact storage problems: existing storage facilities are cluttered *and inadequate for the physical protection of museum collections* (light, dust, and temperature fluctuations, etc.). Most of them are located in designated his-

toric or similar old buildings. One possible remedy for the problem would be to create *modular artefact storage blocks* in attics, cellars, and other undivided storage areas, where artefacts may be sequestered in a unit offering more favourable storage conditions. This method was explored as part of a Dutch study trip, where a 30 m² storage "box" for unexhibited artefacts had been constructed in the attic of the Voorschoten Duivenvoorde manor as part of the institution's "Afgestoft en Ingeboekt" project. Based on this example, in 2002, the Museum of Ethnography constructed a pilot attic storage block that may now be used as the basis for the planning and construction of additional blocks.

11. Conservation-Oriented Review and Renovation of Permanent Exhibitions

At the time the programme was launched, the situation of exhibited artefacts from a conservation standpoint was worrying. The exhibition halls studied included a total of nearly 3,500 square metres of window surface area, with almost 40 percent of windows facing streets with *moderately or highly polluted air. Nearly half of all windows were not draught-proofing.* Almost fifty percent of exhibition storage areas were poorly sealed and constructed of inadequate materials. At least half of the artefacts on exhibit were potentially jeopardised by air pollutants. *Natural light was permitted to pass unimpeded* through approximately one-third of the window surface area in exhibition halls to the inner area of the exhibition, with only three percent of the surface of all glass protected by a UV-filtering coating.

Ninety-five percent of the artefacts in exhibition showcases that were lit with natu-

ral (and other forms of) light *were in fact exposed to UV radiation.* These data, which are of a general nature, paint a grave picture of the condition of permanent exhibitions, demonstrating that 80 percent of such exhibitions, with an average age of around 17 years, have not been renovated since they were first opened.

12. Training 1: Preventive Conservation

The concept of preventive conservation and the specialised knowledge and organisational requirements it entails have made but little headway in Hungarian museum practice. While the basics of preventive conservation *are* taught as part of restoration education, even there, curricula leave room for expansion, and students who have already graduated with such knowledge could easily use further education in this area. *Museum scholars, however, receive no conservation training whatsoever,* reinforcing the untenable notion on the part of museum staff that conservation is the exclusive preserve of restoration technicians and therefore, in fact, the same thing as active restoration.

13. Training 2: Fundamental Concepts of Exhibition Organisation and Preservation

Though there are significant differences between individual museums regarding the adequacy of conservation measures put in place when an exhibition is organised, the general practice is for there to be no conservation at all. Another problem involves the lack of basic conservation knowledge displayed by exhibition attendants and security guards.

14. Creation of an Information resource and Conservation Web Site

The professional work of museum conservation experts is largely aided by collective exchange of experience and knowledge. The most effective means today of facilitating such exchange is the *Internet* and the commonly accessible information it provides. A well-operated conservation *Web site* can serve equally as an aid in day-to-day work and a base of organisation for conservation professionals.

15. Construction of a Central Storage Base

All national museums located within the Budapest municipal limits struggle with the problem of limited storage space. Although the museum reconstruction programme is expected to alleviate problems of this type, it does not apply to all museums, nor will it solve the space problems of all institutions involved in reconstruction. At present, virtually all museums are forced to use external storage facilities. In Budapest, the Museum of Ethnography, the Museum of Applied Arts, and the Hungarian National Museum, for example, all store a portion of their material in a facility outside the city under conditions that may only be seen as adverse from the standpoint of conservation, while the National Museum has external warehouses in other locations, as well. Some parts of the holdings of the Budapest History Museum are housed in several external locations. International examples of one solution to this problem are provided by several museums in Finland, Denmark and Holland where modern storage facilities were constructed for shared use by several museums.

Financing

Hungarian museums follow no standard practice in terms of the conservation and security measures they take. Museums maintained by various organisations function side-by-side, without adhering to appropriate conservation norms or basic requirements, while conservation and security activity are subjected to the decisions of funders and the financial means at their disposal. No artefact from the holdings of a national or city museum – not to mention the often considerably valuable material preserved in local collections and regional folk museums – can be given uniform professional assessment without the institution of professional standards and basic principles. As it stands today, the fate of artefacts in such collections depends on the whims of their owners. The primary objective of the museum preservation programme is that ***artefacts and documents are handled in consistent fashion***, for which ***considerable financial assistance must be provided at the state level***, subject, of course, to adequate professional control. Preservation of artefacts requires the expansion of museums' financial resources, especially where such institutions strive to eliminate damage in all areas of activity – storage, research, and exhibition – using sophisticated preventive measures. ***The sums of money usable for museum preservation should be expanded continuously and funding other than that provided by the government also be made available.***

PHASE 1: RESULTS, 2003-2006

The museum preservation programme succeeded in achieving its strategic plan at several levels. The forums and events associated with the provision of information, education, and continued education served not only the fulfilment of practical objectives, but also a change in general attitudes. The collection, processing, and analysis of information on museum artefacts and collections significantly expanded the body of general knowledge available to both the museums themselves and programme administrators. The knowledge in question may be seen as indispensable to the organisation and effective execution of work done by institutions in the area of complex conservation, while at the same time serving as a foundation for the acquisition of such conservation equipment and furnishings as would optimally serve the improvement of the conditions surrounding museum artefacts, an opportunity made possible by programme funding. Regarding the sums of money involved, although the costs associated with investment and development (*Table 1, Figure 2*) considerably exceed those related to education, information, and communication, the significance of the latter group is expressed not by the cost figures, but by a change in the general attitude toward museum collections conservation that is currently gaining ground. The modernisation of permanent exhibitions in regional museums executed under the Alpha Programme was paired with the conservation-based renovation of exhibition materials and a substantial improvement in artefact environments - an incidental result of the pres-

ervation programme. Section 11 of the preservation programme's strategic plan outlined a review of permanent exhibitions. Thanks to other ministry funds from outside the preservation programme, the extraordinarily adverse situation was successfully remedied in more than 50 cases.

1. SUBSIDIES, DEVELOPMENTS

Equipment, furnishings, and developments covered by the preservation programme – with the exception of instruments of measure – were provided to institutions on the basis of an annually announced assessment of need. In some cases, the conservation supervisory board notified the preservation committee of problems requiring urgent attention, while in others, specific institutions even requested aid directly. In addition to national and county museums, local government, church, and trade museums also became part of the programme. Receipt of aid was subject to obligatory provision of information. The ratio of aid monies provided directly to national versus county institutions was 31 to 69 percent; of the total of more than 664 thousand euros in aid of this kind, 206 thousand euros was received by museums run by the state, and 460 thousand by institutions run by county governments (*Figures 3 and 4*). The sum spent on major conservation developments was expanded to include the amount voluntarily paid by the beneficiaries themselves.

Year	Monitoring Equipment	Security	Modular Artefact Storage Blocks	Artefact Protection and Storage Systems	Equipment Used to Improve Artefact Environments	Building Insulation	Total Thousand Euros
2003	42		34	14	53,6		143,6
2004		76,4	47,2	54	84		261,6
2005	21,6		91,6	114,4	50,8		278,4
2006			24,8	12	23,2	94,8	154,8
total	63,6	76,4	197,6	194,4	211,6	94,8	838,4

TABLE 1. Distribution of aid provided to museums, by heading and year

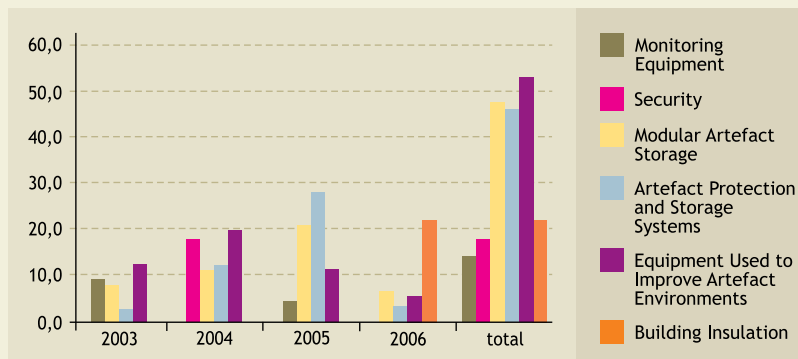


Figure 2. Categories of aid

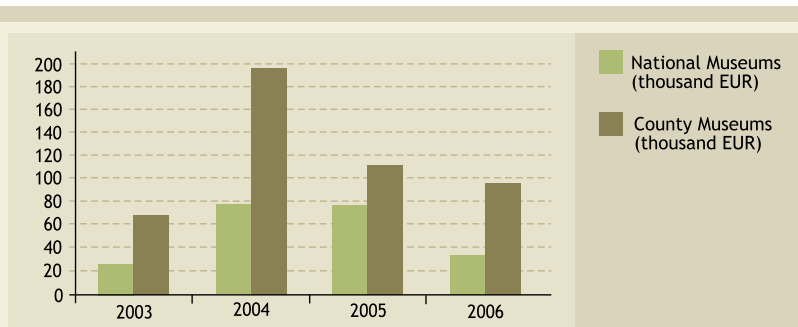
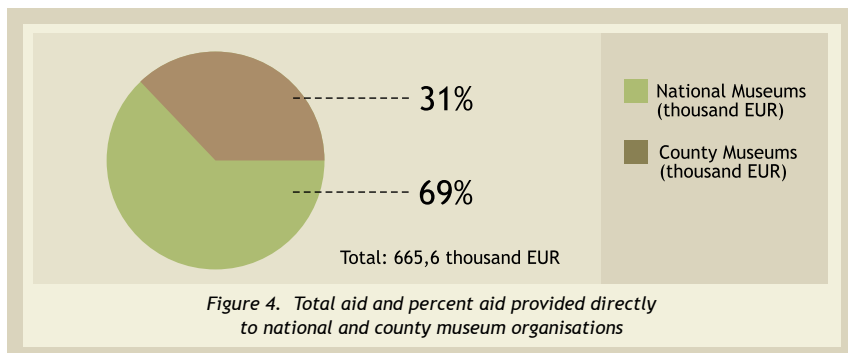


Figure 3. Total aid per year provided directly to national and county museum organisations



1. 1. Monitoring Equipment

The monitoring equipment programme was run to completion – from the first step to the last – at a total cost of nearly 64 thousand euros. In the first phase, national, county, local government, church, and foundation-run museums each received a universal, calibratable digital instrument intended for the measurement of all major parameters (temperature, relative humidity, ultraviolet radiation and light) associated with museum conservation, usable either on its own, or for the entry of data into a computer database. Members of county museum associations received conventional instruments (thermohygrometers), at a total of two hundred in all. In the second phase, an additional 40 thermohygrometers, 20 digital instruments, and 40 data collection ambient humidity instruments were provided to various museums. Given that most modern museums measure and evaluate the ambient conditions in storage and exhibition facilities on a regular basis, these represent a significant step toward the creation and maintenance of an optimal environment for the protection of artefacts at the institutions in question.

1. 2. Investment into Artefact Protection Storage Systems and Materials

The more than 192 thousand euros in aid provided for the expansion and modernisation of storage equipment and the procurement of artefact-friendly packaging and protective materials was successfully employed to improve the conditions under which artefacts are protected at 30 separate museum institutions. As a major portion of requests for aid involved problems of this type, it may be assumed that the equipment which institutions currently have available to them is insufficient even for the purposes of storage. Although central acquisition and need-based distribution of protective materials was hindered



Artefact protection,
Museum of Ethnography

both by technical and by infrastructure-related issues, some experiment in this regard did take place by the end of the programme period.

1. 3. Equipment Used to Protect Artefact Environments

The programme allowed not only for the continuous measurement of ambient conditions, but also for the precise ascertainment of what equipment would be required for adequate ambient conditions to be achieved. Though museums primarily received humidifiers and dehumidifiers, in some cases actual climate control machinery was purchased. All in all, climate conditions were improved in the storerooms and exhibition halls of more than 50 institutions. For the purposes of intervention, "emergency" type rental machines (mobile air purifiers/humidifiers/dehumidifiers) are available, which make it possible to take even greater advantage of available resources. The cost of this equipment exceeds 208 thousand euros.



Modular storage block under construction, Museum of Ethnography

1. 4. The Set-Up of Artefact Storage Areas / Modular Artefact Storage Blocks

Plans to set up modular artefact storage blocks as proposed by the strategic plan were expanded to include aid for projects that would improve conditions in existing storage areas. The programme demon-

strated that dust-free "modules" of light-weight construction did indeed provide an appropriate method for turning otherwise unusable spaces into areas suited to artefact storage. Sequestered blocks permit regulated temperatures and humidity levels to be achieved, while offering an eminently space-saving and – above all – cost-effective means of ensuring both adequate fire safety and storage conditions. All in all, six new storage blocks were set up under programme auspices, with adjustments made for local circumstances. The unit constructed at the Museum of Ethnography has been studied by



Modular storage block under construction, Csongrád



Storage block, Museum of Ethnography

dozens of museum professionals and is also receiving attention from an increasing number of other museums. The only limit to the possibilities lies with the extent of funding available to the project. The stor-

age block project constitutes one of the programme's most successful development areas, receiving a total of nearly 200 thousand euros in aid.

1. 5. Improvement of Exhibition Floor and Warehouse Safety and Security

As a consequence of this programme, ten institutions experienced an improvement in safety and security conditions. Measures taken included the installation of fire and security alarms, in one case the construc-

tion of a relatively high-level surveillance system, and in others the installation of protective equipment that improved physical security. The total expenditure was 76 thousand euros. However, due to the prodigious quantity of applications for aid received during the first year and the size of subsidies requested, *continued support for projects in this area*, given the amount of funds available, *proved impossible*, and the idea was eventually abandoned.

1. 6. Building Insulation

The issue of how to solve warehouse insulation problems was addressed during the final year of the overall programme period. For the time being, results have been modest. The sums expendable for building insulation are considerably larger than they have been previously. To date, solutions have been implemented at three institutions, with costs exceeding a total of 92 thousand euros. As compared to other areas receiving aid, here, there is a need for more serious technical assessment and professional collaboration.

2. CONSERVATION MANAGERS, EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION

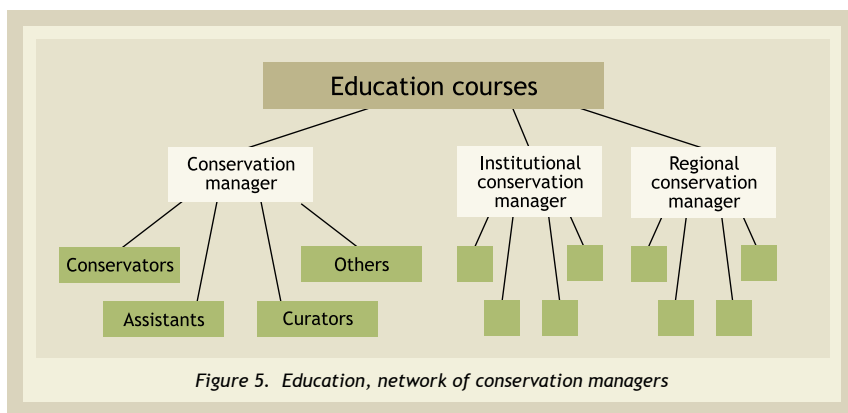
One of the measures urged by the preservation programme was that *conservation managers* be appointed at each of the institutions in question. Today, most museums already employ a person of this title, who regularly attends national *continued education courses*, personally holds courses for co-workers who come into contact with artefacts in the course of their work (collection managers, artefact conserva-



New storage facilities, Veszprém



Modern storage block, Csongrád



tion assistants, exhibition hall attendants, exhibition designers, transport personnel, etc.), and aids these people in their work in an advisory capacity (Figure 5). The programme has brought a quality change in the introduction in Hungary of complex collection management and preventive conservation, and in the overall raising of professional standards. The programme has advanced the dissemination of the knowledge to back these achievements and has created a forum for the exchange of information by professionals in the field. Members of the preservation committee have taken part in making information, education, and consulting available and in transforming local professional opinion. Qualitative improvements were also experienced in the work of museum staff entrusted with artefacts and documents through the organisation of preventive conservation education and the composition and publication of professional literature. Disseminating information on the programme to broader circles additionally served to raise awareness regarding state and local government responsibility for the

condition of museum artefacts. A series of announcements, such as the one held at the Museum Fair of 2004, were also made with the intention of drawing the attention of a wider spectrum of the public to the problems surrounding the protection by museums of artefacts representing our cultural heritage.

2. 1. Education, Continued Education

Free continued education courses for conservation managers on the topics of instrument use and the importance of gathering and passing on information were held on a yearly basis. Participants were then charged with the important task of passing on what they had learned to their colleagues. As time passed, such courses took on the aspect of conservation forums, where participants could report to one another on the results of and experiences with programme implementation. Conservation project leaders in county museums also form a regional network that helps museum staff obtain consulting and much-needed information locally.

2. 2. Information Service

The programme included the launch of a series of helpful conservation booklets to provide information on the various areas of preventive conservation and related topics. To date, four booklets in Hungarian have been published:

- *Measurement of key conservation parameters.* Written by Márta Járó. Budapest, 2003; 2005. (*Museum Conservation Booklets, 1*)
- *Warehousing, Means of Storage, and Packaging Materials.* Written by Mrs. Judit Perjés Bakay. Budapest, 2003. (*Museum Conservation Booklets, 2*)
- *Preventive Conservation at Exhibitions.* Written by Márta Járó. Budapest, 2005. (*Museum Conservation Booklets, 3*)
- *Zoological Pests that Attack Museum Collections and Exhibitions and How to Protect Against Them.* Written by Tamás Vásárhelyi. Budapest, 2007. (*Museum Conservation Booklets, 4*)

By the end of the programme period, the preservation programme Web site had been completed (www.allomanyvedelem.hu). The site makes information, documents, and publications on the programme accessible to those who need them, while serving as a forum for the discussion of related issues. It additionally recommends materials and equipment, transmits technology-related information, and provides links to professional literature and further information resources. The Web site is expected to function as an effective aid to practical work, and to the general dissemination of information in relation to the topic of artefact conservation.

3. DATABASE

During the years 2003 and 2004, the poll conducted at the beginning of and as a precursor to the overall programme was completed with respect to national and county museums, which handle the bulk of the national inventory of museum artefacts. By 2006, the survey of artefacts currently located in local government, ecclesiastical and foundation institutions and specialised museums was also completed. The computer input of the conservation information gleaned from the 163-question questionnaire permitted the creation of a database of information applicable to the entire country. This valuable background material, given continuous work on the part of the conservation supervision authority, may be used as a basis for taking much-needed preventive action, thus effecting a significant improvement in the conservation situation of Hungary's museum collections and creating a guarantee of long-term preservation.



4. DIFFICULTIES, DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Several sections of the strategic plan were, however, either not implemented at all, or were completed at a pace slower than planned. The most pressing problem stemmed from *inadequate resources*. As compared to both the original idea, and the intention on the part of the government, the monetary programme resources were not raised, but rather were reduced to initial levels for the programme's final year. Plans to design and construct a *central storage base* to be shared by Budapest's national museums, for example, were abandoned entirely. Understandably, the strategic plan recommended that the largest possible sum be allotted for this. This notwithstanding - and even without reference to the final year - the programme received less in the course of implementation than was originally suggested by those who drafted it. During the period between 2003 and 2005, less than two-thirds of the amount specified in the draft programme was actually made available: 800 thousand as opposed to one million and 360 thousand euros. Though each programme element did make progress at some level, because funds were often less than had been planned, in the end, some programmes were only partially realised. Another, more general circumstance affecting the success of the preservation programme was that *expansion of funding to include resources outside the budget or budget chapter did not take place*. In fact, not even the conditions or mechanisms required for this to happen were developed. A solution of this type would be important

so that funding for the maintenance and preservation of the cultural heritage found in Hungary's museums does not fall back drastically in the event of budget austerity measures.

Expansion of the general conservation survey proceeded more slowly than planned, while the *scope of information gathered on conservation issues was not expanded* due to lack of funds. These changes in turn affect plans related to evaluation. In the future, there will be a definite need for renewed data collection, though in the beginning, there is compelling reason for performing the next investigation - originally set to be conducted every five years - somewhat later.

The launch of the preservation programme and completion of its first phases represent a major step in the direction of a change of approach on the part of Hungarian museums. It must be seen as a positive sign that most institutions and maintainers that received aid went on to contribute to conservation publications. In more than one rural museum, new developments related to artefact safety and security have been put into place, partly under the influence of the central preservation programme.

Examples where good results have been achieved act as a motivating influence. However, the spread of preventative conservation to broader circles can only truly be achieved in the long term. Continued education has so far been provided only to professional restoration technicians, the Hungarian museum staff members responsible for artefact conservation, and not to other museum personnel (museum research staff and exhibition designers), nor has there been any



*New order at the Budapest
History Museum – Kiscell Museum*

training in preventative conservation organised for institution directors. Knowledge of and attitudes toward artefact conservation among the personnel of today's

museums are wildly inconsistent. Few institutions have the organisation structure and labour policies necessary to accommodate the practical implementation of a programme offering a systematic approach to the care of museum artefacts, to say nothing of the state and magnitude of the necessary executive and staff skills and commitment levels. ***Continuation and the future success of the museum preservation programme depends not only on material resources, but also on the concerted support of museum personnel and professional organisations.***

The first phase of the museum preservation programme, which took place between 2003 and 2006, may be seen as a successful experiment in preserving the national cultural heritage represented by Hungary's museums and in improving the overall condition of such artefacts. The results achieved and experience gained to date justify the programme's continued existence.

PHASE 2: OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES, 2007-2010

Phase 2 of the museum preservation programme, begun in 2007, aims at *continuing the implementation of the concept constructed at the outset*, with need of defining not new tasks and objectives, but merely new points of focus. It continues to be the case that improvement of the condition of artefacts in Hungarian museums requires *significant state expenditure*. The austerity measures instituted in 2005 and 2006 did not enable the sums of aid allotted by the central budget to be increased from year to year as planned at programme launch. The second phase of the programme will only be successful and effective if the *monetary resources* available for implementing the gradually unfolding conservation projects set forth in the original strategic plan are also *increased*. The issue of a shared artefact storage facility for Budapest's national museums is still a very pressing one. Successful fulfilment of preservation objectives continues to form the cornerstone of any future change in professional attitudes, as the complex protection and care of museum artefacts cannot be isolated or made independent from museum work as a whole. The strategy of *preventive conservation* builds as much on the practice of taking small steps as it does on the administration of large-scale, long-term institutional projects requiring the co-ordination of various individual areas of museum work. Professional organisations dealing with museum issues have evaluated the first version of the preservation programme plan for 2007 to 2010, with whose strategic ob-

jectives they agree, within the framework of a social dialogue. These organisations welcomed the idea of continuing the programme, developed proposals for expanding it, and provided their support for its work. Their most important recommendation involved making information and continued education on conservation available to even larger circles, including institutional management.

The successes achieved so far define the work that is left to do. Under the now completed monitoring equipment programme, national and county museums, their member museums, municipal government museums, and ecclesiastical collections each received the instruments and programmes necessary for continuous data monitoring. In addition, national and county museums received the instruments and programmes needed for data collection, storage, and processing.

The *focal points and areas of activity defined for the latest phase* of the programme can be summarised in ten points, on the basis of which a set list of smaller programmes will be launched every year, having received the financial coverage needed to carry out their work. The first important complex conservation task involves a survey of the body of photographic material housed by Hungary's museums and measures to improve its condition. The "Photography in the Focus" programme was launched at the end of 2007. As a result, in just two or three years, museum photographic collections will receive a total of about 120 thousand euros in aid.

1. WAREHOUSE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

There is both a need and a demand for the construction and remodelling of storage facilities, as well as for the building and furnishing of *modular attic artefact storage units* (dedicated storage areas). Experience to date demonstrates that the model of the modular storage area works and can be recommended as a solution suitable for other institutions. The programme can offer assistance in drafting plans and recommending manufacturers and contractors for their construction. A minimum of 4 or 5 storage units can be planned from the annual financial budget. Without reference to a few comprehensive museum reconstruction projects and possible greenfield investments, the preservation programme offers the one and only opportunity currently available for warehouse development. The National Cultural Fund, an independent supporter of Hungarian culture, does not provide aid for investment projects, making the remodelling and expansion of storage facilities and the construction of modular storage blocks possibly one of the museum preservation programme's most important areas for support.



A new warehouse, Veszprém

2. THE IMPROVEMENT OF AMBIENT CONDITIONS IN MUSEUM STORAGE FACILITIES

The number of rented humidifiers and dehumidifiers obtained during the first phase of the preservation programme may again be increased, thus ensuring that more institutions with temporary (not prolonged) difficulties receive access to appropriate equipment. In cases backed by appropriate measurements and professional opinion, it can continue to be made certain that individual institutions have access to equipment. In this area, *better planning* regarding the technical means involved, the organisation of labour, professional collaboration, and preliminary cost calculation should receive greater emphasis than has been previously been the case. In several places, the operation of equipment procured for the improvement of physical conditions in museum storage facilities has presented a problem, as not every institution can pay the increased costs involved. Operation, however, is the responsibility of the institution and is not supported monetarily through programme contributions. The acquisition of new equipments (with primary reference to dehumidifiers) must in all cases be backed by appropriate preliminary case studies, so that the best possible solution is chosen. There is a need for a shift in approaches in this area, as well: it would be unrealistic to believe – and the directors and staff of programme-funded institutions cannot afford to believe – that a solution that produces improved circumstances in several (or even all) respects (involving the regulation of temperature and humid-

ity) can be cheaper! The costs do not consist of a single, one-time acquisition cost, but must include the costs associated with continuous operation, as well.

3. STORAGE EQUIPMENT, FURNISHINGS, AND MATERIALS

The programme package in question will not only be continued, but likely expanded, as well. Knowledge amassed during the interim (lists of transportation companies, and an updated database of equipment and transport and packaging materials) is continually accessible through the committee's Web site. A cost effective method for the procurement of storage and packaging materials is *central procurement*, preceded by a careful assessment of prevailing need. The development and provision of the financial and technical means of distribution will be achieved by developing a preservation programme distribution hub within the Museum of Ethnography expressly for this purpose.

4. BUILDING INSULATION PROGRAMME

Both surveys conducted in the past few years and personal experience confirm that the problem of insulating areas where artefacts are kept must be dealt with rigorously, as until it is, there is no hope of achieving optimum environments using humidifiers or dehumidifiers (or for that matter, any other means). Here, proper preliminary assessments and custom solutions are absolutely necessary. The expected programme budget will probably not enable a comprehensive solution in-

volving a large number of institutions. As a minimum plan, however, it would represent a significant step if at least one or two buildings / storage facilities could be insulated per year. Accordingly, this programme should be allotted a minimum of 60 to 80 thousand euros from the year's budget resources.

5. DISASTER PREVENTIVE STORAGE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

The great natural disasters of the past few years (floods, earthquakes, tidal waves, etc.) have prompted an increased emphasis within international museum circles on the issue of whether museums are properly prepared for extreme situations. It is common knowledge that Hungary, as other countries, has disaster prevention and response regulations, museum regulations, and institutional plans. In fact, institutions must have special *storage equipment and packaging materials* set aside specifically so that artefacts can be moved to safety in an emergency situation. Once a proper survey has been conducted and the necessary information gathered, the preservation programme must be used to create the opportunity for museums to remedy any deficiencies they may currently be experiencing in this area. Any program targeting the complete protection of Hungary's stores of museum artefacts must extend to guaranteeing that the conditions are in place to deal with special situations. Risk management is definitely part of the preventive conservation strategy.

6. CENTRAL STORAGE BASE

There continues to be a *great need* for the construction of the central storage base featured in the original strategic plan, whose use would be shared by a number of Budapest's national museums. As a minimum programme, the preservation committee will begin the preparatory work needed for implementation of the storage base project. Experts will be involved in composing a *detailed professional concept and plan*, on the basis of which a *cost estimate* and *viability plan* can also be drafted. Such measures, while not representing any serious financial burden, are indispensable for procuring the financial resources for the project, whether from EU aid or the ministry's own multi-annual budget.

7. EXPERT ASSESSMENT, INCREASED MONITORING

Once results to date had been assessed, it was realised that the implementation of funded projects must be monitored at the sites in question. Although these were covered in the professional supervisory reports drafted in co-operation with the body (professional supervisory organisation) that monitors the work of museum restoration technicians, programme administrators need to gain experience of their own with individual implemented projects, partly so that they can direct future funds and make further funding decisions. At the same time, such work can be accomplished most efficiently by enlisting the aid of external experts.

8. CONTINUED EDUCATION AND THE PUBLICATION OF SPECIALIST MATERIALS

There is considerable need for continued education as a means for transmitting the new ideas. Today, such classes function as a conservation forum, as well, a place where professionals can exchange ideas, information, and success stories. Continued education must be extended, as per the original strategic plan and to the satisfaction of the pertinent professional organizations, to include a broad spectrum of individuals working in the museum field, including both museum research staff and management. Also serving the causes of on-going education and information dissemination included a *series of conservation booklets* the successes of which suggests that continuation is in order. In addition to possible new publications covering specific conservation issues, there is a need for the publication of one or more tutorials to support the introduction of new ideas in the more general sense. It would be expedient if a methodology-related publication dealing with the museum-level organisation of preventive conservation work were published as soon as possible, primarily for use by museum directorship and project managers in their work.

9. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

In the past few years, museum conservation work has achieved significant successes, with information on both past

achievements and future possibilities available to Hungarian museum staff everywhere. There can be no doubt that the preservation committee has played a key role in these advances. Naturally, the continuous release of programme information remains an ongoing task, for which the preservation **Web site** serves as an important forum. Information on the achievements of Hungary's museum preservation endeavours and the spread of ideas related to preventive conservation is provided to foreign circles in the form of a special programme booklet. In addition to this, the construction of a direct connection to ICCROM and to preservation institutions and associations linked to ICOM. As a first step, Hungary's achievements were shared both at an international seminar (Preventive Conservation: Reducing Risk to Collections, organised by ICCROM), and at a conference on preventive conservation (organised by the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, and the 'ASTRA' Museum Centre for the Training of Conservators and Restoration Technicians), both held in Sibiu, Romania, in 2007.

10. COORDINATION, THE MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY AS COMPETENCY CENTRE

To help ensure the success of the preservation programme, an ongoing dialogue with the Museum Panel of the National Cultural Fund and the Department of Public Collections of the Ministry of Education and Culture was begun. The need for cooperation in this regard stems from two different objectives: namely, the concentration and coordination of funds and the successful and consistent promotion of uniform preservation principles. The institutional stage for the museum preservation programme continues to be provided by the Museum of Ethnography, the leading institution for preventive conservation in Hungary, and from 2008 onward, the Ministry of Education and Culture's designated competency centre. The Museum of Ethnography's role in this regard consists in the organisation, direction, and administration of preservation programme tasks, and the provision of assistance through coordination, information, continued education, and the enlisting of external experts in addressing the conservation problems faced by Hungary's museums.



*New warehouse facilities,
Museum of Ethnography*